

Kapiti Bird Club Inc. "Chirp & Squark"



September 2010 Newsletter
Kapiti Bird Club Inc

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Next club night: Wednesday 8 September
7.30 pm Community Centre, Ngahina St
Paraparaumu

Guest Speaker: A guest speaker from Nga Manu Nature Reserve will update us on what is happening at the Reserve now. This is a place we all should visit and perhaps when the weather gets warmer we could go to on a Sunday, have a stroll through the place, then have afternoon tea.

Shows: These are now over for another year. Club member Murray Davey came out first in most shows including the National with his Norwich and Colour Fed Canaries. Our other show members also did very well. For a club that does not have a Judged show just an exhibition we can hold our heads high. We have several members who are judges. If you want to know what to look for in a Show bird these people are more than willing to give advice.

For me, as a first time exhibitor, I could not believe how good one of my Glosters was and how much money one little bird could win. I must also thank members who put themselves out willingly - if you are unable to get to a Show they will take your birds for you. I even got two birds to the National - thanks to Roy and Shirley Allerby. Now it is breeding season and another year to try and breed even better birds for next year's shows.

Vale: It was with sadness we heard of the passing of Thelma Smith. She had not been well for some time and had been in and out of hospital several times but did die at home surrounded by her family. She and Don have been members of the Bird Club for many years. Both have served on the Committee and have always helped out where they can. Many club members attended the funeral. We wish Don all the best for the future. The club sends sympathies to the family of John Crunkhorn who died last month.

Federation Newsletter: If you don't already receive this, written by Stephen Silk, and you have a computer, it is well worth receiving as it has some really good articles in it and some are a little bit too long to print in our newsletter. If you e-mail Stephen at silkfamily@paradise.net.nz he will add you to the list. They come out every two months.

Subscriptions: These were due in by the end of August and should be paid by the end of October. I will have a few forms at next month's meeting if you have lost yours. We have a cut off date - if not paid by the end of September you will not receive any more newsletters starting October. For members wanting to Direct Credit, the clubs account number is 01-0731-0067815-00. Put your surname in the reference part. Subscriptions can be given to me or Don on club night or posted to Mr D McAlpine, 31 Atmore Avenue, Otaki.

That's it from me for another month. Kindest regards to all

June

Soon it will be Breeding Time

By Monty Wright

The winter has been a long one for some areas, but as we clean the show cages and put them away till the club young bird show next autumn it is time to look forward to the new breeding season. Unfortunately, if spring arrives late, as it did last season, it often means that we don't have the breeding success we all want until early in the New Year. If things go wrong and we have mixed results in the first round often we can't catch up. Therefore we need to do everything we can to ensure that if we do have a successful season by capitalising on every opportunity we have, to breed as many youngsters as possible in the first round. During any season we all get nests where only one or two youngsters hatch and it almost seems a waste of the hen's time to spend three weeks feeding a single chick when she could be on a more successful second round. For this reason it is often to your advantage to hold some eggs back for two or three days so you can set three or four hens at the same time. This is all right if you have several pairs of birds, but this is not always the case if you are a small breeder with only five or six pair.

With several pairs hatching at the same time it allows you to move the singles or couples to other nest and reintroduce the cock for the second round. The hen will then go about her domestic duties again and hopefully lay another clutch of eggs. When moving chicks mark under the wing with marker pen and record it on the card that has all the parents' details and information about the family on it. This allows you to place the correct closed ring on the chick for future reference. Some breeders feel that these short cycles can tire a hen, but egg-laying does not usually exhaust the hen as long as she has received a good soft food mix before laying. Rearing a nest of youngsters is much more demanding on the hen, and it is often better to reintroduce the cock to assist as soon as possible after the chicks are rung. Some hens don't mind this but others will. Each hen has its own personality and this is something you have to learn from your own stock. Write these things down on your breeding notes for the future; it saves a lot of trouble. I suggest that if you allow the parents to rear the last round if possible. This will fulfil the natural desires to complete a full breeding cycle and not breed out of the birds the need to rear as well as lay.

Over the years I have tried to put young hens as close to where they were bred in the breeding room. This will often give a young hen better security than putting her in a different place in the bird room. This is using the record books again. I can't express writing down information enough. It can save you a lot of trouble over the breeding season. Of course there is one problem that we all come up against and that is when you have brought in new stock. Mainly hens. Sometimes this can be infuriating. First you have to have them long enough to get them settled in your set up. They have to be used to your soft food, seed mix and movements in the bird room. Even the bangs and clangs can upset some new stock. It is like cheese - good things take time so be patient. As soon as the shows are over run the pairs together for a few days just to see how they accept each other. This again can save you time when the days are getting longer and it is time to start the breeding. This is generally when you have at least twelve hours of light which is required for good feeding time of the youngsters. If you are having problems with some matings that you really do want to use, it gives you time to hang a cage on the side or a wire partition between them so they can come accustomed to each other. Time spent now is well worth it later on.

Feather Types

The colour visible on feathers fall into two groups: the lipochrome colouring which is a fat soluble colouring originating from the bird's food (light colours), and the melanins which come from proteins produced by the bird (dark colours).

Lipochrome or Ground colour

A canary that does not show any melanins is known as a clear bird and it is the lipochromes that are then seen as the main or ground colour of the bird. A white bird has no visible lipochromes or melanins and appears white. Yellow lipochrome on the feather gives the familiar yellow canary, and orange lipochrome inherited from the Siskin finch gives the Red Factor canaries their base colour. The 'Red' canary is of course, not completely red unless fed an additional colouring agent. These colouring agents act on the lipochrome and turn the orange-ground bird red.

Melanins

A dark bird has melanins (dark colours) over the ground colour of the feathers which give further colouration. There are three types of melanin on the feathers of a normal green canary- two brown melanins and one black melanin. If all the melanins are present on a white-ground feather (no lipochromes) a slate grey colour with tinges of brown is produced. On a yellow-ground feather, the familiar green colour with touches of brown results. On orange-ground feather a bronze colour is shown, the addition of a colouring agent turns this bronze colour to a deep copper.

Non-Frost/Yellow

Another variation that affects the appearance of the feather is the extent of the lipochrome colour on the feather. The lipochrome colour may stop short of the end, leaving the edge of the feather devoid of colour or appearing white (for a clear bird), or it can extend to the very end of each feather vane. The colouring extending to the end of each feather was a very early mutation and has been known by a variety of names over the years, such as jonque, yellow, non-frosted, intensive and hard feather. Non-frost is the term most commonly used for the colour canaries. The term yellow is used with type canaries.

Frosted/ Buff

The feather with the white or fawn edge is the normal feather type (as found in the wild bird). It has had many names over the years, including buff, mealy, non-intensive, soft feather and frosted. Frosted is the most descriptive term and the one in common use with colour birds. Buff is the common name used in the type varieties.

The terms buff and yellow as used with type birds are confusing when applied to the colour birds. Here the terms frost and non-frost are used, it is, however, relatively common to hear colour canary breeders referring to their birds as soft or hard-feather birds.

It might be confusing to beginners who know that most canaries are yellow in colour, but it is very important to be able to determine the difference between the feather type of two birds which may be yellow in colour, as one may be a buff feather bird and the other a yellow-type feather bird. The correct pairing of many of the varieties depends on the pairing of buff-type to yellow-type feathers. If you are unsure of the difference between buff and yellow-type feathers or frost and non-frost feathers, ask an experienced fancier to show you the two birds side by side – the difference will be obvious.

Feathers are more than Fluff

When we admire our birds, at least 90% of what we see is feathers! Although the intended principal functions of feathers is flight, insulation against heat loss and waterproofing, but what we really admire about our birds is their beauty. It is feathers that make them beautiful! It is the feathers that are beautifully coloured and lustrous and it is feathers that conform to natural body contours to give a bird its beautiful shape! A bird's first moult is actually when it loses down feathers, when still a nestling. In its subsequent moults, each bird produces approximately 2,000 new feathers, feathers that are around 90% protein. During moulting, the bird's metabolic rate increases 30% and body temperature rises one degree. This energy-draining process reduces vitality and significantly increases nutritional demands, especially for protein. To make good quality feathers, provide a nutritious diet supplemented with vitamins especially B vitamins for protein metabolism and extra attention to essential amino acids either from vitamin supplement or food such as bee pollen granules or brewer's yeast and in addition, liquid or water soluble calcium. When the diet is as described, the feathers are strong to penetrate the skin rather than grow under the skin as a feather cyst.

Last months back page.

1. Yellowface typell
2. Cinnamon
3. Blackface
4. Cobalt
5. Clearwing
6. Featherduster
7. Anthracite
8. Dominant Pied
9. Crested
10. Common Blue

11. Spangle
12. Olive
13. Classic Green
14. No 13 is the wild type
15. Odd man out? Could be 9- physical variation rather than colour but my choice is 6 –not only physical variation but maybe a viral influence as well.



British Birds in
New Zealand

