

It's Showtime For Birds!

by Ginger Wolnik
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Is my bird better than your bird? There is only one fair way to answer such a question: put the birds in similar cages and let an impartial judge decide! Bird breeders, hobbyists, and pet owners have participated in bird shows for years. Unlike bird fairs and expos, real shows emphasize judging, not selling. The winners are usually experienced exhibitors, but a novice with a well cared for pet also has a chance. Many shows have special awards for novices in order to encourage new people to enter.

Bird shows are sponsored by clubs, although not all clubs put on a real show. The best shows bring in judges from all around the country. These men and women are certified by a national organization specializing in a particular breed. For example, hook-bill standards are set by the Society of Parrot Breeders and Exhibitors. Some other societies are: National Cockatiel Society, American Budgerigar Society, National Colorbred Canary Society, and the National Finch and Softbill Society.

Many societies have standards for show cages. The sponsoring clubs usually have members that can lend or sell these cages to novices, or advise on how to build them. Plain, unmarked cages are used for larger parrots so as to not distract from the bird or identify its owner.

Bird shows are usually held on weekends in the fall. Registration for entries is usually on Friday and early Saturday morning. The fee is typically \$1.50 per bird. A numbered tag is attached to each cage and the show secretary records the owner for each number. The show catalog lists all the categories and rules. Copies of the catalog are available in advance from the sponsoring club.

Judging is done on Saturday and can take most of the day. Some shows allow the public to watch the judging. Exhibitors are always allowed to watch, but they must remain quiet and not let the judge know whose birds he

or she is looking at. A good judge will tell the audience what is correct and what is a fault. For each category, ribbons or rosettes are attached to the winning cages and the cage tag numbers are recorded. An awards banquet is held on Saturday night and the owners of the winners are announced. Trophies and plaques are also given to the winners at the banquet.

Most shows are open to the public on Sunday. The club might hold an auction or raffle to help pay the show expenses. A sales area may be set up for the exhibitors to sell birds to the public. This provides an opportunity to buy good birds directly from the breeder. Some shows have a few vendors that sell supplies, but most of the floor space is devoted to exhibiting birds. Most shows end early Sunday

afternoon to allow time for out-of-town participants to drive home.

If you are interested in exhibiting, get a copy of the show catalog as soon as possible. Better yet, join a show-sponsoring club, attend meetings, and ask lots of questions.

If you are interested in just attending a show, contact the sponsoring club and ask when it will be open to the public. The most educational part is watching the judging, but the main reason to attend a show is to view the birds. Where else can you see hundreds of superb specimens of large and small parrots, canaries, and finches in one room! You will find many breeds and species not commonly seen in pet shops or zoos. Best of all, they will all be beautiful, healthy specimens in full feather! ●

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REGISTRATION:

Full: \$135. includes 3 meals; add \$20. for reg'n at the door

Basic: \$75. for 2 days (meals not included); add \$20. for reg'n at the door

\$40. for 1 day (meals not included); add \$10. for reg'n at the door

**Meals: Saturday - lunch \$25. dinner \$35
Sunday - lunch \$25**

PROCEEDINGS:	1993	1992	1991	1990
at door	\$15.	\$10.	\$10.	\$5.
*by mail	\$20.	\$15.	\$15.	\$10.

* discount \$5. for 2 or more

EXHIBITOR INQUIRIES INVITED

INFORMATION/PAYMENT: (cheque or visa)

**Canadian Parrot Symposium
108 Meadowvale Road, West Hill, Ontario CANADA M1C 1S1
tel: Jacque 416-282-5997**

**Hosted by The Canadian Parrot Symposium
Directors: Silvio Mattacchione and Jacque Blackburn**