



Sept. 4 — chicks were pulled from the nest.



Chicks at 35 days.

The author with chicks at 49 days.



A possible first captive breeding of the Channel Bill Toucan

by John D. Robertshaw
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

This is a report of what I believe to be the first captive breeding of the channel bill toucan. Way back in 1962 I found my first toucan; a Couviers purchased in England. He was soon freeflying, establishing a total exclusion zone in my garden and sadly died following an attack in 1966 on an unsuspecting visitor.

My channel bills joined a pair of toco and Couviers in the autumn of 1985. Their cage was 10 ft. x 10 ft. x 5 ft. wide, shaded above by palm fronds and adjoined by a pair of Couviers to the east and six Noble macaws to the west. We rather feel that alternating macaws and toucans both reduces the nesting animosity and also uses the toucans' rodent catching ability to some success. A phone call to Jerry Jennings produced three nesting boxes and we were in business.

In early July 1986 the channel bills, by far the most skittish and wildest of my birds, showed great interest in their box and both birds started sleeping in it at night. By August we had no doubt they were sitting on eggs. Both male and female took it in turns to sit on the nest but we did notice that both birds would leave the nest for periods of up to half an hour during the hot afternoon hours. We increased our surveillance and on the 17th of August we noted great

Important Medical Announcement for Bird Owners

*Introducing VetRx™ Caged Bird Remedy—The Proven,
Inexpensive Remedy for Avian Respiratory Infections,
Scaly Face, and Scaly Leg Mites*

VetRx™ caged bird remedy is an inexpensive, easy to apply medication for treating respiratory infections, scaly face and scaly leg mites. When administered to the bird at the onset of respiratory problems, VetRx™ helps fight infection by keeping air passages clear. When used in conjunction with antibiotics, VetRx™ helps speed relief. Results are dramatic.

And because VetRx™ lets you take immediate action, you minimize avian suffering and save money, too. It's the perfect remedy for those times when you can't get to a vet immediately. Every home avian first-aid kit should have VetRx™.

Completely Safe, All Natural Remedy

In use since 1874 and FDA approved, VetRx™ has been proven safe and effective by the poultry industry, bantam bird breeders, and pigeon breeders throughout the U.S. It's an effective remedy for all cage birds.

Priced to Keep Your Wallet Healthy, Too

A 2-oz. bottle of VetRx™ costs only \$6.95 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling). Send for VetRx™ today and help your birds breathe a little easier.

Dealers & Pet Store inquiries invited. Respond on your letterhead to: Pampered Parrot Haven, Inc., Dept. AFA, P.O. Box 507, Oyster Bay, NY 11771, or call: 516-922-1169.

Prices subject to change without notice
VetRx is a trademark of Vetre Products, Ltd.



VETREE PRODUCTS LTD.

Pampered Parrot Haven, Inc.

activity. Both birds would come out of the nest for short periods and were most excitable. A second check around 9 a.m. found an infertile egg in the water dish. By 10 a.m. a further check showed a hatched out egg shell immediately below the nest. It is interesting to note that this egg had been opened lengthways all around, unlike chicken eggs which open round the air cell at the blunt end.

So the remaining report is dated from this point, 17th August when we believed one egg had hatched and one was infertile.

We hurriedly re-read back issues of *Watchbird*. I had bred macaws in England from 1960 but no toucans. As these birds were exceptionally skittish we felt that regular checking would be counter productive, and decided only to check on a weekly basis unless there appeared to be a crisis.

24th August. One week old and we are hearing grunting noises from inside the nest. I am sure curiosity exceeded prudence as I took a flashlight and mirror and peeped through the opening. Two small, naked, wide but short beaked individuals apparently were unable to lift their heads from the floor of the nest. I did not look for more than five seconds and retired.

Continued on page 11



PVC UNBREAKABLE PROPS FOR PARROT-TYPE BIRDS

THE TRAINING GUIDE BOOKLET with detailed, illustrated instructions shows you how to train birds Step-By-Step, to do the Ring Toss, Piggy Bank, Basketball, Letter Board, Scooter, Skates, Bicycle and the Unicycle.
Buy 1 booklet-add Props as needed \$12.00

THE "AICU" (Animal Intensive Care Unit), can be used as a Brooder, Nebulizer, Handfeeding, ill, etc., for animals and birds, with removable heating unit, 2 doors, ambient-103° F, adj. vents & water tray for humidity control, made of acrylic. Designed and proven by veterinarian **Hannis L. Stoddard, III, D.V.M.** **\$395.00**

POST CARDS OR POSTER in 4-part color of PARROTS ON PROPS featuring Amazons, Cockatiels, Cockatoos & Macaws playing Basketball, Ring Toss, Piggy Bank, Letter Board and riding a Bicycle, Scooter, Skates and Unicycle. Also a Macaw and Amazon on Water Skis.
MAKES GREAT GIFTS FOR BIRD LOVERS!
Pkg. of 12 Post Cards or 12x22 Poster \$3.00

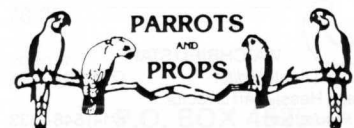
Allow 3 to 4 weeks delivery.
*** Dealer Inquiries Invited ***

**Order Complete Kit w/Booklet (shown in bold).
Or order props separately (shown in "•").**

Kit A with TG Booklet.....	55.00
• Sm. Basketball Stand/Ball	20.00
• Piggy Bank	20.00
• Ring Toss	20.00
Kit #1 with TG Booklet	129.00
• Basketball Stand/Ball	52.00
• Piggy Bank	52.00
• Ring Toss	30.00
Kit #2 with TG Booklet	210.00
• Scooter	62.00
• Skates	46.00
• Letter Board	106.00
Kit #3 with TG Booklet	410.00
• Bicycle	236.00
• Unicycle	212.00
15% discount on Kits and Props above (•)	
Amazon Scooter or Skates	39.95
Art Board or Pull Cart.....	89.95
Cockatiel Scooter or Skates	20.00
Dragster or Jeep	250.00
Bell or Cannon	295.00

*** Custom Made Props on Request ***

For Brochure please send #10 SASE (22¢).
FOB Anaheim. Calif. residents add 6% tax.
Send check or money order to:



**1135 N. ARMANDO ST.
ANAHEIM, CA 92806
(714) 961-1399 630-4036**



1987-1988 COMMITTEES

ALLIED GROUPS LIAISON

James Lyn Swiggart (601) 960-1575

AVIAN RESEARCH

Dr. Susan Clubb (305) 226-6778

AVIAN TRANSPORTATION

Dallas D. Johnson (301) 540-6198

AVY AWARDS

Dale Thompson (805) 252-3441

BREEDING REGISTRY

William P. Maynard (904) 642-5936

CALIFORNIA LIAISON

Laurella Desborough (415) 372-6174

CLUB PROMOTION

Chris Christman (714) 638-1596

CONSERVATION

Jack Clinton-Eitniew (512) 828-5306

CONVENTION 1988

Phyllis Martin (813) 839-4751

CONVENTION 1989

Opal Crosser (602) 853-0348

EDUCATION AND MEDIA SERVICES

Dr. Val Clear (317) 642-0795

ETHICS

Trudi Dam (813) 422-3772

FINANCE

David M. Richards (714) 839-1916

LEGAL COUNSEL

Gary Lilienthal (617) 542-7070

LEGISLATION

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Joe McLaughlin (503) 538-6323

NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS

Janet Lilienthal (617) 542-7070

PARLIAMENTARIAN

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Tom Marshall (703) 759-5978

PUBLICATIONS

Sheldon Dingle (714) 734-7448

RAFFLE

Dick Dickinson (408) 248-1641

SPEAKERS

Nancy Vigran (818) 980-4694

STATE COORDINATOR

Amy Worell, D.V.M. (818) 704-0223

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Laurella Desborough (415) 372-6174

WAYS AND MEANS

A. B. McNabney (415) 945-1785

BUSINESS OFFICE

Pat Benoit (213) 372-2988

WATCHBIRD STAFF

Sheldon Dingle/Editor (714) 734-7448

M. Jean Hessler/Art Director,
Production (714) 548-3133

Sylvia Mahon/Production
Assistant (714) 556-8425

Susan Dingle/Assistant to Editor (714) 734-7448

Ted Hearsey/Advertising (213) 395-8847

31st August. The start of their third week. Again using flashlight and mirror I inspected the nest. Still two naked birds, eyes closed and wide, short beaks, obviously well looked after and I saw no reason to interfere with nature.

On the 4th of September nature struck back. A tropical storm set in for the day and by 4 p.m. we had received over four inches of rain. We felt we should check the nest, as feared we found the babies deep in wet faeces and saw no alternative but to pull them from the nest, an event for which we were only marginally prepared.

We had Jerry Jennings' articles from *Watchbird* on hand, we had heating pads and thermometers but neither myself nor my wife had actually hand raised before. We called Jerry in panic and he was most helpful suggesting diets, etc. We started on a diet of soaked Meow-mix and Purina Hi-pro dog food, diced banana, grapes, papaya and apple. A similar diet is fed to the adults with the addition of more fruits and vegetables and mynah bird pellets fed dry. A couple of days later on the advice of our local vet we added two table-spoons of yogurt to the diet.

Advice to feed every four hours seemed to be more commercial than ideal since we had noticed the parents carried food to them "little and often." We tried to do the same during daylight hours giving them the last feed just before dark and starting again hourly in the morning at daylight.

The babies were housed in a cardboard box, a heater pad on the bottom and wood chips covered with paper towels over this. We kept the temperature between 83 and 87 degrees F and for the first couple of weeks checked them every four hours during the night.

7th September. Their fourth week and we named them Ramilles and Bobo. They were weighed daily and Bobo was consistently larger and heavier than Ramilles. This, we concluded, was due to the fact that Bobo hatched up to one week earlier than Ramilles. Both birds gained weight daily and Bobo opened his eyes and also left his backward kneeling position to stand on two feet on occasions. On the 10th of September we also noted he was sleeping "toucan style," head back along his body and what there was of his tail erect. Ramilles at this time was still sleeping in "dead bird" position.

September 15th. Their fifth week and both birds still gaining weight and very alert, Bobo trying to pick up food from his dish. This ability to control their beaks would remain a problem through

to their tenth week. They just cannot coordinate the picking up of food at an ever increasing distance as their beaks grow, with necessity to "juggle" this food to their throats. Halfway through this week Bobo became impossible to feed. He had to "juggle" and every piece would miss on each throw. I have read that toucans often reject their young at this age and by the end of the week I could not blame them. Both were sleeping "toucan style" and both were using their preen glands on immature feathers.

September 21st. Their sixth week. Both birds stop gaining weight and end up at 11½ oz. and 12½ oz. respectively. Both birds are feathered like the adult female but Ramilles has white splashes on his primary and secondary flights. Neither parent have this white and, as the photographs show, both babies are much more vividly colored than the parents. Ramilles has brown eyes and Bobo's are deep blue. During this week both birds learned to perch and Bobo flew about three yards culminating in an unsuccessful landing.

September 28th. Their seventh week. Both birds again weighed the same as last week and at this stage we abandoned the daily weigh ins. Bobo managing occasionally to feed himself but still having difficulty "juggling." We introduced water bowls to the cage and, by gently splashing, tried to show them what it was about. Both jumped in and took their first baths although after they were thoroughly wet we had to towel them dry and attend them in their distress.

5th October. Their 8th week. By now we had completed a further stand of cages and we carried both birds out in the daylight hours. This is identical to their parents' cage being 10 ft. x 10 ft. x 5 ft. wide with several tree branches for perches and sheltered with wooden laths placed ½" apart. We were still giving the majority of food by hand. Like all children, they can manage treats like grapes but just cannot pick up boring old Hi-pro. Although they now bathe and play in the water they do not seem to be drinking so we are still giving the Hi-pro wetter than usual. Cold rain still drenches through their feathers so after about 15 minutes of rain we bring them back inside. The adult channel bills do not show any interest in them and, as both chicks think they are human, an earlier idea to place all four together seems impractical.

12th October. 63 days old. The final photograph shows that our challenging raising period is over. ●