

Showing Cockatiels for the Novice

by Malinda M. Pope, Tampa, Florida

Many first-time visitors to my home are amazed. First, at the cages, feed dishes, show boxes and cockatiel collection. Second, at the plaques, trophies, certificates and ribbons that hang from odd corners and shelves around the birdroom. Invariably, they will ask, "How did you ever get involved with bird shows?" and "how did you learn what to do?"

Concerning the question of "how did you get involved?", we all have different stories concerning our initial contact with birds and how we each progressed into breeding birds to meet specific standards for exhibition. But, showing is not only the breeding and exhibiting of the birds, it is also the competition, seeing old friends, and talking "birds" with others who will listen for hours as we describe problems in the nestbox and the latest baby bird that is sure to make the "Top Bench". We come back year after year as we strive for championship points and the renewal of friendships.

The second question of "how did you learn what to do," baffles many "would-be" exhibitors. What if you've never been to a show, much less entered one? Just getting started is a tremendous obstacle for many people.

Personally, I was fortunate in that I met several exhibitors as I sought out breeding stock in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They were able to direct me to publications and local clubs that provided information on shows in my area. I began as an exhibitor of society and zebra finches. Since there were no required show boxes at that time, my cages were all wire cages (bought from the local wholesale outlet) that I painted black. I gained valuable experience those first years as I attended several shows and learned the procedures of exhibiting. Eventually, I entered a single cockatiel, along with my finches and exotics, and became "hooked" on the cockatiel. By the time the American Cockatiel Society established show box requirements, I had gained enough experience to locate show box builders and plan for the needs of the next show season.

For the sake of simplicity, let's assume that you have never entered a bird show, but think they sound like something you would like to be

involved with. First, look for show listings in bird publications. Examples would be those listings that appear in local club bulletins, *Bird World Magazine*, *ACS Magazine*, etc. The listings usually give the date and time of the show, location, and a person to contact for additional information. More show dates will appear as the time for show season approaches (usually, you will see notices beginning in April or May for the fall shows). Once you have found a show to attend, you can decide to go to the show to observe and learn, or you can decide to "jump right in" and enter a bird.

Now that the American Cockatiel Society (ACS) has a novice division, it is easy to get started. You do not need a standard show box and you will be competing against others who are relatively new to showing. You will learn more by actually having a bird in competition than by just watching.

Once you have made the decision

to enter a show, you need to begin thinking about getting your bird ready. Eight to ten weeks before "showtime," examine the bird closely. If tail feathers are rough or broken, remove them at this time. Some exhibitors remove all the tail feathers. If you are going to be training more than one bird, separate them according to sex. Put no more than four birds in a cage 2' x 2' x 4' or use flights. Some exhibitors feel the birds gain a little extra weight (that is needed) if put in smaller cages.

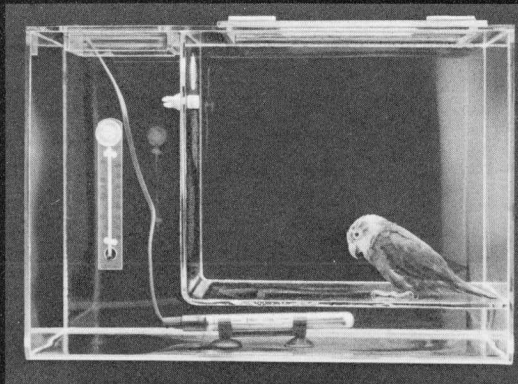
Since you have (hopefully) been feeding a good diet, now is the time to supplement in preparation for show season. Corn is great. It can be purchased from an animal feed store as whole grain, dry corn. Cook for about 12 hours on low, in a crock pot. Wheat bread, oat groats, raw shelled peanuts, hemp and spray millet are all good additions to the diet.

Now is the time to start cage training. Begin training and conditioning no later than July for the fall shows.

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Start by putting your bird in the cage you will use every four or five days. Have visitors, neighbors, etc., talk to the bird. Your bird will not be familiar with the judge and must learn to be calm around strangers. Increase the number of days in the show cage to three times a week until you feel that the bird is comfortable. When trained, you will only need to return the bird to its show cage once or twice a week until the show. The week before the show, do not show train your bird. He should be in his regular cage putting on weight (the show will take a lot out of your bird).

About six weeks before the first show, start misting your bird with tepid water until it is soaked. Spray the bird several times a week until the water begins to bead up and roll off the feathers. Water will not soak into the feathers of a conditioned bird. Once conditioned, continue to mist your bird two or three times a week.

Before heading to your first show, prepare an "emergency" kit. Include a piece of sandpaper (to clean perches), an extra water tube or dish, a small container of water from home, a small bag of cockatiel mix and a small net. These things come in handy. Make sure your cage is *clean* and there is cockatiel mix covering the bottom of the cage. Place a small container of water in the cage and fill it no more than 1/2 full. That will be enough water and it will not spill as much as a full container. Standard waterers may be left inside the cages, but many exhibitors prefer to remove water containers before entering the bird in the show. Otherwise, the bird may drag his tail through the water and then through the seed, resulting in a very messy bird!

If possible, try to have a box-type cage or borrow a standard ACS show cage. The birds really do "show" better in these boxes than in pet cages. You can make a plywood cage that looks similar to a standard show box, if you can't locate one. The dimensions for an ACS show cage are 17" high, 18" wide and 10" deep and have two 3/4" dowels perpendicular to the front. The inside color is a light blue semi-gloss and the outside is a black high-gloss paint.

One more thing. Your bird does not have to be banded in order to compete. It cannot receive championship points (there is no way to positively identify the bird without a

closed band), but it can receive awards.

Once you arrive at the show location, there will be other "cockatiel people" there to help you. Please ask! They will be busy and may not recognize a "newcomer" right away. Take your bird to the table indicated for cockatiels. The person at the table will ask you if you are a novice or an advanced exhibitor. If this is your first show, you are definitely a "novice." You will also be asked how many show tags you want. You need one tag for each bird (one bird to a cage). The tags are usually around \$1.00 each. You will receive your show tags, a show catalog, and two copies of a show form. Fill out the show tag and forms. If you are confused as to what is being asked, consult your show catalog and *ask for help*.

The show tag will be attached to your cockatiel's cage. One copy of the completed show form will be returned to the person at the cockatiel table. Your bird will then be taken back with the other cockatiels, your forms will be marked that the bird was received (you keep the other copy of the form) and you sit down to wait, visit, etc. The fun has just begun!

After the show, give the steward your copy of the show form and your bird will be brought to you. By now, we hope you have been "hooked" and will be with the rest of us at the next show!

If you do feel that exhibiting is for you, it is best to join an organized society (if you have not already done so). The American Cockatiel Society offers a written booklet, "The ACS Standard of Perfection" that details show procedures including the show standard/point standard that judges use, the ACS show cage description, rules/regulations for champion and grand champion cockatiels, how to fill out a show tag, etc. Also, all new members receive the "Basic Cockatiel Information" booklet that gives information on banding chicks, where to get show boxes, management, etc. For those interested, write: ACS, P.O. Box 111, Marlin, TX 76661.

Once a member of a society, resources will be available to you in the form of regional representatives, state representatives, and club representatives from your area. Take advantage of these resources, come to the shows, and join us in the fun! ●

Kellogg Announces Trophy Winners

Photo courtesy of Kellogg, Inc.



Wayne Davis (right) of Tampa, Florida was awarded the 1991 Scannell Trophy for "The Best Bird in Show." This award was sponsored by Kellogg, Inc., Seeds and Supplies. Pictured with Mr. Davis is Conrad Meinert (left), hookbill judge and John Ulrich (center), Manager Cage Bird Products, Kellogg, Inc. This presentation took place at the 43rd Annual National Cage Bird Show held November 14-16, 1991 in Dearborn, Michigan.

Kellogg Inc., Seeds and Supplies presented its prestigious award, The Kellogg, at the 43rd Annual National Cage Bird Show held November 14-16, 1991 in Dearborn, Michigan. The Kellogg tribute is granted annually to the "Best in Division" in 13 cage bird categories. Participants from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico delighted the audience and judges with their beautifully colored, magnificent birds at this year's impressive show. Selected as the most outstanding cage birds from a field of over 600 exhibitors, the 1991 Kellogg trophy winners, by division, are:

Type	Winner
Border Canary	Steve & Linda Howarth
Gloster Canary	Jan Stachurski
Best Type Canary	Lewis & Ellen Shelton
Old Varieties Canary.....	Dr. Mac Saedi
Hartz Canary	Dorothy Ziegler
Lipochrome Colorbred	
Canary	Jesus Hernandez
Melanin Colorbred	
Canary	Bequer Aviaries
American Singer	
Canary	Dawn LeDuc
Finches & Softbills	Jacke Hoekstra
Hookbills	Wayne Davis
Lovebirds	Jean & Karl Wiley

Budgerigars Richard Felski
Cockatiels Carl Helton

The 1991 Scannell Trophy for "The Best Bird in Show," sponsored by Kellogg, was awarded to Wayne Davis of Tampa, Florida.

Plans are currently underway for future National Cage Bird Shows to be held in Oklahoma city, OK, in 1992, and in Houston, TX, in 1993.

Kellogg was instrumental in the National Cage Bird Show's inception in 1948 and donates The Kellogg trophy yearly to the most outstanding cage birds. An award synonymous with excellence, The Kellogg has played a dominant role in the development of bird breeding and exhibition worldwide.

Kellogg Inc., Seeds & Supplies introduced scientifically formulated cage bird food over 50 years ago after their extensive research disclosed the special nutritional needs of cage birds. Kellogg is highly respected in the industry for its products' superior performance in field tests, as well as the impressive results cage bird owners and breeders experience from the use of Kellogg products.

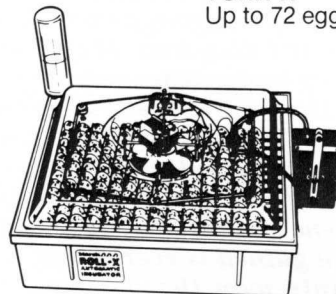
For more information about the National Cage Bird Show, The Kellogg trophy or any of Kellogg's fine products, contact John Ulrich, Manager - Cage Bird Products, at 1-800-627-5495. ●

Marsh Farms INCUBATORS

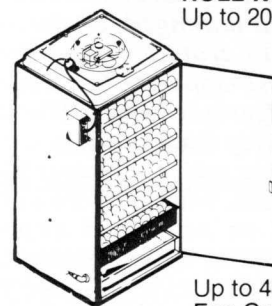
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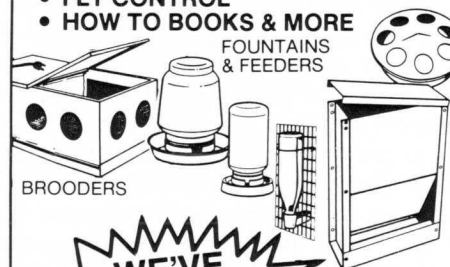
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