



The Watchbird offers free publicity for member club bird shows by announcing the dates and locations of the shows. To have your show listed it is necessary to get the data to the Watchbird four to five months before the show date. For example, if your show takes place the first week of October, it should be listed in the August/September issue. The deadline for that issue is June 1st. (Copy/article deadline is two months preceding publication date.)

**Santa Clara Valley Canary and Exotic Bird Club**  
announces their  
**Annual Bird Show**

**November 25, 26, 27, 1988**  
Peterson Junior High School  
Poplar Avenue (off El Camino Real)  
Sunnyvale, California  
Show will be open to  
the public Sunday, 27th.  
For information contact:  
Naomi Cisper, (408) 241-0617  
1066 Mitchell Court,  
San Jose, CA 95128

**Aviary Association of Kern**  
**14th Annual Bird Show**  
**December 3, 1988**

at the  
Kern County Fairgrounds  
1142 South "P" Street, Bakersfield  
For more information:  
Bill Novickas, Show Manager  
(805) 589-2081

**Greater Memphis Bird Club**  
will host  
**Feather Fair**  
**May 13-14, 1989**

at the  
Memphis Radisson Hotel  
Memphis, Tennessee  
For information contact:  
Mrs. J.W. Higgins, (901) 476-0736  
463-B Rt. 1, Brighton, TN 38011



**AVICULTURAL SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND**

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# Veterinary Viewpoints

edited by Amy Worell, D.M.V.  
Woodland Hills, California

*Editor's Note: The AFA is very pleased to present a new series of columns called Veterinary Viewpoints, edited by Amy Worell, D.V.M. Dr. Worell was graduated from Auburn University with a D.V.M. degree, with honors. She has practiced in southern California for the last six years where she sees a large number of avian patients. She has a special interest in pediatrics and nutrition and, as an aviculturist, is currently working with nine species of cockatoos, African gray parrots, scarlet macaws, and pionus parrots. Dr. Worell is active in a number of professional associations and is a frequent lecturer on avian medicine.*

*A unique thing about Veterinary Viewpoints is that a number of veterinarians are consulted and a broad spectrum of viewpoints are presented. You won't get just one veterinarian's opinion. No single vet can know all about everything so Dr. Worell will solicit answers from various vets. This way we hope to get the best answers from the best people on any given subject.*

*If there is anything you'd like to know about avian medicine, nutrition, even husbandry or anything else, please send your questions to Veterinary Viewpoints, P.O. Box 1568, Redondo Beach, Ca 90278.*

**Question:** We have been using a major brand commercial hand feeding formula this year and the babies' crops get like cement, and have to be cleaned out. Lots of babies died and the manufacturer takes no blame. How many formulas work for baby Amazons and what is the best hand feeding formula for baby Amazons?  
*J. Deighan, Pennsylvania*

**Answer:** I have been hand feeding Amazons for several years, and so will relate to you the diet that I have found to be successful. I have had excellent results and none of the "rock in the crop syndrome" to which you elude. I use several different types of the

Gerber's baby food that is available in jars. I just mix these together and feed the babies. I always include at least one strained meat and then add a variety of vegetables. I like this formula as the consistency is constant, and the solid to liquid ratio works well for babies. In addition, this method of feeding babies is both convenient and inexpensive.

*Roger Harlin, DVM,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

**Answer:** A well balanced, nutritionally complete, palatable and highly digestible diet is the ideal for hand feeding infant birds. Numerous commercial products are currently available as well as "home recipes." Most of these will be satisfactory although nothing is quite like being fed by Mom and Dad.

Problems can arise when hand feeding infants. Hardening of the crop contents is a common problem. The causes are many. Infections of the digestive tract or any other condition which slows the passage of food may predispose the bird to a crop impaction. Improperly prepared food, rather than type or brand, may contribute to the problem. It would be appropriate to consult with your veterinarian to evaluate if underlying infection or other conditions are the primary cause of an impacted crop.

It would also be appropriate to maintain high standards of sanitation in the facility caring for young birds including all equipment used to prepare, feed and store formulas. Last, one should remember an adequate volume of fluids is needed by a bird each day. Fluids supplied in the formula are absorbed from the digestive tract to supply the body's needs. There must also be adequate water present to keep the contents of the tract in a semi-solid or liquid consistency.

In the absence of underlying medical problems, the most common cause of hardening of crop contents is simply not adding enough fluid to the formula.

*James Harris, DVM,  
Oakland, California*

**Question:** I keep both exotic parrots and pigeons in my back yard. Recently, I attended a talk where mention was made of the parrots catching diseases from the pigeons and dying. I am quite concerned but do not want to sell any of my birds. If the birds are kept in separate areas of my yard, is that sufficient to prevent these diseases?

*F. Hills, Texas*

**Answer:** Separate areas are a help, but you can do more. There are a number of diseases that might be spread from pigeon to parrot. Salmonella (typhoid), chlamydia, tuberculosis and some yeasts are diseases possibly spread from bird to bird. In addition to separation, I would also suggest good sanitation, easily cleaned cages and housing, as well as an evaluation by your veterinarian for the presence of any potential disease that may be present.

Last, remember that wild birds are a potential source of infection and efforts need to be made to limit exposure of captive birds to both wild birds and their droppings.

*James Harris, DVM,  
Oakland, California*

**Answer:** I keep hookbills, waterfowl, and pigeons in my backyard and have had no problems with disease outbreaks amongst my birds. I suggest, when servicing your birds, that the parrots be taken care of first and then the pigeons. The disease that comes to mind immediately when talking about these two types of birds is chlamydia. This disease, commonly called parrot fever, affects parrots and pigeons differently, as the strains affecting these two species is different. Pigeons are basically resistant to the disease, and often will develop only a one eyed cold. Parrots, on the other hand, can show a variety of symptoms, and it is often fatal in these birds. Feral pigeons may infect either your parrots or your pigeons and, therefore, contact with your birds needs to be avoided.

*Roger Harlin, DVM,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

**Question:** I recently have had a scarlet macaw go through what was diagnosed as hepatitis after receiving an avian panel blood test. You never see articles on hepatitis in birds and I haven't been able to find much about it. I realize there are different kinds. I would appreciate information on the subject.

In Rosemary Low's *Parrots, Their Care and Breeding*, she mentions a veterinarian she knew associated mold on peanuts to be related to liver damage in macaws.

*K. Lostetter, New Mexico*

**Answer:** Hepatitis, by definition, refers to an inflammation of the liver. The causes of hepatitis are many, both in birds and in mammals. These include insult to the liver cells from such agents as toxins, viruses, bacteria, parasites, chlamydia psittaci, and trauma. Recent research with pigeons demonstrated that lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) was the most sensitive indicator of liver cell damage. LDH is an enzyme which is released by the liver upon insult, and is commonly assayed on routine avian blood panels.

Definitive diagnosis of the cause of hepatitis is not always possible. Liver biopsy, which involves removing a small amount of the liver tissue for microbiological and histopathological analysis, often will demonstrate the cause of the liver inflammation. On occasion, though, the offending agent is no longer detectable in the liver sample or the part of the liver which is affected was not sampled, and thus no etiological agent can be demonstrated. A liver biopsy should be considered, though, in those birds which do not respond with appropriate therapy.

Certain strains of fungi are capable of producing mycotoxins or toxic fungal metabolites. Cultivated grains and stored feedstuffs may become exposed to these fungi, either during the growth stages of the plant or after it has been harvested. Certain strains of the fungus *Aspergillus* are capable of producing a type of mycotoxin called an aflatoxin. These aflatoxins may be hepatotoxic, in other words, produce a toxin which will damage the liver cells. Peanuts as well as some cereal grains, cheese, beans, and fruit juices are often involved. Thus, peanuts affected with this type of toxin could very easily result in liver damage in any bird.

*Amy Worell, DVM,  
Woodland Hills, California*

## The Avicultural Society of America, Inc., Welcomes new members.



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**June / July '89**

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**Oct / Nov '89**

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**Dec / Jan '90**

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