

# AUCKLAND METRO BIRD CLUB

February 2014



Come and hear two interesting speakers, Mark Dullabh on seeds/vitamins for birds, new products on the market and info on soft food etc and Chris Agius on his background in birdkeeping, his new aviary and how he balances his hobby with a busy work and family life

**At our next meeting 7.30 pm 18<sup>th</sup> February, Panmure Community Rooms,  
Pilkington Road, Panmure**

**Collect your Year Book and Volunteer for the fundraising sausage  
sizzle 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.**

## ***President's Chirp & Squawk, February 2014.***

How are your birds coping with the moult? Remember they will need plenty of fresh water to bathe in, perhaps even a sand-bath as well as extra vitamins and seeds like linseed to help get them through this harrowing time. Hopefully, you will be delighted with the way some of your young birds come through the moult, and it is only after this time that you should decide which birds to keep for showing or breeding and which to sell or swap. Our patron, Mark Dullabh (Quality Bird Supplies) is at each meeting and he can help with some advice on the desired seeds and supplements necessary during and after the moult.

The first round of Bird Sales is starting with: Huntly 16 February, Rotorua 2 March and Piako 16 March. Your committee has not quite decided on a definite date for our TWO Bird Sales this year, but we will probably follow the pattern we set two years ago of incorporating them as part of our Tuesday night meeting. The first could well be at our meeting on either 18 March or 15 April; details to follow, but be prepared as it is an ideal time to sell off your surplus stock or to buy in new birds.

The 2014 Yearbooks (black, the same colour as the rings for this last season) have arrived. If you have ordered/paid for one, please be at this Tuesday's meeting to receive your copy. We have a couple of spares but these will be sold (\$10) on a 'first in first served basis' and a reminder that they are invaluable for all bird people.

As you know, no club, whether bird, golf, rugby, stamps, cars etc can survive without 1) new members, 2) new ideas, 3) money! As a club, I think the AMBC has done particularly well in building up its membership and with it, encouraged new committee members with fresh ideas. We have one of the biggest memberships in the country and I certainly encourage ALL MEMBERS to encourage people to join our club (especially if they purchase a bird from you!) Grab some spare membership forms off the front desk at any of our meetings or refer potential new members to our secretary Vince Huston (534 4988)

So why do we need money? Probably for more reasons than immediately spring to mind: meeting night hall hire, supper and raffle prizes - stationery costs (newsletter, photocopier materials and paper, stamps) - NZ Federation fees and levies (which have recently increased, even though our club subs have not) - updating/repairing club equipment such as computer, photocopier - storage of our gear (cutlery, crockery, show trestles & planks - updating/maintaining our promotional equipment (banners, boards) - purchasing/maintaining our library of books, magazines, videos & DVDs - contribution towards our rep/s travelling to the National and AGM - our Annual Show: hall hire, prizes of money and rosettes, judges expenses, meals, advertising - honorariums and so on. So, if we ask for help with fundraising, be assured, it is not necessarily because we want to, but rather more a case of having to! As hosts of the National in 2015, we need to raise even more money in preparation for this prestigious event. So, I ask again, if YOU can volunteer to help at any of our sausage sizzles (next one outside Bunnings, Ti Rakau Drive, Botany on 22 & 23 February, or have ANY FUNDRAISING IDEAS, can help by recommending a workplace or business to approach for sponsorship etc.....please let anyone on the committee know ( eg. Dave, 576 2535; Vince 534 4988; Derek 271 3774)

Hope to see as many of you as possible at our meeting this Tuesday at 7.30pm to hear an interesting guest speaker, to discuss with fellow breeders any issues you may have regarding birds, to share ideas for helping move the AMBC forward, to hear who has birds or equipment to sell or wants to buy, to pick up your 2014 Yearbook, to bring along any potential new members, to buy a 'winning' raffle ticket, to enjoy a nice supper and chat!

*Dave Nicholson.*

**HUNTLY BIRD SALE** Ph Sharon 07 824 6552, **PIAKO 16<sup>th</sup> March** details Vera 07 304 6191

## **FOR SALE**

Breeding pair of blue canaries - unknown species - \$45 - hen is currently sitting on one egg, I already have one young from these two although it was raised by my red factor borders because of circumstances caused by humans not birds. Also desperately **WANTED** : Cordon Hen, me and the rest of New Zealand. Call for viewing if interested Kylie Fletcher (09)9298299 or (022)3007707

### **AMBC CLUB MEMBER PROFILE – ROBERT CRANSTON**

#### **Why did you join the AMBC?**

It is the closest bird club to my home

#### **What type of birds do you keep?**

Budgerigars

#### **How did you get involved in birds?**

Have been interested in birds since I was a child. My Father built me my first pigeon loft when I was 10 years of age.

#### **How can we make the meetings more appealing to new and younger members ?**

Spend more time grouping people into bird groups of their particular interest and spend a lot less time talking about the running of the club. This should be done by the committee at separate meetings.

#### **What other subjects can we discuss that are related to the bird world?**

Housing of birds.

Show preparation,

Each month have different type birds at meetings and get members to judge them.

#### **What do you think are the advantages of belonging to a club?**

Only place to learn and meet likeminded people.

#### **Are you interested in visiting other aviaries?**

Yes – depending on time

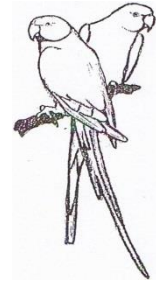
**Hopefully other members will give some thought as how to continue improving the AMBC**

**All contributions to the newsletter are most welcome. Please e-mail or send to the editor. Original and/or interesting articles preferred as well as buy/sell or swap. Email octopuss@xtra.co.nz**

# **TE POI BIRD SALE**

**(PIAKO BIRD CLUB)**

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014



**NEW VENUE:**Tatuanui Hall

SH 27 Tatuanui

(Same as the show – due to unavailability of Te Poi Hall)

Benching from 9.15am

**Sale:** 9.30am-11.30pm

**Entry:** \$2pp

\$5 for ½ table space for seller (includes entry)

- Light Refreshments available
  - Raffles
  - Plants for Sale

**PIAKO BIRD CLUB**

## **TE POI BIRD SALE RULES**



The Piako Bird Club will provide the venue, advertise and organise this sale but cannot be held responsible for any claims made by sellers of birds.

1. All birds must be in a clean cage/box relative to the size of the bird/s, no overcrowding.
2. All birds must have seed, water or fruit.
3. Please put the name of types of birds on cages for easy identification for the public.
4. Vendors are asked to remain in the hall until close of sale unless all birds have been sold; reason being: the public continue to arrive up to the advertised time of closure expecting to be able to buy birds.
5. No selling of raffle tickets by any other club/organisation within the hall will be permitted.

# CAUSES OF INFERTILITY OR POOR HATCHING RATE IN UNPROVEN AND PROVEN BREEDERS

- Nutritional
  - Inadequate dietary calcium, sodium and energy can interfere directly with egg laying and fertility. Over-supplementation of zinc can cause infertility. Obesity causes problems with decreases ovulation especially in Galahs, Budgies, Amazons and Macaws. Increasing the variety of foods fed can stimulate fertility. Aflatoxins in seed can lower fertility.
- Genetics:
  - Inbreeding can result in lowered semen quality, abnormal mating behavior and physical defects. Some bird species have been bred that they have become physically unable to breed, for example some budgie species. Hybrid eggs have a low hatchability.
- Physical
  - Age and experience of birds: Hens are born with a limited supply of eggs and fertility in aging birds goes gradually down until they will eventually stop laying. Young birds may still be too young to produce fertile eggs or they lack "technique". Poor physical condition for whatever reason.
  - - **Overall health of parents.** Poor health will result in reduced fertility or dying of chicks inside the egg. [Psittacosis](#) is commonly associated with infertility and the deaths of babies in breeding aviaries. The first step should be a vet visit to eliminate illness as the cause of the problem. The only test that may be needed is a simple white blood cell count. If his count is normal or only slightly elevated, then the infertility problem is more likely to be social or environmental.

Overuse of medications. For example, Doxycycline lists amongst its side effects a lowering of male fertility. Dysfunctional reproductive system - Reproductive disorders, such as ovarian cysts or tumors, testicular neoplasia, etc., can only be surgically assessed. Physical impairments (can't properly balance on top of the female to copulate) **The Time Factor:** Hatchability of eggs decreases over time. The sooner incubation commences after the laying, the better the chance of hatching chicks.
- Social
  - Same-sex birds are paired up. If two females or two males are paired up, they will go through the motions of breeding the same way as they were a compatible pair. Two females will lay eggs and incubate them. Two males will also mate and go through the motions of nesting without any eggs. Excess time spent in territorial defense against perceived threats or potential rivals can result in lowered fertility. If birds are stressed by human presence then this will limit fertility.
    - During the breeding season, it is important to limit disturbances, such as visitors, noisy dogs, as well as predators such as cats, birds of prey, rodents and snakes

- Environmental
  - Extreme temperature variations may cause temporary infertility. All perches should be firmly fixed. In some instances, the "favoured" perch for mating (which could be the top of the nest box) was too close to the ceiling of the aviary or the top of the cage to allow the male to successfully balance on top of the female, thus resulting in infertile eggs; or the perch was not providing a stable enough surface to allow successful copulation. If the eggs are being artificially incubated, place the [incubator](#) in a stable environment. Ideally, incubators should be placed in a room where the temperature remains in the 70s. However, most incubators (including the Mini Advance) can work with temperature variations from 60 - 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Hatchability may still occur at temperatures as low as 60 or as high as 90 degrees. However, if the temperature drops to below 60 or goes above 90 degrees, no incubator would be able to maintain the correct temperature inside the unit to ensure hatching - this includes the expensive professional incubators. Incubators should be placed in an area where there is no direct sun exposure (sunrays hitting the unit will increase the "ambient" temperature immediately around - and therefore inside - the unit significantly; nor should the incubator be placed in an area with drafts (from windows, doors or air conditioning vents).

- See more at: <http://www.avianweb.com>

### **INFERTILITY IN BIRDS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY FERTILE:**

- Nutrition:
  - If the birds are newly acquired and successfully bred at their previous location, investigating and potentially implementing the same diet they were previously on is the first step.
  - If the nutrition has NOT changed from when they were still able to successfully produce, then changes in health status or environmental differentials should be considered.

#### Physical:

- Marginal illness in either the male or the female can be the cause of infertility. The first step should be a vet visit to eliminate illness as the cause of the problem. The only test that may be needed is a simple white blood cell count. If his count is normal or only slightly elevated, then the infertility problem is more likely to be social or environmental.
  - If the female successfully lays eggs, then the problem is more likely with the male.
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- Environmental:
    - The male may not be comfortable where he is.
      - Maybe the highest perch is too close to the ground or the male may not like what he sees from inside his cage / flight. He may resent the fact that the perches of adjacent flights are higher than in his own. He may hate his neighbours or he may be intimidated by them if they are larger than him. Many breeders stack their cages. A pair that used to produce nicely in the top flight may stop producing if moved to a lower level. Another very common problem may be a cage with a group of immature or unrelated birds within view of your breeding pair. Even though a large percentage of pairs will tolerate this situation - a small percentage will not.
        - These types of problems can be avoided by arranging your aviaries and placing your perches so that no one is higher than anyone else. Also, try to keep birds of the same size together.
        - If these situations cannot be rectified, then you may want to consider installing blinds between the cages.

# EGG PROBLEMS

**Description:** Incessant egg-laying without a mate is a common problem with single hens, mostly occurring in cockatiels, Eclectus and cockatoo species. Repeatedly laying clutches of unfertilized eggs can become a health problem for the hen, limiting her nutrients, such as calcium and protein.

## Symptoms:

Without being in contact with a mate, some female birds will lay a clutch of infertile eggs. Before laying the egg or eggs your hen may suddenly gain weight, signaling the production of an egg. Most egg-laying hens will pass voluminous, smelly droppings right before and during an egg-laying cycle. Because health issues regarding pet birds are better understood, companion birds are reaching sexual maturity and as a single bird, they may still exhibit breeding behaviours.

## Immediate Care:

Any egg-laying hen needs to be provided with additional calcium. Cuttlebone, mineral blocks, cottage cheese, Tums™ and almonds are good sources of calcium. You can discuss particular supplements with your avian veterinarian. An egg-laying hen also needs full-spectrum or natural light for normal calcium metabolism. When a hen begins repeatedly laying unfertilized eggs, it is important to attempt environmental changes to hopefully stop the egg-laying. Most species breed when exposed to increasing amounts of daylight. Eight to ten hours of light each day is adequate and birds may begin to demonstrate breeding behaviours if their daylight hours exceed this amount of light.

## Long Term Care:

When your hen lays a clutch and maternal instincts kick in, causing her to become protective, sitting on the eggs, do not remove them. Wait until the full incubation period for normal, fertilized eggs has passed, because the female will most likely know instinctively when the eggs should hatch and she will lose interest at this time. If your bird does not abandon the eggs after the proper amount of time, wait no more than 30 days to remove the eggs and alter her environment to discourage incessant egg-laying. You can also replace her eggs with ceramic eggs or other artificial materials in the shape of an egg, of the same colour, as some eggs may become rotten, which can cause infection in the brooding hen. Move your bird's cage as well as the toys and perches inside the cage. Discontinue feeding soft foods to your egg-laying hen as it may cause your bird to perceive you as its mate, causing her to lay more eggs (a female's mate will begin feeding the hen soft foods while she incubates the eggs and cares for the chick). Weigh your bird weekly to monitor any weight gain or loss. A weight gain can help predict when the hen is about to lay an egg again. Most owners will begin to tell when a hen is becoming "broody," as she will usually become territorial of the cage, she will drink more water and pass larger, less frequent droppings and she may develop a pendulous abdomen from the hormonal laxity of the pelvic floor muscles.

**Don't forget to pick up your 2014 Year book**