

AUCKLAND METRO BIRD CLUB

August 2013



Meeting Tuesday 20th August 7.30 pm, Panmure Community Rooms,
Pilkington Road, Panmure. Breeding season discussion, Raffle, Accessories.

President's Chirp & Squawk!

The show season is over with the culmination being the National hosted in Napier by four East Coast North Island Clubs (Poverty Bay, Hawkes Bay, Hastings & Tararua) Congratulations to all of those responsible for putting on such a big event and to our members who entered birds, all with some success! Next year's National is in Gore and we host it in 2015. No club/s have offered to host the event from then on and this is a worrying situation. I am sure some club will step forward, but already the Federation is discussing ways in which the National may look in the future. I welcome AMBC input on this matter. Perhaps regionally hosted nationals are the way to go? I am proud the way our members stepped up in 2011 but the main problems include: lack of man-woman power, suitable venues (halls are needed from Wednesday to Sunday) and financial issues. We are looking to appoint judges for our 2014 Annual Show and to discuss a few changes including exhibitors' entry fees, prize money and the percentage structure for bird sales. A number of years back, many out-of-town judges were billeted by the host club and this is one thing I think we could consider again to help save on costs. Ray and Margaret have done some research on what venues are available for sausage sizzles, so we will be calling on members (and not the same few....please!) to help out soon with a couple of hours over a weekend. Then of course, in 2015, we host the National again and we really do need ideas/sponsors etc to help make this another memorable National, so bring along your practical ideas or flick an email through.

There have been some warm days lately and I have a feeling that our birds may well be going down to breed a bit earlier this year, but....don't rush them into it! At Tuesday's meeting, we will have a talk from specific breeders (Budgies, Canaries, Finches in particular) on preparing for the breeding season with plenty of worthwhile tips, so do bring along your own ideas and a pen & paper to jot down some helpful hints. Now is the time to check that breeding cages/boxes/nestpans are in good order & thoroughly treated to prevent mite invasion. Stick to the diet your birds are used to and increase the foodstuffs that will help bring them into condition. Remember though, it is the longer hours of natural sunshine & the warming of the temperature that are the key factors. Also at this Tuesday's meeting, I will have some products and accessories (including wormers, Ornithon, Vitapower and treat foods) at extremely good prices, with all money going into our National 2015 Fund. If you have any birds to sell, do bring them along too.

It is sad to hear that another longtime member of the birdworld has passed away: Jerome Bremmers, of the Christchurch Club. More on Jerome later in this newsletter.

We are discussing having another bird sale at one of our upcoming monthly meetings; a good time to stock up or to quit those birds who don't quite fit in with your current breeding programme.

Remember that October is our AGM. All positions are available and we encourage all members to consider standing as fresh people mean fresh ideas and enthusiasm! Also, all subs are due by 1st November so that we can get all the relevant material through for publication in the 2014 Yearbook.

See as many of you as possible at 7.30pm, this Tuesday 20 August and hey, why not bring someone new along?! Remember, breeding season discussion, bird products and even a few birds for sale, very good raffle prize, nice supper and convivial company! Dave.

Congratulations to AMBC Members at the 2013 National

Bernard & Helen Reinen: 2nd Best CYCR Colour Fed; Best Novice Non Colour Fed, Best & 2nd Best Novice CYCR Non Colour Fed, Best Novice Ivory.

Alan & Carol Catley: Best Frosted Bronze, Best Any white or AO Colour.

Vince & Lynne Huston: Best Open Clearbody/Clearwing

Derek & Esme Lourens: 2nd Best Novice CYCR Budgie, Best Novice Hen Budgie, Best Novice Normal Green Budgie.

Dave Nicholson: Best Foreign Bird in Show (OTHB) Best Champ Opal & Ivory

Jeff Page: Best Budgie in Show, Best Champ Budgie, Best A/A Budgie, Best Champ Hen Budgie, Best Champ Normal Green Series

Obituary: Jerome Bremmers, former NZ Federation President & Christchurch Club

Jerome was an expert on a wide range of birds and had been published here and overseas on a number of occasions. He held the position of president of the NZ Federation for quite a number of years and was known for a somewhat uncompromising attitude. He swore he would never own a computer or a cellphone! His main love was Rollers, which, along with Glosters and Foreign, he was a judge. He was always willing to help newcomers into the hobby and along with a number of more experienced 'bird people' who have passed on recently, will be greatly missed in the hobby.

Make A Difference!

Consider standing for a position at the next AGM: patron, president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and up to 6 committee members (each with an area of responsibility)

For Sale

Lizard Canaries, chesnut Zebra finches & hen, Gouldians for sale. Ph Dave 576 2535

Bird products & accessories/supplements available at this Tuesday's meeting ; various prices.

WANTED, Cock Blackbird for aviary. My Hen that I have had for some years, nests, lays then dumps her infertile eggs. Contact Brian (09) 276.8782

6 Green Turks. 2 Hens & 4 Cocks. 2 x 8 months, 4 x 2 years.

2 Yellow Turks. 1 Hen & 1 Cock. both 2 years old.

\$ 25 each or \$ 160 the lot.

Ray Absalom Home: (09) 533 9015 Mob. 021 105 4958

WANTED! Corflute to mount our new bird posters, approx 98x68cm; contact Dave 576 2535

Preparing birds for breeding

When you are properly prepared, the breeding season is the best time of the year. Breeding seasons vary depending upon the types of birds you keep. Budgerigars are bred from August onwards, to coincide with the BS ring supply date, whilst canaries breed from September to December. British finches are usually slightly behind the canaries, and foreign seedeaters, parakeets etc can breed all year round, when the conditions are right, which is of course the key to success.

Condition is vital

Your birds will only breed successfully when they are in the right condition, have suitable accommodation and are fed a nutritious diet. They are 100% dependent upon you for their needs, so if they let you down, you really have only yourself to blame. The majority of all the cage birds you may wish to buy are already bred in captivity, so someone, somewhere, is doing it right. All you need to do is learn how.

Basics first

Let's look at the basics first. The accommodation needs to be clean, in good repair, and provide cover to make the birds feel secure. Birds using nest boxes to breed, such as budgies, parrot like, finches etc are automatically provided with security once inside their nest boxes, whilst those birds using more open nest sites, need something to hide behind, either a bush in an aviary, or a cardboard screen, if kept in a cage. We like our privacy, and so do our birds - you will find that the hardest part of breeding is keeping away, once your chicks start to hatch. On the subject of cleanliness, a good wash down with a disinfectant followed by an insect repellent preparation is recommended just prior to breeding, whatever the variety of birds kept.

Conditioning breeding birds is an ongoing process. On leaving the nest, the life cycle of our birds follows a regular pattern regardless of the variety of birds kept. First the moult, followed by a rest period during which time we exhibit our stock at shows, then a lead-up period when we concentrate more on exercise, health and fitness, before pairing for breeding. The most common mistake is concentrating solely on the lead-up period, as preparation for breeding. Far better results will be gained by realising that breeding preparation is an all year round task.

Consider, a bird that has raised several nests of young before moulting, then competed at shows throughout the country each weekend, travelling in and out of cars, then being faced every week by a multitude of unfamiliar faces, in show halls of varying light and temperature, before being thrown into a flight cage to exercise, having to compete for food against other stronger, younger and fitter birds, is not particularly well prepared to go through the rigours of breeding for a second year, without making at least some mistakes along the way. And whose fault is that?

Preparation begins with the moult, which should be completed as quickly as possible. Birds need protein from which they build new feather growth, so ensure you provide a suitably rich protein diet throughout the moult. Aviary birds often seem to moult quicker than individually caged birds, so use this if the species is naturally gregarious. Birds pre-selected for exhibition will probably be moulted singly dependant upon the variety kept, but the fancier should consider the effect that an over active show season may have on individual specimens. Preparing two or three separate exhibition teams will mean that each individual bird is less stressed than if it were exhibited each week, and this will pay dividends when breeding time comes around. If you have any doubts about fitness, keep those individuals causing you concern at home rather than exhibiting them, and consider using one of the various products to reduce stress before and after taking your birds to shows.

Review your stock

After the show season, take time to review your breeding stock. Decisions should be made not to breed from any birds that are not 100% fit, prior to the lead-up period. Breeding may be three months away, but any doubtful stock will ultimately let you down. By breeding from only the healthiest birds, you are laying the foundations for future sound stock - and future prolific breeding seasons. The best bird in the world will not breed if it is unfit - and in the process will cause its mate not to breed either - which would probably be another of your better quality birds, wasted for the year.

Make haste slowly

Concentrate on bringing your birds into breeding condition gradually, over a defined period. Exercise without overcrowding, and ensure plenty of feeding stations, so that the less boisterous birds are not bullied. Increase supplies of the feeds you intend offering the birds when they are rearing young - so they get the taste! Finally, watch the weather, how the foliage is blossoming, and the activities of our native birds. When they breed, then so can you.

Fanciers breeding birds out of season, such as Budgerigars, need to provide artificial conditions to stimulate their birds into breeding activity. Daylight is the major factor - remembering that young birds need to go through the entire night on the crop food provided by their parents. A good rule is to allow 14 hours of daylight each day; by the time your earliest chicks hatch. This may mean installing additional lighting, and using a dimmer and time switch. I favour increasing lighting in the early hours of the morning, allowing birds to roost naturally as dusk descends, but I know several fanciers who successfully use light in the evenings - a regular routine is all that is required, introduced gradually to enable the birds to become accustomed to your chosen methods. Whilst you are installing lighting, provision of a low wattage night light should also be considered, allowing birds that leave their nest boxes to find their way back, without having to wait until morning light.

Feeding choices

Feeding for breeding is entirely a matter of choice. I know almost as many feed recipes as I do fanciers, as each person has his own likes and dislikes - and so do the birds. What matters is that your system works, and is consistently proven by the results you obtain. You need to ensure you are providing your birds with all the essential vitamins, minerals, calcium and proteins that they require, in one form or another. Any shortages will affect your breeding successes, and any over provisions could equally prove detrimental. Hitting the right balance takes time, and you should initially follow the practices used by your mentor, but once you do get it right, you will have every chance of continued breeding success.

Article Brian Keenan

PREPARATION OF THE STOCK BIRDS FOR THE BREEDING SEASON

By Dr. Colin Walker B.Sc. B.V.Sc. M.A.C.V.S (avian health)

Parasites

Start by ensuring the birds are parasite free. The important parasites are:-

1. Roundworm, Hairworm and Mites

Many avian vets recommend **moxidectin** 2mg/ml at a dose of 5ml/1L for 24 hours. This is a palatable water soluble liquid that in addition to worming the birds also kills all external parasites that feed off blood. This includes all mites (including feather mites and air sac mites). No need to withdraw food and does not affect feather quality. Ensure the loft is particularly thoroughly cleaned after treatment to minimise the chance of re-infection.

2. Tapeworm

If tape worms are a concern a product is available that combines moxidectin with praziquantel (the medication of choice against tapeworm). This product is bitter and the birds are reluctant to drink it. Use the syrup as you would a tablet and give each bird 0.25ml(5 drops) individually to the mouth. Remember tapeworms are carried by insects. Cleaning and spraying with an insecticide eg. permethrin onto the scraped surfaces and into the nooks and crannies will decrease the chance of re-infection.

3. Coccidia

Easily controlled with **Toltrazuril** 3ml/1L for 24 hours.

4. Lice

Dip all birds in **permethrin**. To prepare a dip, add 10ml permethrin to 1L of water. This works out to 120ml to the average bucket, which is about 12L. To this add 1 cap of baby shampoo to act as a wetting agent. Dip all birds by immersing their body, fanning their wings and tail and then momentarily dipping their head. Best to make the water warm and dip on the morning of a warm day.

Canker

There is no benefit in treating for canker prior to breeding unless more than 10% of youngsters had canker in the previous breeding season, or there have been significant numbers of new breeding birds introduced shortly prior to pairing. Best time to treat if needed is not prior to pairing but prior to hatching. Preferred products contain ronidazole. Products containing dimetridazole are not appropriate to use during breeding as they interfere with sperm production in the cocks leading to clear eggs (for up to 6 weeks). Also the increased water intake of feeding birds can lead to toxic levels of this drug being ingested.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia in the breeding season causes late and irregular laying, dead in-shell embryos and weak youngsters that die soon after hatching. If these problems were experienced during the previous breeding season and were diagnosed as being due to Chlamydia the birds can be treated prior to pairing with doxycycline for 7-20 days. Please note that most dead-in-shell youngsters are due to either poor incubation by the parents or problems with temperature and humidity within the nest box.

Salmonella

If Salmonella has been diagnosed in the previous breeding season or during the year give **enrofloxacin** 25mg/ml, 10ml/1L for ten days finishing at least two weeks before breeding. At the completion of this course maintain ongoing dry, hygienic conditions in the loft. Regular avian probiotics eg. **Probac** given either in the water(1tsp/2L) or the food (1tsp/kg) will decrease the spread of Salmonella through the loft throughout breeding.

GOOD IDEAS As the breeding season approaches

1. It is a good idea to spray the nest boxes with Permethrin prior to breeding to decrease later problems with red mite, mosquitoes and pigeon flies.
2. Ensure the ongoing provision of palatable calcium supplements before and during breeding. A good quality grit such as **Health Grit**, a pink mineral such as **PVM** powder and a picking stone such as the **APC Mineral Block** should always be available. Calcium given in the water two to three times weekly in the last month prior to pairing will help ensure adequate calcium levels. Preferred product is **Calcivite Plus**, a sugar free water soluble blend of calcium, magnesium and vitamin D3. Dose is 5ml/L.

OPTIMISE breeding results

1. A complete multivitamin/mineral drink eg. **Multivite Plus** can be given 1 or 2 days weekly.
2. **ID Yeast** is rich in the entire vitamin B group and high in protein(45%). Adding this to the grain after pre-moistening with a seed oil will increase the vigour, growth rates, weaning weights and feather quality of the youngsters. Pre-moisten grain with **Polyseed Oil**, 1ml/kg and then add ID Yeast. Stir and feed. The birds love it.
3. Regular probiotics eg. **Probac** 1tsp/2L, 1 or 2 days per week will decrease bowel disease and lead to more robust young being weaned.

NOTE! Some raffle books are still outstanding; please return them immediately to Derek Lourens!

