

**“CHIRP & SQUAWK”
NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2010**

Patron	Shirley Allerby	President	June Simpson	Telephone	(04) 904 2330
Vice Patron	Roy Allerby	Treasurer	Don McAlpine	Telephone	(06) 364 7067
		Vice President	Bill Witham	Telephone	(04) 905 8784
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Beverly Grant	Telephone	(04) 9049133	Denise Mundy	Telephone (04) 902 0697
	Jan Killalea	Telephone	(04) 2983333	Joss Hicks	Telephone (04) 9050951

NEXT CLUB NIGHT:

WEDNESDAY 11th NOVEMBER 2009

TIME: 7.30. PM Please be on time

WHERE: Community Centre, Ngahina Street, Paraparaumu

GUEST SPEAKER: This month we have Annette Smith who has worked at the Parrott Farm in Levin. This will be most interesting. I have been to the Farm and found it most interesting. It is a place our Club should visit.

A very Happy New Year to you all. ☺ ☺ ☺ The weather has not been great so if you managed to get away you would have had much better weather than we had here.

I think this had a lot to do with the breeding season as I am sure the birds didn't know whether it was Summer or Winter very confusing!!

My 1st year at breeding with such a lovely aviary and bird room got most frustrating. I thought I was away to a good start, only to have them lay 1 egg or lay all the eggs and then find out all were infertile. One hen had 3 rounds of 4 eggs and all were infertile. At the end of the season I feel pleased with the babies I have got, all I need to find out now is which are the males and females, now I start it all over again with Gouldians.

Our Club is going along very well. I seem to be always sending out subscription forms for new members. It makes our Club Night's more interesting when we end up with about 20 odd people. That number seems to make the hall look full and it is really great when we have Guest Speakers. A lot of work goes into getting guest speakers and there is nothing worse than having a really interesting person come along and we have a hall half empty Perhaps you could bring along a friend or two?

CHRISTMAS DINNER: I know it seems like ages ago but it went really well and the meal was really nice. The Kapiti Club was a really nice venue even though they had a Quiz night there were not many members along and I think a few of us were interested in what was going on.

It is thanks to Bev Grant we had lovely table cloths and Christmas decoration on our tables.

EXHIBITION DAY: This year it will be on the on Saturday 10th April. This is the week before our Club Night so it only gives us 2 months of Club Nights' to bring along something for our Raffle. So if you could all remember to bring along an extra item or two for our February and March Club Nights I am sure we will end up with our usual large basketful of "goodies"
Now is the time to sort out all your "bits and pieces" that you don't need so you can sell them on the day.

BIRD KEEPER MAGAZINE: The committee has decided to renew our subscription again for this year. Please take the time to read these as they have some very interesting articles.

LIBRARY: If you didn't bring your books back in November or if you still have a library book, could you please return them this month so we can do a check. The committee are trying to get this sorted out so we know just what we have. We have such a good selection of books so please make use of them.

BIRD SHOW: I have just received a schedule from the Palmerston North Bird Club

For a Young Bird Show. 2009 CYCR rings only. To be held on Sunday 28th March 2010. Away Birds to be benched by 12 pm. Debenching at 3.30pm. Entry fee 30c per cage. If you are interested please let me know. I will have the schedule's with me on Club Night.

Some pairs will raise five or six, others only two or three, while others, for various reasons, raise none.

It can be very frustrating to have the babies from your best pair die because the parents are not feeding properly, or to have a pair raise just one baby, when babies in a nest of five or six are dying because the parents cannot cope.

There are methods used by experienced fanciers to increase the number raised. You start by keeping careful records and noting birds' performances from previous years or from the first round.

That is not foolproof, because some birds will become ideal parents on their second round or next year. But if it is noted in your records, you will be aware of a possible problem.

Generally older birds are better parents than first year birds.

Basically the way to increase chances is the concept that eggs laid by a bird do not have to be raised by that bird.

EGG SWAPPING: Move the eggs laid by your best pair to a proven or more capable pair of a lesser standard. The eggs from that pair go to your best pair.

That way if the best pair turn out to be bad parents, you only lose average birds, with the best babies raised by the proven parents. That raises chances of getting more babies of better quality.

Some breeders pair birds just for that purpose, as "feeders". The eggs do not have to be moved on the first day of setting, nor do the pairs have to be at the same stage of incubation.

Within a few days of each other is OK, but you must remember to mark your cage card or records with the revised due date. If you are not sure how the parents will perform, you can gamble by moving only half the number of eggs between nests.

That way if one nest fails you have not lost everything. But the birds must have been set on the same day and it is

a help for later identification if the nests are a different variety or colour.

FORCED LAYING: An extension of egg swapping. Move the eggs from your better pairs to feeders and set the better pairs on clear eggs or dummy eggs.

Allow the hen to sit the full 14 days then remove the nest for a day. Return the nest the next day, minus the dummy eggs and provide some new nesting and lining material.

From a week to 10 days the hen will lay another clutch of eggs. Repeat as before, allowing the hen to sit for 14 days and moving the eggs to feeders.

That way you can obtain three settings of eggs from your best pair in the time it normally takes to raise two.

But don't get greedy and demand too many settings from the hen, because you will probably find she will die during the moult.

Having done this with a pair, you have now trained that bird that this is what happens during the breeding season and she will probably not expect to raise babies in the following years. That method does have the possibility of increasing the number of fertile eggs.

Sometimes the hen or cock can get so involved with the young that they forget to mate, so the next clutch of eggs is infertile.

With the hen and cock only in the cage together for breeding purposes, fertility can be increased and it is an easy way to manage trios or quartets.

ADDITIONAL EGGS: Some older hens may only lay two or three eggs. To those nests you add an egg or two from

the problem pairs (those that you know are not good parents).

You then don't have to worry about the problem pairs and they can be set to lay another clutch. Again identification of babies can be a problem unless they were from another variety or heavily variegated in a nest of clear birds.

INCREASING NUMBERS: Try to set two or three pairs on the same day, even if it means holding back one pair for a day or two. Check the eggs above a light after the eighth sitting day and note the fertile eggs.

For instance, if there are only one or two fertile eggs in one nest and two or three in another, combine the fertile eggs together in one nest and move the infertile eggs to the other.

Choose one pair to raise the babies, while the other pair can be started again after the 14th day. That method best applies to birds of different type or colouring, otherwise you will have difficulty identifying the babies later on. Eggs from several pairs can be combined to fill one nest.

This method can even be done after the babies hatch. Some hens will accept an additional baby or two into the nest without a worry for the first few days after hatching. Transfer babies last thing at night.

ADDITIONAL PAIRS: At the beginning of the season flight cages and weaning cages are usually left empty in readiness for expected youngsters.

Those cages will not be required for

six to eight weeks and in the meantime can be used to house other breeding pairs, such as an experimental pairing, or a pair from the spare cocks and hens, kept in case a breeding bird dies.

The rule here is that you must never set these pairs on their own eggs. The eggs are removed as laid and given to other pairs.

They are replaced by dummy or clear eggs and the hen is allowed to sit out her time.

After the 14th day the nest is removed and returned a few days later with fresh nesting material. A second round of eggs can be taken and transferred to other cages.

By now the cages will be needed for the growing youngsters and the pairs can be broken up and returned to their holding cage or flight.

Eggs will keep for many weeks, but it is advisable to turn the eggs after 10 days.

To keep track it is wise to number each egg, which can be done with a felt tip pen (do not press). When the eggs are checked for fertility you then know what babies to expect.

By using the above methods you will raise more babies, but remember if you do not know how your birds perform you can increase your problems.

If you give five full eggs to a hen that does not feed you lose five instead of gaining five, but with a little forethought and planning you can increase the number of birds raised.

UPPING THE ODDS ON MORE YOUNG CANARIES

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