

Kapiti Bird Club Inc. "Chirp & Squark"



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October 2010 Newsletter
Kapiti Bird Club Inc

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Next club night: Wednesday 13 October
7.30 pm Community Centre, Ngahina St
Paraparaumu

Guest Speaker: Michael Peryer makes a welcome return visit to our club. He is going to tell us what is now happening at the Waikanae Estuary. His book on this subject, after many years of observing the wild life, is in our library.

Breeding Season: By now most will have their birds in the breeding cages hopefully laying eggs or some babies hatched. Lets hope we don't get another couple of weeks in October like we did last year when we got two weeks of bitterly cold winter weather that made some females abandon the nests after laying just 1 or 2 eggs so the first round was a disaster with many infertile eggs. Mine have made really lovely nests but are now just looking as if to say "what do we do next?" I am ever hopeful that at the end of the day things will work out OK. Remember they are all "arranged" marriages, by us, hoping to breed better birds than last year.

Seed Order: We will be doing a seed order next month, last one for this year, so stock up well. You can get the order forms at our November meeting or contact Bill Witham – (04) 905 8784.

Christmas Dinner: I have made a booking for our Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 8th December 2010 at the Kapiti Club. Cost per head is, as last year, \$30 per head. I did try a few other places but the Kapiti Club came out on top with price. We went there last year and most people were happy with the food and service.

Wanted: A large cage or aviary about a meter square, to be used outside to house canaries. If you can help please phone Adele Cherrill on (04) 904 3665

Barbeque: Don McAlpine has bought a 4 burner barbeque plus a full bottle for \$258. The committee will discuss whether club members can hire this from us.

Website: Adam Kake has spent a lot of time to get a Website up and running for us before the rise in GST. The web address is www.kapitibirdclub.org.nz At this stage it will have contacts for President, Secretary and Treasurer and that our Club Nights are on the second Wednesday of the month He will also add our Newsletter each month. If you have any suggestions about what you would like to see on the Website please contact Webmaster Adam Kake (04) 299 0594. The website will also have a link to The New Zealand Federation of Bird Clubs (inc) – their website is www.birdclubs.org.nz

That's it from me, hope to see you all on the 13th October at 7.30 pm

Kindest regards to all

June

June reports some newsletters did not survive the Post Offices sorting machine last time, as some arrived incomplete. I trialed not taping the edges, but it looks like that is no good. Will revert to previous method until the stickers are all used up, then maybe we will use envelopes.

If you don't get your newsletter don't hesitate to ring/email me and I will send another.

Regards Don

Subs

These have been a wee bit slow coming in this year.
(Although two members have paid theirs twice!)

Please post to the Treasurer or give to June on Club night.

Alternatively they can be paid by Direct Credit to the clubs account.

01-0731-0067815-00

Those getting a newsletter delivered will see a subscription status just below your name and address.

Emailed newsletters will have a reminder in the email itself.

The article on the next 2 pages has been reproduced from the recent Federation newsletter

Canary Breeding – some basic principles

Preparation

The usual time to start conditioning canaries is in midwinter and at this time, in addition to their basic seed mixture they should be receiving soft food, condition seed (e.g. niger, rape) and additional supplies of grit plus a little charcoal. The rearing food should be provided twice a week for three months prior to breeding.



Hens should be given as much exercise as possible during this period housed in small groups either in double/triple breeders or in flights. During the three months prior to the breeding season it is wise to dust all birds with an effective mite powder on three separate occasions, the final treatment three weeks before pairing birds together. Many breeders will trim vent feathers of both the hen and cock, to improve the chances of effective mating. Cages are thoroughly cleaned and where necessary repainted, dusted or sprayed to help prevent any mite infestation. Nest felts will need to be purchased and thoroughly treated with mite powder before being sewn into nest pans. A supply of nesting material will also be required (e.g. teased hessian and carpet under-felt), egg boxes, which are used to store eggs prior to incubation must be properly labelled, so that eggs which have been removed cannot be mixed up with those of other hens laying at the same time. It is a good idea to make the layout of the compartments in the egg box match the layout of the breeding cages. The compartments can be filled with plain canary seed which prevents eggs rolling together.

A supply of dummy eggs will also be required. These are used as substitutes for the first three eggs in each clutch, which are then returned to the nest once the fourth egg is laid. This procedure ensures that each chick has an even chance of being successfully reared. A record book should be kept, which details each specific pairing and all the young produced from that pairing. Also required will be a supply of numbered rings which can be used to identify each individual youngster.

Assessing Breeding Fitness

Breeding readiness should be assessed by the condition of the hens. They will start to carry small pieces of nesting material in their beaks or shred paper used to line the floor of breeding cages as the breeding season approaches, but often they will do this a full month before they are actually ready. As their condition improves many will be seen trying to pull feathers from their breasts in order to start building and they will be continually 'calling' to cock birds. The atmosphere in the bird room will become more and more intense as the condition of the birds improves.

Pairing

Each pair should be allocated its own breeding cage, which, in addition to the normal seed and water, should contain an ample supply of grit, a scattering of condition seed, a few pieces of chickweed, two perches, a nest pan complete with nest felt and a small amount of nesting material. *Helpful Hint - when the nest pan is positioned in the cage it is advisable to fix a thin piece of Perspex, or other suitable material, about 12.5 cm square, in between the nest pan and the cage wall. This will help to prevent the cage wall near to the nest pan becoming heavily soiled during the breeding season and therefore make the task of washing out cages later in the year much easier.* Provided conditioning has been done correctly and the birds have not been paired together too soon, pairs should settle quickly and there will be very little fighting between cocks and hens. If one cock bird is mated to more than one hen, he will have to spend time with each partner and should be transferred from breeding cage to breeding cage three or four times each day until eggs are laid.

Nest Building and Egg Laying

As hens start to build they will require additional supplies of nesting material. Some will prefer to build in a different site to the one chosen by their owner. In these cases the nest pan can temporarily be placed on the floor of the cage, in the position the hen has chosen until she lays and begins sitting. At this time the nest pan can be moved back to the position preferred by the bird keeper and in the majority of cases the hen will accept the situation and continue

incubation. Normally hens lay their first eggs seven days after pairing, but of course there are variations. Some hens may lay one or two 'rogue' eggs virtually as soon as they are mated. Provided preparation and diet have been correct, this will cause no problem and these eggs can be discarded immediately. However, eggs laid as soon as four days after pairing can be fertile and these should not be automatically discarded. Once the first egg is laid it should be removed from the nest and placed in the egg box. The hen can then be given a dummy egg as a replacement. Dummy eggs can be used as replacements on a daily basis, but in a large stud it will be more convenient to replace the first egg with two dummy eggs, and then no more additional dummy eggs will be required until it is time to replace the real eggs. Hens should have their real eggs returned on the morning that the fourth egg is laid and the incubation period is counted from this time. The usual incubation period for a canary egg is 13 or 14 days, but can vary from nest to nest.

Hatching

If eggs have not hatched after 16 days' incubation they should be candled to check for fertility. This involves viewing the egg while it is being held in front of a reasonably bright light source. If the egg is fertile, the developing embryo will be seen as a dark area inside the egg through which light cannot pass. If the egg appears clear inside and there is no evidence of an embryo forming, then it is infertile. Clear eggs can be discarded immediately, unless the hen is required as a foster parent, but full eggs, those which contain an embryo, should be replaced and incubation allowed to continue for a further two days. Where eggs have failed to hatch after 18 full days of incubation, they can be discarded and the nest removed for a few days before being replaced to allow the hen to lay a new clutch of eggs. Soft food is provided on the 13th day, together with a sprig of chickweed. As the young grow, the amounts of food supplied will need to increase and if possible fresh food should be provided 3 or 4 times per day. Nests containing youngsters should have the cage floors regularly in case any youngsters have fallen from the nest. If this occurs, even though the chick seems very cold, it will very often revive if warmed up in your hands and breathed on gently for about 5 minutes. Once the warmth has revived the chick it can be placed back in the nest. Ideally breeders should be looking for nests containing three or four youngsters. If fewer than three youngsters hatched, parent birds can have insufficient rearing duties to keep them occupied and they tend to neglect the youngsters. More than 4 youngsters in one nest places too much burden on most parent birds and usually results not being properly fed. Nests and nest pans can become dirty and soiled if they contain healthy young canaries and when they do they should be replaced with a new nest pan. By the time the youngsters are 14 days old they will be feathering up nicely and at 21 days most will have left the nest. Most canaries cannot be weaned from their parents until 25 or 26 days, and some may take longer.

Ringling

Close-ringling canaries at first may seem to be a tricky operation but once the technique is mastered is quite straight forward. Provided canaries are rung at the correct age (8-10days) fanciers should not expect too many problems.

Weaning

The weaning procedure for canaries should start when birds are about 18 days old. The nest pan containing the youngsters should be placed on the cage floor; a fresh nest pan can then be placed in the original nesting site ready for the next clutch of eggs. At this stage the cock will attend to the majority of the feeding duties, allowing the hen to concentrate on the next clutch of eggs. Should the young become a nuisance or start being used as nesting material by the hen, they can be separated from the parent birds by means of a wire slide. This will allow the youngsters to be fed while reducing the interference they may cause and the chances of feather plucking.

While the young are separated from their parents they can also be given their own supply of soft food and chickweed, enabling them to start feeding for themselves. Once youngsters are eating food properly they can be transferred to indoor flight cages/ double or triple breeders. Apart from the soft feed, offered at this time, is a seed mixture of 50% niger seed, 25% rape seed and 25% plain canary seed. As time passes the amount of canary seed in the mixture will be increased gradually and by the time the young are about 10 weeks old the mixture will contain 50 -75% canary seed. Soft food should be given on a frequent basis until they are fully through the moult.

