

AUCKLAND METRO BIRD CLUB

May 2014



REMEMBER.....

..... bring along a bird to the meeting and a grocery item for our Annual Show raffle

which will be drawn on 20th July at our Show

HOW CAN YOU HELP AT OUR SHOW ?

Volunteers to help at our Show are always extremely welcome!

Meeting Tuesday 20th May 7.30pm, Panmure Community Rooms,

1 Pilkington Road, Panmure

President's Chirp & Squawk!

Canaries should be out of their moult now and looking quite different! Budgies and Finches usually breed at different times, so let's hope most club members have had a good breeding season and there are some 'beauties' ready for the show-bench. Remember, this meeting will be our own internal show, a really casual affair where you can bring along some of your birds & get others to run an eye over them. Who knows, you may have a New Zealand champ in the making?! Just bring your birds, preferably one to a cage (needn't be a show cage) and we will share ideas. Again, I would like to see the Budgie, Canary & Finch people representing their specific type by bringing one or two along. If you are going to shows, what about letting others in the club know so that some 'car-pooling' can occur. Members will also be on hand to show you how to fill in entry forms at this meeting and if you haven't got a show cage, then sing out! By co-operating in this way, it is a chance to visit other shows, to learn & share knowledge and to make some new friends, especially contacts for buying in new stock. I also have the new club shirts, so those who have ordered will be able to pick them up. Still some Yearbooks to be collected too!

Our Bird Sale at our April meeting was moderately successful and Derek will have more precise figures, but I think with donations, raffles, seed sales and supper donations, we may have made close to \$400. Well done to those who supported this event. Once again, if you know of a speaker (preferably avian related) please make contact with them & let us know if they can speak at an upcoming meeting.

I have been lucky lately to visit a number of aviaries lately and have been very impressed with the quality of the structures, the birds and the dedication and the tips offered by the owners. I would like to see us organize some aviary crawls amongst our own club members as this is a great way of learning and sharing tips-of-the-trade.

Remember our Annual Show 19-20 July. We have a marketing plan in place, but as I have said before, the best marketing is done by each and every member doing their bit and word-of-mouth can be so valuable. We will have posters & supermarket cards at our June meeting, but there is nothing to stop you from doing your own unique promotion in your area. A hobby gets people off their backsides, so let's do our best to promote bird keeping!! We also depend on our annual raffle to raise valuable funds, so when you receive your one book of ten, please do your best. If you have an objection to selling raffles (and 'can't be bothered' does NOT count!) then please let us know in advance. We ask that each member brings along a grocery item to put in the various hampers, so this will be very willingly received at this meeting as well as in June & July. My thanks to those in the AMBC who have donated money or product towards the prizes for this year's show; this really is appreciated. In the June newsletter, we will have a list of duties to be filled and again, this is very much appreciated by your committee.

Hope to see as many as possible at this Tuesday's meeting: bring along a couple of birds, some questions and if you can, a grocery item.

Dave.

UPCOMING SHOWS

17-18 May: Te Awamutu, Capital & Valley Cities; 24-25 May: Wairarapa;

31 May-1 June: Whakatane; 7-8 June: Stratford; 14-15 June: Hawkes Bay;

21-22 June: Hamilton, Levin; 28-29 June: Huntly; 5-6 July Palmerston North;

12-13 July: Piako'; 19-20 July: Auckland Metro 31 July-3 August: National, Gore

1. What are the top three things that a person should do to prepare their birds for a show?

Number 1 – The Standards. “The first, and what I believe is the most important thing, about showing is you have to understand what the judge is looking for. If you don’t know that you can’t pick the appropriate birds to take All of the societies have a Standard of Perfection. The bulk of the points are typically Size and Conformation. It is always about 60 points out of 100. This is the basic size and shape of the bird.

Number 2 – Know the rules. “Every show is different. Specialty societies have certain rules, local clubs have their own rules, and you must be prepared. Contact the show contact person. Get your paperwork ahead. When you show up organized it will make your check-in smooth.”

Number 3 – Show preparation. “There are a number of things that you as the exhibitor have control over ... Once you select your first show, back up about 8 weeks. This is the date you need to begin show prep. The reason why is that you will often have tail feathers and flight feathers that are damaged so much that normal bathing will not help. [Talk to a professional groomer on how to handle this situation. -Ed.]

“Between now and the show mist your birds twice daily with water. I recommend keeping your mister in the refrigerator. The cold water helps make the feathers tight. When you mist just do so enough to lightly cover the bird and inhibit grooming on their part ... You will see noticeable improvement on the condition in just a few weeks.”

2. What are the top three mistakes that first-time participants make?

Number 1: “Out of condition birds ... Groom your birds, train them in their show cages so they are calm and relaxed.”

Number 2: “Show presentation. Things like coloured seed should not be used. Use plain seed.

“Use approved drinkers and place them between the second and third wire from the right. Many birds get their feathers wet from sitting on the drinkers ... Clean or paint your show cages ... A clean cage shows off a good bird.”

Number 3: “Enter your birds correctly. Check the schedule and discuss if need be the correct class. If a bird is entered in the wrong class it may not do well.

3. What should a person do with their birds the week before the show? The day before? The hour before?

“Start show cage training your birds 8 weeks out. Let them get accustomed to the cage. I have two sets of cages, saving the good ones until the day before the show. I used older beat up cages for training. As each week passes, let the birds stay in the cages longer.

“The day before the show, I transfer the birds into the clean show cages. I place the band numbers on some masking tape on the top of the cage so that it will make it easier to attach the tags at the show.

“Show up early. Be organized and ready.”

Article - Bird Channel.com

Wanted – Female Quail, Phone Taco/Troy 09 2666 798.

For Sale – Aviary - length 2.8 metres, width 1 metre, height 2 metres. \$ 75.00 Phone Taco/Troy 09 2666798

GROOMING YOUR BIRD

Be sure that your bird is healthy enough to be groomed and that you are comfortable performing the procedures.

- Safely grooming your bird may require two people – one person to hold the bird, and one person to perform the grooming.
- It's okay to leave grooming to the professionals! Ask your veterinary team what grooming services they offer for birds.

Getting Started

Like most other pets, pet birds can benefit from regular grooming. But before you get started, here are a few things you should know:

- ***Be sure that you can handle your bird without causing injury.*** This may not be an issue if your bird is used to being handled. However, improper handling can injure a bird very easily. In some cases, your bird may even become startled or agitated and harm *you*, so talk to your veterinary care team about proper handling techniques before attempting to groom your bird.
- ***Be sure your bird is healthy.*** Sick birds may not be able to tolerate the excitement or stress of being handled for grooming. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to tell when a bird is not feeling well. Birds naturally hide illnesses, so sometimes problems can go undetected. Be sure to schedule regular checkups with your veterinarian, who will examine your bird for signs of illness and discuss proper nutrition and other tips for keeping your bird as healthy as possible.
- ***Don't be afraid to ask questions.*** Your team of veterinary professionals will be glad to answer any questions you may have about safely grooming your pet bird.
- ***It's okay to leave grooming to the professionals.*** Even if you have the necessary equipment, grooming birds safely requires skill, patience, and confidence. If you aren't comfortable trying to groom your bird at home, ask your veterinary team about the grooming services it provides.

Proper Restraint

Many pet birds are used to being held, so capturing and holding them for simple grooming procedures can be fairly simple. In many cases, two people are needed – one to hold the bird, and another to perform the grooming procedure.

When holding a bird, the head and feet should be secured, and the body and wings should be supported in case the bird struggles during the procedure. Your index finger and thumb can be used to hold the back of your bird's head, which can rest in the palm of your hand. Be careful to avoid pressing on the eyes and throat. Also, avoid squeezing the chest, which can cause injury and breathing difficulty. In most cases, a small towel can be used to cover the back of the head and part of the body while the feet are held in the opposite hand.

Nail Trimming

Nail trimming is recommended if the nails become overgrown (which can injure the feet or make perching difficult) or become sharp enough to injure someone. As the nails grow, they curve naturally to form an arc. As a general rule, the arc should not be longer than a half-circle. However, be careful to avoid cutting the nails too short. Nails contain a blood vessel (sometimes called the *quick*) that can bleed if cut. In most cases, bleeding can be stopped by applying a styptic pencil or styptic powder designed for use in birds.

Most birds can be restrained as described above, with the legs held between the fingers so the bird's toes can be isolated for trimming. For small birds (such as parakeets), a small human nail clipper or small scissors can be used to trim the nails. For larger birds, a rotary tool, nail file, or emery board can be used.

Beak Trimming

Most birds never need their beaks trimmed. However, a bird that has suffered trauma to the area or has a malocclusion (a defect in which the upper and lower beaks don't meet properly when the mouth is closed) may need the beak trimmed regularly to ensure normal ability to eat and drink. Restraint for a beak trim is similar to that for a nail trim. The beak should be held closed before trying to trim it. A rotary tool can be used to trim the beak, but be aware that the beak contains a bone and blood vessels, so it should not be over-trimmed. Some birds, like macaws, have very long, pointed beaks compared with other birds (such as parakeets), so it is important to know how long the beak should be before trying to trim it.

Wing Trimming

Wing trimming is usually recommended to reduce flight capability. Trimming reduces the risk of the bird escaping through an open door or window or becoming injured as it flies through the house. If the wings are properly trimmed, the bird should be able to gently glide to the ground but is much less able gain lift or fly a significant distance. Wings generally need to be trimmed a few times each year.

Many trimmed birds still try to fly, so the wings must be trimmed properly and symmetrically to allow the bird to maintain balance as it tries to land safely. If the bird is unbalanced, it can fall too quickly or awkwardly and become injured. Similarly, young birds should be permitted to learn to fly and land before the wings are trimmed for the first time. Otherwise, they are more likely to fall and become injured.

When handling a bird for a wing trim, restraint is similar to that for nail or beak trims. The wing must be extended to inspect the feathers. Be sure to grasp the wing close to the bird's body to reduce the risk of breaking the bone.

Usually, the primary feathers are trimmed. These are the feathers at the outer edge of the wing. Depending on the size of the bird, anywhere from four to eight feathers may need to be trimmed. Larger birds tend to need fewer feathers trimmed, whereas smaller birds (such as cockatiels) may need up to eight feathers trimmed. Sharp scissors or sharp feline nail clippers should be used to prevent shredding. The scissors should have a blunt tip to reduce the risk of accidental injury.

Before trimming, inspect each feather to be sure it is not a "blood feather." These feathers have darker quills containing a blood vessel. Significant bleeding will occur if a blood feather is cut; it is also recommended to leave the feathers on either side of a blood feather, to provide additional protection. If you accidentally cut a blood feather, it will need to be removed quickly to minimize blood loss. Call your veterinarian if this occurs.

Ask your veterinary team to teach you how to perform these grooming procedures safely. If you aren't comfortable performing them, ask your veterinary team what grooming services it offers for birds.