

breeding the Grey-cheeked Parakeet

by Jose Aleman
Orlando, Florida

We started collecting individual Grey-cheeked Parakeets from different sources back in 1985. Some came from a quarantine station in Miami, others we bought from local club members and individuals. We were lucky enough to end up with three pairs, which a friend pelvic sexed for us.

At that time we were holding hundreds of wild-caught imported finches in an outside aviary that measured 12' x 12' and 6' tall. In a corner of this enclosure I built a stack of three cages measuring 2' x 2' x 2', each cage stacked one on top of the other. Feeding and watering was accomplished through the outside. A hinged door covered with plexiglass kept the rain and the wind away from the cages. The nest boxes were serviced and inspected from inside of this large aviary and we decided to use lovebird nesting boxes with pine shavings as nesting material.

The daily diet consisted of fresh water, cockatiel seed mix and diced fruits and vegetables, mineral grit and calcium block. It took several months for the birds to come into breeding condition and they started producing during December, January, February, March and April, and every year after they always bred during the cold months. It seems to me that the cold weather forced them into their breeding boxes. Also, since the size of their cages was kind of small they may have been motivated to breed due to the fact that it was their only entertainment.

Through the next three years, we produced a total of 26 babies which we sold to pet stores and breeders. We banded all of the babies with the SPBE bands starting with 001 thru 026. We kept the last baby produced which was hatched late during summer of 1988. This bird is our pet named "Peeper" due to the constant "peep, peep" that he called all during the handfeeding period. This bird was fed Roudybush Brand H/F Formula.

Peeper's vocabulary consists of

"What you doing? Hi! Nite...nite Peeper, Hush right now! Out! Jose," and the telephone ring! He is our pride and joy. He is tame with my wife and also with me and we handle him on a daily basis, early morning and late at night. We keep him on the kitchen counter next to the phone, in a cockatiel size cage.

As for the three breeding pairs, we sold them in February of '89 to a breeder who set them up to breed again. At the present time Grey-cheekeds are selling for three times as much as they cost during the '80s, and the demand for them is astronomical due to the fact they make one of the greatest pet birds ever. ●

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Estrildian Research Project

This is an international project sponsored by the Estrildid Forum for the purpose of carrying out one of the primary goals of the Forum, namely the bringing together of the researcher and the serious breeder! Anyone noticing any unusual or significant finch behavior, such as postures, nest building, calls, etc., should document this in the form of video and/or audio recordings, photographs, notes, etc., and send to the: Estrildid Forum, c/o Stash Buckley and Carol Anne Calvin, 215 W. Washington Ave., Magnolia, New Jersey 08049-1703, USA. Phone: (609) 783-2039. The material will be collected and sent to Dr. Luis Baptista for analysis and publication in *The Estrildian*, the journal of the Estrildid Forum. The *Watchbird* magazine will also have access to this information. ●

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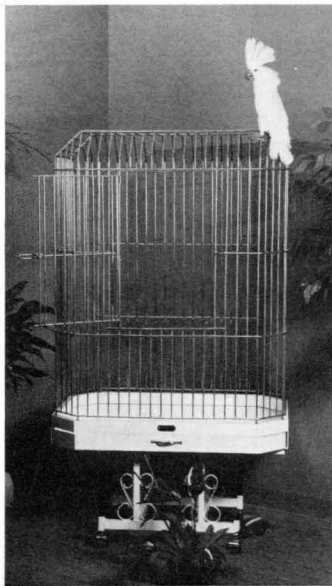
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