



AVIAN FLYER

MAY 2021

MAY 2021

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ARTICLES, ADS AND PHOTOS
ARE WELCOME
AND ENCOURAGED!

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Happy Mother's Day



A LOVING MOTHER SWAN AND HER CYGNETS

APPOLOGIES FOR THE LATE ISSUE

This month's issue is later than it should be and I apologize for that. One of our members, and a dear friend, had an emergency that she needed help with. The ZOOM meeting will be this next Sunday, a week early due to Mother's Day.

This issue contains some helpful information about weaning and moving young canaries, as well as dealing with foot problems in your birds. We have an article about sprouting seeds as well, if you have never done that for your birds.

Page 9 tells a tale that occurred literally just days ago. A Torrance, California family suffered an event straight out of Alfred Hitchcock's movie "The Birds"!! Be sure to check that out!

I want to wish all of our Mothers (and bird mothers) a very happy Mother's Day. Being a mother is one of the most selfless things that a woman can do. I know my mother could have been anything she had wanted to be. She was beautiful, smart and an amazing seamstress, cook and singer. Yet she chose to make her career to care for her husband and raise 3 children as a home maker. She indeed made home "home". I miss her very much, and anticipate being reunited with her in heaven.

So, Happy Mother's Day to all of our moms out there. (I fall in the "bird mom" category, currently hand raising a precocious and beautiful baby roller pigeon gifted to me at Easter by one of our members!)

Enjoy the spring weather and I will see you on ZOOM!

Your Editor, Beth Murphy

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THE PREZ SEZ

Welcome Members to our May Newsletter. It has been great to see so many of you joining us on our Zoom meetings. We can give Nina Rapp a hand for hosting the Zoom meetings for us. Members need to let us know which they want to do: continue Zoom meetings where we can have members from out of town join us and get out of town guest speakers, start holding meeting in person or do both.

Norman Hoffman received an email from our band supplier, Regina McCarthy. Regina checked with her supplier and found that we can order 3.3 bands. If we need 3.5 (the next size up) band we will need to go to our Specialty Clubs to order them this year.

April's warm weather and some showers reminds me to give my birds a shower regularly in their warm cages and flights. I use water bath with a drop of mouth wash. When I am in a rush I use a spray bottle with water and a drop of mouth wash. When I use the bath my bird get in the water as I am putting the bath in the cage. When they see a spray bottle they come to the front of the cage to get the most water they can.

May your birds have lots of little ones.

Sandy

Weaning Canaries – Encouraging Fledglings to Accept the Adult Diet

Whether they are hand or parent-reared, young Canaries usually need some encouragement to switch from the nestling to adult diet. This change-over period can be quite stressful, but there are a number of steps you can take to ease the transition.

The Transition Period

Pet Canaries feed their chicks largely upon sprouts, soaked seeds and Egg Food or hard boiled eggs. Once the young fledge, which usually occurs at age 16-20 days, they will be fed by their parents for an additional 2 -3 weeks. During this time, they will also begin to pick at food and eventually learn to eat on their own. Fledglings benefit from watching their parents and siblings...chicks that are hand-reared are at a disadvantage in this respect, but will also respond to the ideas and foods mentioned below.

Hard seeds are a novel food for young Canaries, and acquiring the skill needed to open them takes practice. A high protein diet remains important right through the first molt (which usually begins within 2 months of fledging), but eventually seeds should replace egg-based foods as their staple.

Caution: Stress and Weight Loss

While it is important to encourage youngsters to accept hard seeds, bear in mind that dietary switches, and the loss of parental care, are very stressful events. Stress can depress the immune system...if the birds are also losing weight, serious health problems can quickly take hold. So it's important to keep them feeding, even if this means that the transition to adult foods will be slow. Continue to supply young birds with their favorites, such as egg food and sprouts, especially if they appear to be losing weight and slowing down. Canaries have little in the way of food reserves, so be sure to seek veterinary advice quickly if your birds decline in condition.

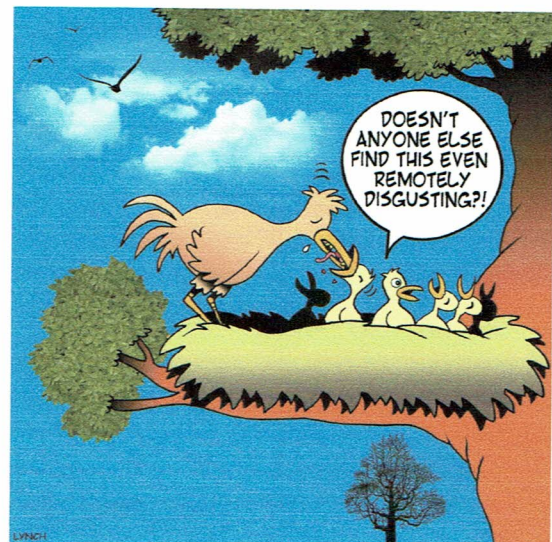
Useful Weaning Foods and Techniques

Couscous soaked in hot water is used by many breeders as a transition food. I use soaked, crushed seeds in place of couscous, but several of my former coworkers at the Bronx Zoo report that Canaries eat it readily, and remain in good weight while adjusting to a seed-based diet. If you opt for couscous, I suggest that you offer soaked, ground seeds as well.

Crushed softbill pellets (i.e. Softbill Select) can be mixed into the foods that the youngsters are accustomed to (typically Egg Food or a similar product). This will provide additional nutrients and introduce new tastes.

Seeds that are just beginning to sprout (please see photo, and article on page 6 for sprouting info) are one of the best foods to introduce. Most young Canaries relish sprouts; while pecking at the sprout the birds invariably hit the seed itself, and in time will begin to consume it as well.

Mix some soaked seeds from your adult canary diet in among the sprouts to encourage further experimentation. Once your birds are eating softened seeds, add crushed or ground hard seeds. Coffee grinders or pestles can be used to break up seeds and render them easier to consume.



WHEN TO MOVE YOUNG CANARIES

Written by Brian Keenan

As a canary breeder, I am often asked "when do you move the chicks?"

The question relates to those chicks that have fledged, and at what age they should be removed from their parents. My reply is always "when they are ready."

Canary chicks usually fledge at anything from 17-24 days. Much will depend upon how well they have been fed, and on how many chicks there are in each nest. I find that broods of three, four or five chicks tend to fledge much earlier than if there is only a single or couple of chicks in the nest. There are exceptions of course, but I am speaking generally, here.

OBSERVATION

Breeding canaries successfully calls for a high degree of observation on the part of the fancier. Constantly checking nests to see that all is well, and taking immediate remedial action when problems loom, is one of the recipes for a successful breeding season.

Moving chicks is simply another critical time on the canary breeding calendar. Much will depend on the breeding methods employed by the fancier. For example, has the hen been left to rear the chicks single-handedly, or is the cock kept with her, as a pair?

My practice usually is to allow the hen to rear without her partner. I re-introduce the cock bird until mating occurs, from the time the chicks are about fourteen days old, and I remove him immediately afterwards. I do not want to risk him harming the chicks, in his eagerness to attend to the hen.

Similarly, I do not allow the cock to play any part in rearing the fledgling chicks, once they have been removed. Instead, my practice is to move them to a clean cage, ideally housed with another nest of chicks, and keep them in small groups for the next ten days or so. Kept in this way, the chicks will encourage each other to feed, to bathe and generally

keep alert. I like to see my young birds active and bright eyed at all times, and do not separate them into individual cages until they have enjoyed a little communal living for a short time, as part of their educational process.

AGE IMMATERIAL

The age at which chicks are removed from their mothers is dependant on when I have seen each one picking up soft food unaided by the hen. Only then can I be sure that there are no 'cry babies' among the nest - those that constantly give a plaintive peep, seeking attention. If necessary, I have delayed moving chicks until they are four weeks of age, although this is certainly an exception. Most are fine by the time they are 23 or 24 days old, and many sooner, particularly in the height of summer.

If I do need to leave chicks for longer with their mothers, then this does not mean that the hens breeding cycle needs interrupting. She will still have been mated with her partner, and she will be preparing to start her breeding cycle again, regardless of whether her chicks are feeding correctly or not. My rule of thumb is to have the chicks away by the time their mother is ready to incubate her second nest of eggs. There is rarely any problem in achieving this, particularly if the straggler has enjoyed outings with his more advanced brothers and sisters into a communal nursery, even if he is returned to his mother after a short outing, each day.

Those preferring to pair breed have a different problem, and that is to ensure that the cock bird does not pluck or bully the chicks, whilst he is housed with them. Some cocks are perfect fathers - they will feed better than hens, and will school the chicks correctly as soon as they are old enough, whilst still attending to the needs of the hen. These birds are worth their weight in gold. However, others can turn

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on the chicks at a moments notice, so a careful eye needs to always be kept, on the lookout for trouble.

NURSERY CAGE

A practice favored by many breeders, is to hang a nursery cage onto the outside of the stock cage, or simply to divide the stock cage into two, to allow the parents to feed the chicks through the cage wires, whilst physically separated from them.

This method certainly works, although at some stage, the chicks will need to fend for themselves, and so you are perhaps only delaying the inevitable, if you follow this practice.

Whatever method you adopt, remember some simple rules. Always keep the bottom of the nursery cage clean - use paper trays for the first few days, which you can replace at every feed, to avoid the chicks from accidentally picking up stale food. Secondly, be careful if using perches. At less than a month old, young birds feet are extremely tender, and can be easily damaged, if the birds are frightened momentarily. Better to rely on the birds perching on the floor for a few days, which allows them to more easily find the feeding pots, than to risk them harming themselves.

And finally, do not be fooled into thinking that you must follow the clock. Many books suggest you remove the chicks at 21 days of age. My advice is to simply allow the birds to tell you when they are ready, which is when you see them eating soft food for themselves, at every new feed. Only then can you be confident that you stand an excellent chance of rearing those chicks to maturity, rather than risk losing them at the last hurdle.

Carol Groenevelt has perches!! Call or text her at 815-780-0119 or email canarypalace@comcast.net.



Each perch is 8" long and fits Quality Cages besides all other bird cages. They are made from durable plastic and are removeable from outside of the cage for easy cleaning. Perches come in a variety of colors and are \$2.00 each.

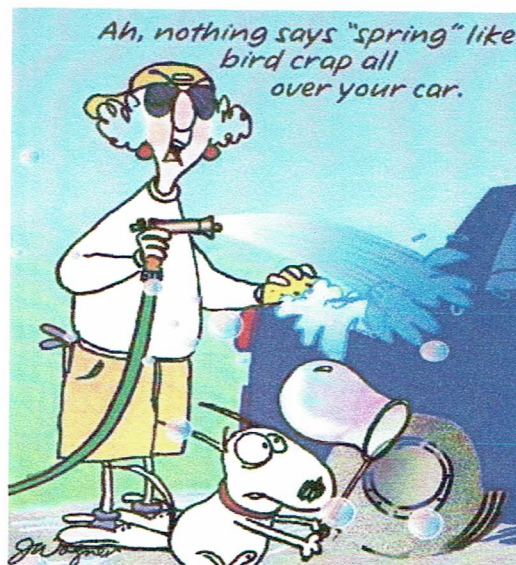
SAVE THE DATE



TIRED OF WASTED SEED?

Larry Brake has a seed cleaner for sale! It will quickly pay for itself by dramatically cutting down on wasted seed. If you are not familiar with how these work, contact Larry.

He is asking \$75 for it. Call or text Larry at 360-909-0008 or email him at larrybrake77@yahoo.com.



Sprouting Seeds at Home: A Useful Method of Providing Pet Birds with Nutritious Treats

Seeds to Use

The seeds chosen for sprouting should be fresh and be comprised of as wide a range of plant species as possible. A simple way to achieve this end is to utilize Kay tee's Forti-Diet Safflower Seed Blend as the basis of your new "garden". You can also purchase a wide variety of seeds from most health food stores. Particularly nutritious, and favored by many birds, are safflower, lentils, mung beans, sunflower, wheat berries, barley, buckwheat, popcorn, brown rice, oats and wheat – but there are many others as well.

Producing and Using Sprouts

You will need to rinse the sprouts several times each day, so they should be grown in a colander or other porous container. Then simply proceed as follows:

Rinse the seeds and remove those that are broken or damaged.

Soak in water overnight.

Spread seeds on a colander and place in a dark, well-ventilated location.

Rinse 2-3 times each day; discard moldy seeds.

Shoots will appear in 1-3 days.

Drain to dry and serve.

Unused sprouts will keep well in a refrigerator for several days. You can also dry the sprouts in an oven (use lowest setting) and later re-hydrate or feed to your pets as is.

Additional Notes and Cautions

A wide variety of animals relish sprouts – try them on cats, tortoises, herbivorous lizards, red-eared sliders, hamsters, gerbils, chipmunks or other pets you may have.

I have not experienced any mold-related problems while sprouting seeds, but if this or bacterial contamination is a concern, you can add grapefruit extract to your soak water.

Ventilation is extremely important... the sprouts will invariably develop mold if kept in a closet or similar location. Try using a shelf blocked off by a cloth if you have difficulty finding a dark, well-ventilated site.

Popcorn needs to soak for 18 hours before being set out for sprouting; buckwheat only ½ hour. Overnight works well for most other seeds.

Some hobbyists have reported that fava, black, kidney, lima, pinto, navy and similar beans have caused digestive upset in pet birds, while others note no problems at all.

May's Treasurer's Report:

Income:

Membership \$50.00

Total Bank Deposit: \$50.00

Expenses:

Hartford annual insurance premium. \$646.00

Stamps, Directories etc. \$ 65.08

Annual P.O. Box fee \$106.

Deposit slips \$ 28.72

Bank Balance: \$12,962.12



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Foot Problems in Birds

Just like humans, birds suffer from a range of leg and foot conditions. Some of these problems are potentially serious in nature, such as nerve damage or a tumor, while other conditions may clear up with something as simple as a perch change or toenail clipping. Some concerns related to the legs and feet of birds are easily identifiable, while others – such as lameness – may be caused by stroke, nerve compression or toxicosis – among other possibilities.

Having a consultation with an avian veterinarian provides a unique and invaluable opportunity to understand the legs and feet of your bird, and what best sustains their health. For example, a condition that is particular to birds is bumblefoot, an inflammatory condition of the soles of the feet. In some cases, birds suffering from a disorder like bumblefoot can develop serious, and possibly life-threatening, bacterial infections. If the owner of a pet bird does not pay careful enough attention to physical changes to the skin or structure of the feet, the bird may have to endure chronic pain or eventually experience something as serious as lameness.

There is a range of unique conditions that may affect the feet, and physical stance, of a pet bird. Foot problems may be attributable to something serious, like nerve compression or trauma, or due to something simple, like a blister. Paying careful attention to how the bird stands on and interacts with its perches is highly recommended. When a bird has an injury or a condition affecting the legs or soles of the feet, the discomfort will often show in a constant shifting from foot to foot. Irritation from the surface of the perch may become a potentially genuine problem if small cuts in the soles of the feet allow for the entrance of bacteria or a fungus. Because they typically curl around the perch, one commonly overlooked problem in pet birds is overgrown toenails. Limping may be attributable to too-long nails, particularly if you notice the first joint of the toe is rising from the surface, or the nail is bent on its side. If your bird is resistant to toenail-clipping, a grooming perch is an excellent solution. The bird can use this perch at will, enabling proper nail length. Providing perches of different widths, diameters and

surfaces enables the bird to stand and shift comfortably. If awkward or uneven, the bird can develop a painful arthritic condition that may worsen over time. Keep perches clean and sturdy. Sandpaper perch covers should always be avoided.

Nutritional status also contributes negatively or positively to every aspect of your bird's health, including the feet. The most common nutritional deficiency in birds is a lack of Vitamin A, which affects the condition of the skin. Without sufficient Vitamin A, legs and feet may become rough and scaly, and lead to discomfort and possible infection.

As always, if you are concerned about physical changes in your pet bird, or suspect that it is experiencing pain or discomfort, please schedule an appointment with an avian veterinarian.

Foot problems in birds can be attributed to a range of health conditions, nutritional deficiencies, or problems in the bird's caging or living environment.

Symptoms of Foot Problems in Birds

- Curling of the toes
- Shifting from foot to foot
- Splayed legs
- Weakness
- Discomfort/pain
- Paralysis
- Swollen and "hot" feet
- Chewing, stomping
- Gout

Types

Foot problems may be ascribed to everything from trauma to overgrown nails, or something more complex like vitamin deficiencies, bacterial infections and heavy metal toxicities. Short-term problems or injuries

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must be addressed so long-term, more serious problems like arthritis do not develop.

Causes of Foot Problems in Birds

Foot problems in birds can be attributed to a range of health conditions such as inflammatory disorders like bumblefoot or even blisters, nutritional deficiencies like a lack of Vitamin A, and problems in the bird's caging or environment, including dirty or uneven perches.

Diagnosis of Foot Problems in Birds

In the case of painful feet, weakness or physical changes in your bird's feet, it's recommended that you seek out an avian veterinary specialist who is aware of a bird's physiology and anatomy.

An excellent tip is, if possible, to take your bird's cage to the avian vet for evaluation. This will give the vet the opportunity to check the bird's stance and any interaction with the perches. The vet will be able to suggest modifications geared specifically toward your bird. The veterinarian may suggest testing for conditions that can contribute to foot problems such as nutritional imbalances, infection, or disease.

Treatment of Foot Problems in Birds

Any treatment will depend upon the problem with the feet. A bacterial infection, for example, can be treated with antibiotics, and pain and inflammation can be treated with nonsteroidal medication and/or pain medication. Sores and roughness can be soothed with ointment or humectants.

Painful and scaly feet can also be alleviated with ongoing warm water soaks. If the feet have any type of scaling or sores, soaks may loosen rough matter and soften the skin.

Recovery of Foot Problems in Birds

There is nothing more important to a bird's quality

of life than the comfort of its legs and feet, its posture, and how it perches within the cage environment. Standing for extended periods of time on a wooden surface or a perch covered with a rough material like burlap or sandpaper may lead to sores and cracks on the soles of the feet, enabling open paths for bacterial or fungal infection. A consultation with a veterinarian who specializes in the treatment of birds is an invaluable opportunity to change the quality of life of your bird.

Repairing Back Slip Claw

Occasionally a chick will have slip claw where the back claw is always pointed forward. When the chick tries to perch, it has only a club foot to balance with and is not able to properly clasp the perch. To fix the slip claw, use 3M brand micro pore surgical tape (if paper tape is not available you can use tape from a band aid) and mold the foot in the proper position. Use only the very smallest diameter perches in the cage to encourage the bird to learn to grip. In very severe cases, it may be necessary to start the bandaged chick in a cage with no perches for a week before it learns to perch. As the bandage gets soiled, remove and check how the chick is perching without the bandage. If he does well, leave the bandage off and just keep an eye on his perching. Should he not perch correctly or revert back to not perching correctly, keep replacing the bandage until it is no longer necessary. The procedure is most effective on young chicks but can even work on older birds, it just takes longer.



Think it couldn't happen in real life?

TORRANCE CALIFORNIA FAMILY EXPERIENCES REAL LIFE SCENARIO FROM ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S "THE BIRDS"!!!

A Torrance, California family is warning others after they were left feeling like they were living out a horror movie when hundreds of birds poured into their home last week.

The avian invasion began last Wednesday, April 21, and lasted a few days, according to Kerri, the woman who lives in the home with her husband and child. She asked that news sources withhold her last name.

Kerri says the family came home from dinner to find the flock swarming around inside after swooping down their chimney, practically taking a scene out of Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds."

"It's so hard to explain. If you don't see it with your own eyes, you'd never believe it," Kerri said.

Video she shared showed the pulsating flock circling above the family's chimney before many begin swooping down inside. Another clip shot later shows them up against a window inside the home, still flapping with determination. "We lost count after 800," Kerri said.

She says the Carson sheriff's station put her family in contact with county animal control officials, who said simply to leave their doors open. But the birds weren't going anywhere.

"They acted like they wanted to get out, but they wasn't going nowhere," said Patrick Belleville, a relative who came over to help with the situation. "They were just flying around, just everywhere, every room in the house, every bathroom." Belleville said he put his hood and mask on to protect himself from the onslaught. "They were just beaming off my head," he said.

Surrounded by hundreds of birds and feeling helpless, Kerri, her husband and their baby stayed in a hotel overnight while Belleville tried to evict the birds.

The birds did calm down and sleep in the house after a few hours — but they made themselves a bit too comfortable, Kerri said.

"The second night I actually woke up to a bird flapping in my room. So basically just pull the covers over my head and started screaming," she told KTLA.

Possibly worse, the home became filled with bird droppings. "You couldn't walk in any spot in the living room, the kitchen and the hallway without stepping on bird droppings," Kerri said.

Up the coast in Montecito, just south of Santa Barbara, the local fire department says it responded to a home where 1,000 birds became trapped in a chimney Sunday night.

In that incident, the birds were identified as swifts.

In both Montecito and Torrance, the birds' behavior appears to align with that of the Vaux's swift, which is known to roost in chimneys in groups.

The birds are believed to be passing through Southern California as they migrate north, looking for a new home.

John Honjiyo, whose bird control company Birdxpert serves Orange and Los Angeles counties, said he's been busy lately with bird nuisance calls. He advised residents in the area to close their chimney flue and make sure their spark resister at the top hasn't rusted out and opened.

SAVE THE DATE

**WE ARE PLANNING OUR
51ST ANNUAL SHOW
FOR 2021!**

Set Up and registration is on Friday, Nov. 5.

**Registration, sales, and show on
Saturday, Nov. 6.**

Raffle and sales on Sunday, Nov. 7

