



A rainbow lorikeet visits Tony Bucci at Currumbin Bird Sanctuary.



Galabs cruise over a local farm.



Bus stop for picnic lunch in a small town park.

AFA Members Visit AUSTRALIA

*by Tony Bucci
San Pedro, California*

Australia is a big country, and there are few places on Earth with as much variety as Australia has to offer. For example, if you could superimpose Australia over North America geographically, it would cover all of the territory as far north as the state of Oregon and south to Panama in Central America.

With so much geographical and ecological diversity, more than 700 different species of birds occur naturally in Australia. Unfortunately, the duration of our tour did not permit us to see all of them. My main objective was to see and study Gouldians in their natural habitat. Our tour covered only the portions of Australia where they could be found, which included the northeastern coast of Queensland, and Northern Territory.

Last year in the month of July I made all of my preliminary arrangements: passport, visa, airline ticket, land tour, etc. One last thing, I thought, should be to phone my friend, Joe Krader, to ask him if he knew of any aviculturist in Australia that I could visit. When Joe heard I was going to Australia he gave me hell for not telling him. So I told him there was still plenty of time for him to decide to go (I was hoping he would!).

Without hesitation, Joe yelled to his wife, "Gloria! Can I go to Australia with Tony?" I could faintly hear Gloria yelling back, "Yes! When can I pack your suitcase?" That was all the planning we did, and we left on August 17th, flying from Los Angeles to Sydney, Australia. As soon as we got off the plane, we immediately boarded another plane that took us to Brisbane.

There, a friend of Joe's who lives in Brisbane, Mr. McAfee, gave us a warm welcome at his home, then proceeded to give us a tour of Brisbane and south of the city to the Gold Coast, where we visited the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary. Thousands of rainbow lorikeets came as we fed them sweetened soaked bread. This was our first encounter with the birds, and what a sight. At exactly 3:30 PM, they all came and ate from our hands. What a pleasure to see these super-colorful and vigorous birds at such a close range!

We spent the night in Brisbane, and the next morning we boarded our tour



*Brombies
at dawn
on the beach
of Fraser Island.*



*Red-tailed black cockatoos in the wild.
This magnificent bird is extremely rare in aviculture.*

The elusive Lady Gouldian finch — normal purple breasted, and a black-headed, white breasted mutation. These birds were bred in the author's aviaries. He plans a return trip to Australia to see Gouldians in the wild!



At day break a flock of crimson-winged parrots landed in a deserted street of Karumba. This crimson-winged parrot is in the author's collection.

Ant hills are often used as resting sites by various species of birds including several psophota species.



Photos by Tony Buccì

bus. The “coach captain” (bus driver) greeted us and introduced us to the other passengers, made up mostly of native Australians, a couple from Germany, and a young lady from Canada. The bus was half empty giving Joe and I several seats each. Most other passengers were couples who sat next to each other. Immediately we made friends with them, especially with the Australians who were very friendly and eager to relate to two crazy “bird nuts” from America.

The Australians were mostly farmers from the west coast vacationing and visiting the east coast. They were amazed at our love and interest in birds,





AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE

Dedicated to conservation of bird wildlife through encouragement of captive breeding programs, scientific research, and education of the general public.

MEMBER NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

African Love Bird Society American Budgerigar Society, Inc. International Dove Society
American Pigeon Fanciers' Council National Finch & Softbill Society National Parrot Association
British Columbia Avicultural Society National Cockatiel Society International Softbill Society
Southeastern Aviculturists Association Avicultural Society of America
Society of Parrot Breeders and Exhibitors

MEMBER CLUBS

ALABAMA

Bird Club of Greater Birmingham
Central Alabama Aviculture Society

ARIZONA

Arizona Aviculture Society
Avicultural Society of Tucson
Seed Crackers

CALIFORNIA

Aviary Association of Kern
Avicultural Association of San Francisco
Budgerigar Research Association
Butte County Bird Club
California Game Breeders Association
Capitol City Bird Society
Central California Cage Bird Club
Contra Costa Avian Society
Finch Society of San Diego County
Foothill Bird Fanciers
Fork & Feather Bird Club
Golden Gate Avian Society
Golden West Game Breeders and Bird Club
Great Western Budgerigar Society
Hi Desert Bird Club
Hookbill Hobbyists of Southern California
Inland Game Bird Breeders Association
Long Beach Bird Breeders
Norco Valley Bird Breeders
North County Aviculturists
Orange County Bird Breeders
San Diego County Bird Breeders Association
San Diego County Canary Club
San Gabriel Valley Parakeet Association
Santa Clara Valley Canary & Exotic Bird Club
Simi Valley Bird Society
South Bay Bird Club
South Coast Finch Society
Valley of Paradise Bird Club
West Valley Bird Society
Western Bird Breeders Society

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Association
Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture, Inc.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Association for Aviculture, Inc.

DELAWARE

Delaware Avicultural Association

FLORIDA

Aviary & Cage Bird Society of South Florida
Bird Club of Manatee
Central Florida Bird Breeders
Gold Coast Exotic Bird Club, Inc.
Greater Brandon Avian Society
Greater Miami Avicultural Society, Inc.

FLORIDA (continued)

Jacksonville Avicultural Society, Inc.
Ocala Cage Bird Society, Inc.
Polk County Avicultural Society
Suncoast Avian Society
Sunshine State Cage Bird Society, Inc.
Tropical Cockatiel Club of Miami
West Florida Avian Society, Inc.

GEORGIA

Greater Atlanta Pigeon and Dove Club

ILLINOIS

Illini Bird Fanciers
McLean County Pet Bird Club
Mid-West Hookbill Club
Prasa Cage Bird Club

IOWA

Mid-America Cage Bird Society

KANSAS

Capital City Bird Club of Kansas
Kansas Avicultural Society, Inc.

KENTUCKY

Kentuckiana Bird Society

LOUISIANA

Capital Area Avicultural Society
Central Louisiana Budgerigar Society
Gulf South Bird Club

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers, Inc.
Maryland Cage Bird Society, Inc.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Cockatiel Society, Inc.
Boston Society for Aviculture, Inc.
Exotic Cage Bird Society of New England
Massachusetts Cage Bird Association, Inc.
Western New England Cage Bird Society

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor Cage Bird Club
Great Lakes Avicultural Society
Mid-West Canary Club, Inc.
Motor City Bird Breeders, Inc.

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Cage Bird Association

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Budgerigar Society

MISSOURI

Missouri Cage Bird Association

NEBRASKA

Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society

NEVADA

Las Vegas Avicultural Society
Northern Nevada Cage Bird Society

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society
New Hampshire Avicultural Society

NEW YORK

Feathered Friends Bird Club
Finger Lakes Cage Bird Association
Greater Rochester Hookbill Association
Rochester Cage Bird Club

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Metrolina Cage Bird Society
Smoky Mountain Cage Bird Society
Triad Exotic Bird Club

OHIO

Cleveland Cage Bird Society
Golden Crescent Cage Bird Club
Mid-American Exotic Bird Society, Inc.

OKLAHOMA

Bird Fanciers of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Cage Bird Society

OREGON

Columbia Canary Club
Exotic Bird Club of Oregon
Northwest Bird Club
Northwest Pigeon Fanciers Association

Rose City Exotic Bird Club

PENNSYLVANIA

Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Club
Chester County Bird Breeders
Delaware Valley Bird Club
Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society
Philadelphia Avicultural Society
York Area Pet Bird Club

TENNESSEE

Greater Memphis Bird Club
Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club

TEXAS

Abilene Bird Club
Alamo Exhibition Bird Club
Dallas Cage Bird Society
Fort Worth Bird Club
Gulf Coast Aviculture Association
Houston Cage Bird Association
Parrot People Club of Houston

UTAH

Utah Pheasant Society

VIRGINIA

National Capital Bird Club
Parrot Breeders Association
Peninsula Caged Bird Society

WASHINGTON

Avicultural Society of Puget Sound
Cascade Canary Breeders Association
Greater Spokane Avicultural Society
Northwest Exotic Bird Society
Northwest Old Variety Canary Association
South Sound Exotic Bird Society
Washington Budgerigar Society, Inc.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee Bird Society, Ltd.
Wisconsin Cage Bird Club, Inc.

which they considered pests. They told us stories of thousands of Galas (*Eolophus roseicapillus*) eating their crops, and unfortunately, in desperation, shooting some in order to scare them away.

We left Brisbane in the morning and travelled north on the coast bound for Maryborough, enjoying the scenery from our comfortable, air-conditioned bus. At noon we stopped in a small town, the name of which I don't recall, where we found a beautiful park and ate our picnic lunch. The bus was equipped with a portable kitchen, where our "tour hostess" doubled as a cook and prepared our lunches daily while on the road. That evening we reached Maryborough, and nearby on the coast we boarded a ferry to Fraser Island.

We arrived at the island in the evening and drove in a small four-wheel-drive bus, slipping and sliding through the rainforest on a sandy road to the motel on the other side of the island. The ride, which lasted approximately one hour, seemed to last all night. The darkness of the night, made even more dark by the thick rain-forest canopy, offered an exciting ride which Disneyland could never duplicate.

Fraser Island is the world's largest sand island. The superb beaches, towering sand dunes, and clean, clear lakes and streams make it a paradise for nature-lovers. The interior of the island is carpeted with a lush rain-forest.

The next morning I got up before daybreak, went to the beach, and waited for the sunrise. Several sandpipers (*Calidris acuminata*) were already walking the beach, reminding me of the saying, "The early bird gets the worm;" and they certainly did. The air was brisk and invigorating; no one was there except me and the sandpipers. They walked around me with no concern of my presence. As the day began to break several horses came to the beach. Later I learned they were wild horses; the Australians call them "Brombies." The sun never came up, and it suddenly began to rain. I then realized we were experiencing tropical weather. Geographically, we were now located approximately on the latitude equivalent to where Cuba is in the northern hemisphere. The rain did not last very long but it did chase me back to the motel. It was time for breakfast anyway.

After breakfast Joe and I went bush walking hoping to see some birds. Joe kept teasing me by pretending to see a Gouldian. I knew better, for this was not Gouldian territory. We did see many rainbow lorikeets, sulphur-crested cockatoos, and other species of birds

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's closest state coordinator. There is a state coordinator listing with phone numbers elsewhere in this publication.

unknown to us.

The next morning we left the island and proceeded northward along the Bruce Highway. We drove mostly through acres and acres of sugar cane plantations. I was not aware that the world needs so much sugar! In the next four days we visited two more Barrier Reef islands, where we had plenty of time for sun bathing and swimming. These islands abound with bird life, and Joe and I had field days of picture taking and bird watching.

I must mention that if you like seafood, Australia has one of the most delicious fish, called "Barramundi," which I never refused when the menu gave me the choice. Also, Australian wines are just as good as our California wines or better.

As we proceeded further north, the weather became warmer and warmer, and the landscape became more and more tropical, comparable to that of Central America. The month of August in Australia marks the end of winter and is the best time to be in northern Australia. The rainy season will start there some time in October, and this is the time, I was told, when you should visit southern Australia. At any rate, we were now in the right place at the right time in Cairns.

Cairns is the capital of the far north and probably the best known city in Queensland. For the next three days we stayed in a very nice hotel which gave us an opportunity to recuperate and prepare for our next tour. In the meantime, we took side trips in the surroundings of Cairns.

Offshore from Cairns we visited Green Island. The island is actually part of the Great Coral Barrier Reef. While having lunch there under the palm trees, many small finches came to beg for food. They were very tame and came close enough to be almost touched by our hands while feeding them bread crumbs. These finches are very small and have a very prominent white circle around their eyes, giving them the appearance of having big eyes. A quick look at our field guide gave us the name of these finches as gray-breasted silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*).

We toured the underwater coral gardens by glass-bottom boat, then it was back to Cairns, where our present tour was to end and the second to start. The next day we left Cairns and travelled through the Atherton Tablelands, across the base of the Cape York Peninsula. In this area, according to information I read in the book, "Breeding Australian Finches," by G. W. Iles, the Gouldian finch is present during the dry season, but does not breed. I made



1988 OFFICERS

THOMAS C. MARSHALL/President (703) 759-5978
 PHYLLIS MARTINI/1st Vice President (813) 839-4751 DAVIS KOFFRON/2nd Vice President (602) 268-9237
 DAVID M. RICHARDS/Chief Financial Officer (714) 839-1916 KAYE BREDEHORST/Corresponding Secretary (703) 281-4136
 VICKI FLETCHER/Executive Secretary (206) 841-2705

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

Dallas D. Johnson/Northeastern (301) 540-6198 • Chuck Clift/Southeastern (205) 285-6522
 Tony Silva/Mideastern (312) 447-3147 • To be announced/North Central • Rex Kennedy/Western (801) 571-6183
 Dick Dickinson/Northern California (408) 248-1641 • Chris Christman/Southern California (714) 638-1596
 Jeri Wright/Northwest (206) 838-9802 • Roger W. Harlin, DVM/Central (405) 636-1484

LEGAL COUNSEL VICE PRESIDENT

Gary Lilienthal (617) 542-7070

LEGISLATIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Janet Lilienthal (617) 542-7070

STATE COORDINATORS

Amy Worell, DVM/State Coordinator Chairman (818) 704-0223

ALABAMA Horace Gardner (205) 874-7937	KENTUCKY Thomas B. Angel, Jr., DVM (606) 371-4929	OHIO Michaelen Rogers (419) 639-3673
ALASKA Jim Bauman (907) 334-0623	LOUISIANA	OKLAHOMA
ARIZONA Sunny Clarkson (602) 943-0614	MAINE Archie Fairbrother (207) 394-2252	OREGON Kay Mahi (503) 543-6042
ARKANSAS	MARYLAND Roddy Gabel (301) 585-9647	PENNSYLVANIA Brenda Geesey (717) 854-2604
CALIFORNIA (NORTH) Laurella Desborough (415) 372-6174	MASSACHUSETTS Glenn Talbot (617) 651-0139	RHODE ISLAND
CALIFORNIA (SOUTH) Aletta M. Long (213) 596-7429	MICHIGAN Glen Pace (313) 687-2512	SOUTH CAROLINA
COLORADO Susan Baker (303) 223-2452	MINNESOTA Gary Michael (612) 588-5652	SOUTH DAKOTA
CONNECTICUT Walter J. Willoughby (203) 528-7296	MISSISSIPPI Jerry Pace (601) 781-2364	TENNESSEE Deborah Dorsey (615) 865-2941
DELAWARE Diane Korolog (302) 762-0819	MISSOURI Gus Piros (314) 837-3063	TEXAS (NORTH)
FLORIDA (NORTH) Chuck Saffell (813) 722-0997	MONTANA	TEXAS (SOUTH) Jack Clinton-Etniere (512) 828-5306
FLORIDA (SOUTH) Mrs. M. Simmons (305) 772-2632	NEBRASKA Robert G. Travnick (402) 821-2490	UTAH
GEORGIA	NEVADA	VERMONT Sebastian Lousada (802) 685-7724
HAWAII	NEW HAMPSHIRE F. Lawrence Brandt (603) 642-5074	VIRGINIA Carole Wheeler (703) 323-5048
IDAHO	NEW JERSEY Carol Bauer (201) 662-1400	WASHINGTON Mike Wong (206) 244-8468
ILLINOIS Ken Newby (618) 259-5453	NEW MEXICO	WASHINGTON, D.C. Ruth Hanessian (301) 424-PETS
INDIANA	NEW YORK Paul Gildersleeve (516) 922-1169	WEST VIRGINIA Patty Knoblauch (304) 725-6601
IOWA	NORTH CAROLINA R. M. Mack Long (919) 674-9328	WISCONSIN Greg Schauer (414) 629-9292
KANSAS Hal Prester (316) 788-4505	NORTH DAKOTA	WYOMING

SCHEDULE FOR AFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Mark these dates and plan to attend!

February 12-15, 1988
 San Diego, California Bahia Resort Hotel
 Winter Regional Meeting
 Janice Pritchard, Chairperson (619) 442-1164

August 2 thru 7, 1988
 Tampa, Florida — Hyatt Regency
 14th Annual Convention
 Phyllis Martin, Chairperson (813) 839-4751

COMMERCIAL MEMBERS

Animal Environments, Carlsbad, CA
 Animal Exchange, Rockville, MD
 Auerhahn Ranch, Boerne, TX
 John Ball Zoological Park, Grand Rapids, MI
 Bio-Pak Associates, Farmingdale, NJ
 Birdcraft, Inc., Coconut Grove, FL
 Burke's Birds, San Bernardino, CA
 Crofton Animal Hospital, Gambrells, MD
 East Coast Avaries, Inc., Conway, SC
 Fins, Furs, 'n' Feathers, Boca Raton, FL
 Hagen Avicultural Research Institute, Rockwood, Ontario, Canada

House of Tropicals, Glen Burnie, MD
 Kaytee Products, Inc., Chilton, WI
 Kellogg, Inc., Milwaukee, WI
 Key Kritters, Inc., Key Largo, FL
 Magnolia Bird Farm, Anaheim, CA
 Michael's Bird Paradise, Inc., Riviera Beach, FL
 Nekton U.S.A., Inc., St. Petersburg, FL
 Parrot Jungle, Inc., Miami, FL
 Pet Farm, Inc., Miami, FL
 Pete 'n' Such, Erlanger, KY
 Petland—White Flint Plaza, Kensington, MD
 Pritchard Bookkeeping Service, El Cajon, CA

Reliable Protein Products, Studio City, CA
 Roff C. Hagen, Inc., St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada
 Safari City Pets, Seattle, WA
 Scarlet Oak Avaries, Glenwillow, OH
 Scooter's Pet Shop, Novato, CA
 Tarmy's Landing, Kernville, CA
 The Feather Connection, Miami, FL
 The Perco Companies, Houston, TX
 The Pet Ranch, Jamul, CA
 Valentine Equipment Company, Hinsdale, IL
 Vivigen, Inc., Santa Fe, NM
 Your Basic Bird, Berkeley, CA

sure every morning to rise early and investigate the area before we departed. But there were no Gouldians in sight. I did see flocks of zebra and owl finches however. We continued our travel west-bound via the "outback" on Highway 1 through Georgetown, Croydon, Normanton, and finally reached Karumba. Karumba is located on the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria and is Australia's prawn (large shrimp) fishing capital. Karumba is Australia's equivalent to the outpost towns of the Amazon and, despite its modern amenities, still has that "far away" frontier feeling.

After spending a very restful night, I got up very early. This was also Gouldian territory, and there was hope of seeing them. When I left the lodge it was still dark, but as I walked through the town the day began to break. Suddenly, a flock of large birds that appeared to be pigeons landed in the street. My first thought was, "Pigeons! I can see them back home every day." As I approached the birds they flew away, and then I realized they were not pigeons but crimson-winged parrots (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*). They landed in nearby trees, and I was able to photograph some. I hoped to see Gouldians, but had no luck.

We left the same morning and rode all day through the outback. The route went through Normanton, Burketown and Cloncurry. This is the area where the Cloncurry parrot (*Barnardius barnardi macgillivrayi*) lives. Joe was very interested in seeing this bird, but unfortunately we didn't see any! After many miles of desert-like scenery, low bush, and many ant hills, we reached Mount Isa. The town is a comparative oasis in the wilderness. After a good night of rest, we embarked on another day of travel through the desert. In the morning we crossed the border from Queensland into Northern Territory, and by evening we reached Tennant Creek. The Northern Territory is the least populated and the most barren area of Australia. I enjoyed the vast empty spaces, a welcome site after leaving crowded Los Angeles. Australia's total population is about 15 million; Los Angeles and its suburbs have about the same!

My early morning walk through the back streets of Tennant Creek provided several sightings of zebra finches. No Gouldian finches yet. After a good breakfast at the motel (by the way, Australians know how to serve a good breakfast; we always had a choice of bacon and eggs, cooked cereals, dry

cereals, orange juice, coffee or tea), we left and headed northward through Eliot and Larrimah to Katherine. This stretch of travel took us through miles and miles of low bush and grass land. Some short stretches of highway were not paved yet.

We observed flocks of different cockatoos. As we approached Katherine and the landscape became more forested, we were privileged to see many red-tailed black cockatoos (*Calyptrorhynchus magnificus*). I was able to approach them fairly close and take several pictures. This spectacular bird is an impressive sight. I have no words to express the joy I felt observing these birds in their natural habitat. This is also Gouldian territory, but still none were to be found.

In the late afternoon we arrived in Katherine in time to watch a flock of sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*) feeding in the trees right in front of our motel. Joe was always quick and ready to give me the monetary value of what we were observing, which was always in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the same place, we watched flocks of chestnut-breasted finches, but no Gouldians yet.

From Katherine we drove north to Darwin, where our tour ended. With only one day before we were to fly back to Sydney, we rented a car in Darwin and investigated the nearby area in hopes of finding the Gouldians. We desperately drove around in the outskirts of Darwin, but to our disappointment, we never saw one Gouldian finch. We flew back to Sydney, and the next day we boarded our plane back to Los Angeles.

Both Joe and I enjoyed this trip tremendously, but it left me with a feeling of unfinished business. I must return to Australia to see Gouldians! I am planning a group tour this year in July-August. It would be nice to share the trip with a bunch of "bird people," and the larger the group the less expensive it would be. The approximate cost of a 15-day land tour would be \$1500. The main portion of the tour would be Northern Territory, Darwin, and Kakadu National Park. If any of you are interested in this unforgettable adventure and wish to experience nature at its best, please write to:

San Pedro Travel
attn. Tony Bucci
2438 S. Western Avenue
San Pedro, Ca. 90732
(213) 833-5265

We will send you a detailed itinerary, the cost, and information of what to do.

Aviculture is Conservation too...

Name: Bali Mynah (starling), *Leucopsar rothschildi*

Range: Northeastern forest of the island of Bali, Indonesia

Status in the Wild: Fewer than 200 birds

Status in Captivity: 492 specimens in 66 institutions and 8 private collections

Conservation Action: 40 specimens from North American population are to be sent to the Surabaya Zoo, Indonesia as part of a captive breeding/release program.

Support the AFA Conservation Fund

Send your tax deductible contributions to:

AFA Conservation Fund
American Federation of Aviculture
P.O. Box 1568,
Redondo Beach,
California 90278 U.S.A.

