

FOREIGN BIRDS

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KEEPING SOCIETY IN THE UK

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A big thanks to all those who contributed to this magazine—Darren

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photographed at Buena Vista Lodge in Ecuador by Darren
Sefton

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The Premier Foreign Bird Keeping Society

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As with any correspondence a S.A.E. would be greatly appreciated.

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Editor's Page Darren Sefton

I must start off with an apology—in the Winter edition I included two photographs of Laughing Thrushes sent in by Nigel Hewston to accompany his article on Softbills—I labelled them up the wrong way around, so I've re-printed them on page 7—hopefully with the right names this time !

Sadly, I've been struggling for content this quarter. I had hoped that the enforced lockdown would mean that people had time to spare and encouraged some writing. I would like to think that your time was taken up caring for and enjoying your birds instead (a much better alternative actually) Although the opportunity for articles on overseas trips and zoo visits will obviously have been curtailed. Here's hoping this changes soon.

However, Steve Peacock and Bryan came to my rescue (and they deserve my gratitude), but I've been forced into picking out some articles from our overseas magazine exchange, or from the internet. I've tried to pick out items that you will have not already seen them and also find them of interest.

It is always preferable in my mind for new material written by our members specifically for Foreign Birds, so to this end I'm appealing to you all to spend a few minutes to jot down some of your experiences and also send me them, hopefully with a few bird-related photos. It has been a few years since it was last published, but I've included a guide on writing based on one sent in by one of my predecessors from 2012. It is still largely pertinent and therefore I hope this helps.

In a recent news report I saw that crisp manufacturers were advising that prices of crisps were going to rise due to rising Sunflower oil prices, so I've put a report on page 42 about this.

Hope you all keep safe and have a great breeding season
Darren

Honorifics—a reply Bryan Reed

In the Winter 2021 edition Darren Sefton asked whether honorifics being used when naming species of birds was necessary in the modern world

I think it should be left "as is" - I'm personally against trying to change history to suit a trend - or where does it stop? What's acceptable today isn't necessarily acceptable tomorrow, and even then could be reversed again in future.

The current trend seems to be very selective, and often doesn't take into account atrocities carried out by ethnic majorities against minorities in a historically shared foreign land - or the fact that many forebears of wealthy individuals in those lands made fortunes on the misery of others.

And how far do we go back in time? Aristocracy, Invaders of which we and others have had our fair share? Indeed in the present day no countries seem to be making a very good job of all forms of modern slavery. Indeed, neither are they good at controlling the multinationals big business model of exporting jobs to ever cheaper (poorer) countries and their people,. Taking advantage of them on the pretext of the customer wanting ever cheaper products, which is actually based on multinationals wanting more profit, less restrictions, minimal health & safety legislation, fewer environmental concerns, very little remuneration paid to workers and a lot of backhanders. And by the way, I don't remember anyone asking for any consumer's opinion on the subject.

Oh and as Darren hinted you cannot name a species or sub-species after yourself - it's not cricket!

And on the subject of the whole idea of species naming. This is an entirely man made idea to order the natural world by Carl Linnaeus who's credited with being the father of modern taxonomy - if we could actually talk to the natural flora and fauna we may find they couldn't give a damn and may call themselves something entirely different! Lol.

Sorry for my light hearted response to a serious "food for thought" - but we can't wipe out history, countless wars, and subjugation by pretending things didn't happen - different times create different thoughts, moods and ideas, and what seems right or acceptable today may not prove to be right in the near, middle or far distant future.



Striated Laughingthrush *Grammatoptila striatus*



Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron lineatum*

Inti Tanager: Colourful New Species of Bird Discovered in South America

Natali Anderson (courtesy of Sci-news.com—Nov 2021)

Ornithologists have discovered a new genus and species of tanager on the lower slopes of the Andes in southeastern Peru and western Bolivia.



Tanagers are a large family, *Thraupidae*, of more than 370 songbird species restricted almost entirely to the American tropics.

It is the second largest family of birds and represents about 4% of all avian species and 12% of the Neotropical birds.

These fruit-eating birds display a wide range of plumage col-

ours and patterns, foraging behaviours, vocalizations, eco-types, and habitat preferences.

Thraupidae includes some of the most spectacularly colourful birds in the world — such as the paradise tanager (*Tangara chilensis*) — as well as more drab birds.

The newly-discovered species, named the Inti tanager (*Heliothraupis oneilli*), inhabits the Yungas bioregion of Bolivia and Peru. It is also known as the **San Pedro Tanager**

“The name Inti is the Quechua — a language indigenous to the region — word that means ‘Sun,’ referring to the bright yellow colour of the bird,” said first author Dr. Daniel Lane from the Museum of Natural Science at Louisiana State University and colleagues.

Unlike most new bird species discovered recently, which typically differ only subtly from their closest relatives, the Inti tanager is so different in appearance and genetics that the ornithologists also described a new genus just for it.

“The species was first noted from southeastern Peru in 2000, but little of its natural history was uncovered until the 2011 discovery of a breeding population in deciduous forest in an intermontane valley, the Machariapo valley, in Bolivia,” they said.

The seasonality of this new species at the breeding site in Bolivia led the team to conclude that it is an intra-tropical migrant, meaning it migrates from between patches of habitat without leaving the tropics.

“This is rare among passerines,” said co-author Dr. Ryan Terrill, a postdoctoral researcher in the Moore Laboratory of Zoology at Occidental College.

“The Inti tanager is thought to breed in the deciduous forest at the Bolivian site strictly during the rainy season, which runs from November to March, and spend the dry season dispersed along the lower slopes of the Andes as far west as Manu in Peru, the original site of discovery, occupying bamboo-dominated habitats.”

Male Inti tanagers are canary-yellow birds with a contrasting black stripe on their heads. They also have salmon-pink bills and a bushy crest.

Females are primarily yellow with bright orange or pink on their bills but lack the black eyebrow and the crest.

“That this unique, bright yellow bird could have gone unnoticed by ornithologists until recently attests to the remoteness of the areas where it lives and to the importance of continued biological surveys off-the-grid in South America,” the researchers concluded.

The discovery of the Inti Tanager is reported in a paper published in the journal *Ornithology*.

Image credit: Louisiana State University / Lane *et al*

Lineolated Parakeets

Darren Sefton

This March saw the 40th anniversary of me starting to keep birds. I got a pair of Normal Grey Zebra Finches for my Birthday and things lead onto more and more birds—eventually I built an aviary in my parents garden and I was hooked !

This got me thinking about my time with birds and how they have enhanced my life. Firstly, and most importantly, I met my wife Sue whilst on a Burnley Cage Bird Society trip to Walsrode Birdpark in Germany.

I've had a great deal of pleasure from keeping, observing and breeding birds, although it is probably more accurate to say that birds have bred whilst in my care DESPITE me rather than because of me! Many species have bred in our aviaries, but not as many as I would have liked and this is probably my biggest regret.

Another regret was not acquiring a Lineolated Parakeet at Stafford Sales Day a few years ago. I had kept the “normal” green Lineolateds for many years, but this was a completely different bird. It was described as a double-factor Cobalt-Purple and was to me the most amazing colour variant bird I've ever seen. The normal is a handsome, sleek bird with a bright green body covered in black spots and stripes, whereas the green was replaced with a rich light purple.

I knew that it was bird I could look after, I had the aviary space and the appropriate food needed for it was already part of my daily routine, but I still chose not to buy it. I've always seen wild-type colouration as preferable to any of the colour variants bred, so this could have been a deciding factor – as could the price!



Although this picture downloaded from the internet gives an idea of the colouration of the Cobalt, I'm pretty sure that the bird I saw had a much deeper colour to it – maybe this is where the “double-factor” came into play?

However, despite this regret I still believe that the Lineolated is an ideal bird for UK birdkeepers, both beginners and the more advanced. They are smartly dressed, have a quiet voice, don't need huge aviaries and with a little protection are hardy even up here in the North.

The Lineolated Parakeet (*Bolbyrynychus lineola*), sometimes called the Barred Parakeet or simply “Linnie”, is native to highland forests of South and Central America, the Lineolated parakeet gets its name from the black and dark green stripes on its green plumage. It was first bred in the UK in 1953 by A.A. Prestwich, the first FBL member breeding them in 1954 (Mrs. D.K. Draper). I cannot find any record of Mrs Draper writing up her breeding experiences, but Ron Oxley wrote about their breeding in the 1975 Summer edition of *Foreign Birds*. The Lineolated is in the same family as the Sierra Parakeet, a species I've kept before and bred successfully.



The Lineolated parakeet is about 6.5 inches (16 cm) long and weighs from 1.5 to 1.8 oz (42 to 52 grams). It is not too dissimilar to a “chunky Budgie”. Their normal plumage is olive green with stripes, darker green on the tail, and blue under the wings. Lineolated parakeets have pink legs, cream/grey coloured beaks, and dark brown eyes. Males of the species are very similar in appearance to females, though they may have darker stripes and a “bolder” head. In the photo above I would suggest that the far right bird is a male and the one next to it a female. Juveniles are less prominently striped than adult birds.

In the wild, lineolated parakeets live in groups of six to 30 birds, though flocks may be as large as 150 birds. Birds lay four or five eggs at a time, and they hatch within three weeks. Chicks leave the nest about five weeks later. The lifespan of a Lineolated parakeet is about ten to 15 years.

They are an ideal species for the garden aviary, as they certainly will not upset any neighbours with their calls, I’ve heard them described as the “South American Budgie, but with the volume turned down” and this just about says it all. There are even records of pet Lineolateds repeating a few words.

I fed mine on a standard Parakeet mix, a millet mix specifically for Budgies, a wide range of fruit and veg as they come into season, but the rest of the time this is mainly apple, grape and carrot. This fruit was cut up into small chunks to allow them to pick it up and eat it from the foot. Unlike many other parrotlike birds they ate the flesh of the grapes and discarded the skins. When breeding I also supplied a proprietary eggfood sprinkled over the fruit.

Access to bathing water is essential for them to stay in good condition and seem to relish it. In rainy weather they would hang on the wire in such a way as to get quite soaked.

The flight was 2metres long and 60cm wide and 1.8 metres tall. The perches were a mix of natural branches and dowelling. The natural branches always being the favourite. The roof was covered with plastic sheeting, which was also used on the sides during winter. The wire was 16 gauge 1" x ½" (although 19 gauge wire is sufficient to hold Lineolated in, I wanted that extra security of keeping other wildlife etc out.) The nest box I used was about 8" square and about 10" deep and I used wood shavings as the substrate. Although they do not have a particularly strong bite, and do not cause any damage to the aviary, they did chew down the shavings and make it a little finer.

Lineolated do tend to climb and walk more than fly, so the concrete floor of the flight did keep their nails trimmed, but this would need to be watched in case they did grow long. When they do fly, it can be quite fast, so a long flight might actually mean that they could get up speed and hit it quite hard. However, the thicker wire I use makes it more visible.

As well as the Cobalt variant previously written about, there are many other colours available. These include a powder blue, a lutino, a dark olive. I'm quite sure that this range will continue to expand, so if colour variants are your thing, then Lineolateds would be right up your street.

Lowering the pH of the Drinking Water for Finches

Kristen Reeves – courtesy of NFSS

Just about the only advice given to new birdkeepers regarding water is that birds should have a plentiful, clean source of water in the cage or aviary and that you should keep show birds from bathing before judging. Some experienced exhibitors will even take a bottle of their local water to shows if travelling far from home. There is nothing wrong with either of these statements, but there must be more to it than that.

Why would you want to lower the pH?

Many pathogens thrive under high pH conditions. Yeast, protozoa, and some bacterial issues may occur when heat or humidity is high or the immune system is suppressed (recently moved birds, during breeding season, during the molt, any stressful situation, etc.). Lowering the pH of the drinking water inhibits the ability of these pathogens to gain traction and affect your flock.

After years of research, I have discovered the best pH level to maintain healthy gut flora in Gouldians and other small finches is about 5.3-5.5.

When attempting to lower the pH of your water - whether it be to avoid yeast in a chick's crop, or to "sweeten the gut" and tighten droppings, you first want to TEST your water to see what the pH level currently is. I use aquarium test strips to do that here, though the aquarium department of your local pet store may have some better options, such as digital readout testers. The normal pH of your water will also depend on your

water source and may vary greatly if you have a well.



Aquarium test strips as shown above can be easily sourced from the internet at a surprising cheap price and come with a colour chart to indicate the pH

My local tap water ranges from 7.0-7.2. At that level I need to add the following to lower the pH to 5.5:

- 1/4 tsp MegaMix (MM) per quart of water - OR
- 1/4 tsp of Citric Acid crystals (CA) per quart of water – OR
- 1/4 tsp Unpasteurized Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) per quart of water

(it MUST be unpasteurized to be effective) - OR

- 1/4 tsp KD Cleanser per quart of water
-

Once you test your water, you'll then add the appropriate amount of one of the above mentioned reducers to lower the pH.

When I test, I measure 2 cups of water and add 1/8th tsp of the lowering agent at a time, mix well, then RE-TEST to see how much the pH has changed. I continue adding by 1/8th tsp until I get pH the level I desire. I RECORD the amount I had to use for future reference. I typically test my water quarterly to be sure nothing has changed and I don't need to increase or decrease

the amount of reducer I use.

The biggest issue is making sure there isn't so much that it totally changes the taste of the water. If you've had to add too much, the birds may not drink it - which would defeat the purpose. Watch for "squinty eyes". If you see the birds looking squinty, they aren't drinking enough and you need to re-evaluate the amount of pH reducer you've used in their drinking water. Dehydration can quickly lead to death, especially in hot and/or humid climates.

I do NOT use CA, KD, ACV or MM every day of the week. I really only use it when I see a problem. I want my birds to become accustomed to regular, untreated water. I want them to be able to go to a buyer without having been "babied". They should be able to combat issues WITHOUT the use of a pH lowering agent, and should only need it on rare occasions. When I see an issue, I use one of these reducers as my first line of defence. Genetics, nutrition, overall health, stress level, and environment will all play a part in whether you see a need to lower the pH of your bird's drinking water, and how often.

I watch the droppings - when they become wetter than normal, I add the reducer. I also run environment swabs and faecal smears weekly to determine if pathogens are present, but I understand that this will be beyond many hobby keepers.

You MUST know what normal droppings look like for YOUR species. Many times, dropping consistency will depend on what you are feeding them. If you are feeding fresh greens, chitted or sprouted seed, or wet soft food, their droppings will be wetter by default. If they are on a plain seed diet with nothing more than water supplements and grit, their droppings will be well-formed, relatively tight and dry.

Birds who do not have a wet diet may have a small wet ring of urine around their droppings which is perfectly normal. If they are receiving supplements in their water, their urine and/or the

urates may be slightly tinted yellow from the supplements.

If you keep softbills, their droppings will be wetter by default, so knowing what's normal will be imperative to your husbandry regime.

Average Water Intake for Healthy Captive Birds

Over the last 10-17 years (depending on length of time any particular species was kept), I've tracked everything from seed hulls to water intake and have referenced the water intake for normal, healthy birds and multiple species. Average temperature in my bird room ranges from 65-72 degrees during the spring, summer & fall months, 48-68 during the winter. Humidity is always a bit on the high side right around 50- 55%, but often much higher because my bird room is located in the basement. I will occasionally run a dehumidifier when the humidity is higher than 55%, but not often. I prefer to allow the birds to acclimate to their environment and build up immunities to issues that would be present during high humidity time. These totals are taken only from my own aviary and may be very different in other aviaries.

In my aviary, every species drinks a different amount of water. I track it daily and keep detailed for each cage. Birds in flights tend to drink less - no matter the species or mix of species – while pairs tend to drink more with or without chicks. Odd observation, yes, but a flock mentality does strange things to their eating & drinking habits!

Averages for species we currently keep or have kept are as follows:

- Gouldian - ½ oz per bird per day
- Society (Bengalese) - ½oz per bird per day
- Chestnut Breasted Mannikin - ½ oz to ¾ oz per bird per day
- Star Finch - ¾ to 1 oz per bird per day
- Zebra Finch – ¾ to 1 oz per bird per day

- Cherry Finch - ½ oz per bird per day
- Shafftail (Longtailed Grassfinch) Finch - ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Parson Finch - ¾ to 1 oz per bird per day
- Masked Grassfinch – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Blue Capped Cordon Bleu - ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Red Cheeked Cordon Bleu - ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- African Silverbill - ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Indian Silverbill – ½ to ¾ oz per bird per day
- Owl Finch (Bicheno) - ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Lavender Waxbill – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Redbilled Fire Finch (Senegal) – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Gold Breasted Waxbill – 1/8 to ¼ oz per bird per day
- Orange Cheeked Waxbill – ¼ oz per bird per day
- Black & White Manikins – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Bronze Winged Manikins – ¼ oz per bird per day
- Blue Faced Parrot Finch – 1 to 2 oz per bird per day (they soften their food with the water and also try to bathe in the drinkers, so this could be less drinking and more mess making, there's no way to truly measure)
- Red Throated Parrot Finch – ¾ to 1 oz per bird per day
- Quail Finch – ¼ oz per bird per day
- Cutthroat – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Spice Finch – ¼ oz per bird per day
- Green Singers – ½ to 1oz per bird per day
- Grey Singers – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Cuban Melodious - ½ to 1 oz per bird per day
- Weaver (Red Bishop) - ½ to 1 oz per bird per day
- Strawberry - ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day
- Crimson Pileated Finch – ¼ to ½ oz per bird per day. This small amount is mostly due to the wet foods they receive daily.
- Budgerigar – varies greatly from ½ to 4 oz per bird per day – mostly due to bathing in the water receptacle
- African Grey – approximately 6 oz per day
- Orange Cheeked Conure – approximately 4 oz per day
- Rosa Bourke – 2 oz per bird per day
- Scarlet Breasted Grasskeet – ½ to 1 oz per bird per day
- Canaries – ½ oz per bird per day. Fairly consistent regardless

of species (We've kept Glosters, American Singers, Fife and Rollers)

Taking into consideration that a medication or supplement may taste or smell bad, these amounts may vary greatly depending on what is added to the drinking water. Gouldians here, for example, will totally refuse to drink for up to 48 hours if they don't like the taste or smell. By then they are wobbly and looking dehydrated and squinty-eyed and will finally give in and drink, but in very small amounts averaging less than 1/4 oz. I have seen similar behaviour in all of the species I've kept over the years, but to a lesser extent than with the Goulds.

These totals also change dramatically depending on the foods offered. Salt content and wet foods affect intake – changes in diet will also affect consumption, usually seeing it rise as much as 5x the norm until they've acclimated to the new diet, so obviously these totals may be very different from one aviary to the next. Overall health of the flock also plays a large role in consumption. In my experience ill birds, or those with mild issues, tend to drink more than those with strong immune systems and no outward signs of illness. And, of course, heat and humidity play a large role as well. A hot and humid aviary may see far larger consumption, while a drier, cooler aviary may see slightly lower consumption.

An important aspect of tracking water intake is observing whether a bird has received enough of a medication to actually stop an issue. In the past it has been a problem here and what prompted me to begin tracking intake. Unless I closely monitor their intake, I may not know for sure they are getting enough. When I do not monitor the water intake, my only other recourse is to check droppings and run crop washes (depending on the issue) to ensure treatment has worked. I perform follow-ups at 3 days, 7 days and 10 days following treatment, and monitor water intake the entire time. But all water is tracked daily, regardless of health in the flock.

Breeding Brown-Breasted Barbets

Steve Peacock

Sunday 4th October: on a trip to the Stafford show ground I hadn't thought about buying any birds in particular, I was just looking for rings and food etcetera. We had gone around the various show halls and were just about to leave when we bumped into an old friend with some young Brown Breasted Barbets for sale. The Brown Breasted Barbet (*Lybius melanopterus*) is a bird in the *Lybiidae* family.

Found in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia and Tanzania, it is a large and unusually coloured barbet, with a predominantly red head, a broad brown band across the underbody, a black back, and a white belly and rump patch. It is a beautiful looking bird.



Illustration left is the Brown-breasted Barbet painted in 1860 by Paul Oudart.

This pair for sale looked gorgeous and so I was tempted but not really in the market for any birds. I did not have enough money either; "... go on, you know you want them" was a response from my mate "... oh, I will lend you some cash", so after much deliberation I bought them. Now I need to do some research, but first had to buy some carrying cages. On arriving home, the pair were put into quarantine with lighting left on inside my workshop overnight. The birds were isolated for three weeks and

were getting on well in a large double breeder; luckily I put some small soft logs in for the birds and they made short work of those.

The birds were fed on my own recipe soft foods. I make up two types;

one normal universal with additives including apple cheese carrot and grated dog food; and the other is a mixture of egg food, couscous dry and then in season fruits and added to the mix daily and fed in separate dishes mixing up the soft feeds and chopping fruit etc I find very satisfying and enjoyable with the current collection it takes approximately 1.5 hours per day to mix up their soft foods then there is feeding and washing up of the dishes; luckily I have all the amenities to hand in my own small kitchen: fridge freezer; sink and hot and cold water, separate to the house so it doesn't antagonise my wife!



The barbets were released into a 3mx 2.4m fully planted Avery, which was 90% covered. Planting included clump forming bamboo which was quite mature and bushy, *berberis thunbergii* with its small orange berries and dark red fruit. This flight was in the middle of a 20m run of flights, a dry stream and

associated rocks, gravel and grass is formed a there running into the aviaries, with sand covered areas in the common parts as well in the parts open to the weather.

Several small nest boxes and angled nest logs were already in situ. A lot of searching was carried out to find tall logs suitable for the birds, but to no avail, so I





tried to make one out of several smaller ones stacked together. This didn't look that good. Time had run out and the birds were in on the Saturday 2nd of April.

Generally, I like to release birds on the weekend when I am available to check on their well being. An added bonus is that I have set up a hard wired camera system of flight and nest box cameras which relay real time video back to a DVR recorder and monitor in my workshop. Good in one respect but very time consuming when you need to be doing other jobs! The nest logs were set on a 45 degree angle and approximately 300 millimetres in diameter set high up under some overhanging shrubbery.

On checking the camera these logs were checked out but not used. the birds roosted in a 200 by 200 by 300 high nest box with rotten woods chunks and wood chips in the bottom. All this was ejected and the birds would roost together. Interestingly I tried to record the aspect of the nest box entrance hole, this was facing east. There were others with different aspects that they did not use. Nest boxes facing east

have early morning sun but can also be open to hostile east winds, let the birds decide their preference. Although the birds were using the box at night and in the day no the was no sign of nesting behaviour witnessed. Birds probably too young as yet. However I was experiencing a lot of trouble with cats and particularly a fox was running up and down on top of the run of flights, this caused mayhem and on Wednesday the 4th of May I found the female Brown Breasted Barbet dead and also a grey sided thrush in the adjoining aviary had died. I assumed this to be night fright, but was really rather sad, and perplexed as to how to resolve the situation, plus two single birds in two separate flights, not a good start to the season, as we so often say “ *there's always next year* ”.



And

so it was in midwinter before I found a replacement female: a 2016 Brown Breasted Barbet bred by a good friend in Wiltshire. On ac-

quiring the Brown Breasted Barbet I put her in quarantine in the workshop before moving her into an adjoining internal flight with the male Brown Breasted Barbet to see how they get along. I had no hopes of any breeding this year, but she's a cracking bird in full plumage. on putting her next to the cock bird, he started getting excited jumping from side to side on his perch with a lot of tail wagging, a good sign. I decided to put the barbets out into the flight, one same flight as the previous pair

15th April: on introduction both birds disappeared into the bamboo. As I needed to observe their interactions with each other I retreated to the workshop to view them on camera. Having both emerged they found the feeding station and ate some fruit, had a bath and then settled into separate perches, all appeared to be okay until the cock bird started getting close to the hen which was okay, she moved away and then he started to vigorously chase her several times. So much so as soon as she went to feed he would harass her, too much I thought, so I decided to remove the cock bird into the adjoining flight. On opening the door in he went. How long this will last I don't know, I will have to observe on camera over the next few weeks and give her a chance to be safe and secure in her own flight. Over the next week or so they were sat next to each other with the wire mesh between them, but I could not hear any vocalisations as it was video only.

29th April: opened adjoining flight door and retreated to the workshop to view, they both started flying around together where she went he followed but not chasing. Over the winter I managed to find a 1800mm x 300mm log and installed it partially shielded by the bamboo shrub, and fixed a horizontal perch close by in full view of the camera. Both birds seem quite comfortable with each other at present. Birds roosting in a normal ply wood nest box have thrown all the loose woods and wood chips out of the box, but they are showing a lot of interest in the tall log which is well weathered. They are now taking it in turns to excavate the nest log by clinging to it like woodpeckers. Next time I looked after work there is a hole in the log and only one bird visible, this is good news eventually the second bird appeared from the nest log.

2nd May: observed Brown Breasted Barbets feeding each other and

offering pieces of fruit, they are now both in and out the nest log and a pile of wood chips are at the base of the log, still feeding, cock feeding hen. Having increased live food for a week or so, they don't seem that interested in it, they go straight for the fruit soft food mix.

4th May: one birds in log one out, assuming hen is inside. when she comes out there is much tail wagging by the hen with the cock bird jumping back and forth over her, repeatedly no treading as yet. This is all rather exciting.

5th May: Same as yesterday with both birds out of box, but I assume it's the hen, she stays in the log for longer periods, when she comes out tail wagging and jumping starts again. No treading.

6th May: as above but after a while of the cock bird jumping over hen, she stops he stops on her and starts treading. I thought I would count this as they were treading a full 80 seconds. I couldn't believe it! She would go back into the nest log, come out after about 10 minutes and it would start again, really pleased.

7th and 8th May: as above I assume she is in the process of laying, fingers crossed.

9th May: birds both in an out of nest log.

11th May: really heavy rain storm luckily log is undercover and cock is feeding the hen through the nest holes and also when she comes out, with much tail wagging.

12 May: I think the barbet might be sitting. Just a little side issue of annoyance, the birds are fed via triple swing feeders to enable easy feeding with little disturbance. The downside to this is that snails climb up the wire and slime the soft food, consequently the birds won't touch it. A short gap solution was to put copper tape around the feeders to deter the snails and slugs, this worked for awhile, but the slime persisted so I started to remove dishes overnight and replace

early morning to break the cycle. This worked but I had to be up extra early (4am).



28th May: pretty sure Brown Breasted Barbets have hatched as I spotted an egg shell under the food dishes, so I've added crickets and more pinkies to the dish.

29th May: not much live food being consumed as yet.

1st June: more live food going in; crickets, pinkies and mini meal worms. All dusted with vitamin powder. Not as much live food being consumed as I would have thought, but lots of fruit soft food going and not so much of the Orlux type soft food. Observing on camera both parents in and out of the log, sometimes she stays in and cock bird feeds her from the outside, this behaviour was seen from 1st until 15th of June.

16th June: hen Brown Breasted Barbet being chased by Cock bird, she keeps disappearing not sure if they are nesting again and she is trying to hide from his attentions, hope they don't abandon their first nest. Hen still disappearing and don't really want to go in the flight and search for her at this time.

22nd June: hen still in nest and still disappearing but also in and out of the log.

25th June: heard what I think is chicks chirping from the nest log.

27th June: live food feeding has dropped off a lot and there is now live food left in the feeder, but lots more of the fruit soft food is being consumed.

30th June: not sure if the hen is sitting again.

1st July: what a great day, a Brown Breasted Barbet has left the nest, very excited and very hopeful. Are there more?

2nd July: came home from work today and saw not one but three Brown Breasted Barbet chicks out! On the perch sat flanked by proud parents! Just lovely. The chicks are fully feathered but quite dark in comparison to the parents. Very drab.. Cock bird intermittently chasing the hen and she disappears into the log, fingers crossed!

Editor's note :- Steve was recognised as the first FBL member to have bred this species.

Successful Breeding of Peter Twinspots

Jaco Kriek – South Africa



HISTORY OF THE PAIR

At the end of September 2016, I acquired Peters Twinspots from an importer here in South Africa. This was from the last birds imported before the ban started. The age of my pair is thus unknown. The cock was paired with another female which I subsequently lost. In April I introduced another hen and they immediately started breeding. I miss interpreted their behaviour for abandonment during May 2017, and when a chick fledged, it was very weak due to poor nutrition provided by me. The chick died the first night out of the nest.

During June 2017 the hen got egg bind, and I gave her heat. She didn't recover enough to be able to push the egg out and was basically dead. As a last resort I broke the egg inside her and was fortunate that she recovered 100%. I didn't return her to the cock, but separated them for the remainder of the winter. She was re-introduced to the cock early September, and they started building a nest within a week. Breeding started shortly after.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I am located 30km outside Malmesbury in the Western Cape, we have dry hot summers, and cool/cold wet winters. We have a lot of wind, summer southeast, and

winter west and north-west.

AVIARY INFORMATION

I have a breeding setup, meaning my aviaries are small with limited birds and species per aviary. Aviaries are 0.9m wide, 1.8 deep, and 2.1m high. The Peters Twinspots do not have a densely planted aviary, some grass and shrubs and additional cover is provided. They share their aviary with one pair of Gouldian finches. Seed mixture is provided by means of roof hanging self-feeders, and soft food, minerals and water are given on a feed platform from the outside, I thus enter the aviary the least amount of times possible (only to fill the self-feeders). Nesting sites provided included large hollow bricks, and a piece of cloth hanging from the side of the aviary (was meant to plug a hole but they built their nest under it!) Nesting material includes teff grass, kikuyu grass, and feathers.



Left—Aviary floor — Ground with live and dried grasses, shrubs and additional cover

NUTRITION PROVIDED

I have a 2-week water routine:

Week 1: Monday Vitiation 34

Tuesday Clean water

Wednesday Apple cider vinegar

Thursday Clean water

Friday Clean water

Saturday Apple cider vinegar

Sunday Clean water

Week 2: Monday Vit B12

Tuesday Clean water

Wednesday Vit D3 and Calcium Boro Gluconate

Thursday Vit D3 and Calcium Boro Gluconate

Friday Vit D3 and Calcium Boro Gluconate

Saturday Clean water

Sunday Apple cider vinegar

The Vit D3 and Calcium Boro Gluconate is specifically to combat egg binding, since I started this routine I have not experienced egg binding again.

Seed Mix (*always available in self feeders*):

30% white millet

20% budgie mix

40% red manna

10% canary

Soft Food:

Boiled pigeon breeding mix

Sprouted mung beans and shelled sunflower

Broccoli

Green beans

Carrot

These ingredients are chopped fine in a food processor. I then add hard-boiled egg and sprouted Japanese millet.

Live Food:

Black soldier fly maggots and mealworms

Minerals:

A bowl of minerals is always available. The mineral bowl consists of:

Charcoal

Grit

Diatoms

Egg shells



Above—the feeding stations attached to the side of the aviaries

BEHAVIOUR OF BIRDS

The hen and cock shared brooding. Three days before my estimated hatch date I started to increase the amount of live food provided.

The pair tried to indicate that they don't even have a nest, and would never approach their nest while I am in site. I thus always spend as little time as possible at the aviary. The amount of food they ate gave them away however. Some days I had to top up the live food, and other days I had to top up their soft food.

On day 12 the hen stopped sleeping in the nest.

On day 20 the chicks fledged.



Nesting site – large hollow bricks, and a piece of cloth hanging from the side of the aviary that was meant to plug a hole but they built their nest under it!

CARE GIVEN TO CHICKS

The first night out all the chicks returned to the nest. The second night the 2 strongest perched for the evening, and the 2 weakest chicks returned to the nest.

The weather was cold and windy, as such I took the two chicks that perched inside for the night (in a Gouldian nestbox)

The following evening all the chicks perched and the weather was favourable, and subsequently I have left them alone.

Trade in Protected Species is Expanding in the Czech Republic

JAN POTŮČEK ON ARARAUNA.CZ

This is an article translated via internet translation service from press in the Czech Republic and posted online.



Exports of endangered species from the Czech Republic break records. In 2020, according to the Ministry of the Environment, Czechs exported almost 55,000 specimens protected by the international CITES agreement. This is the highest number so far. Most of it was exotic birds. In their breeding, the Czechia is one of the world's great powers, experts confirm. However, the number of specimens seized during the illegal trade has also increased.

At first glance, the ranking of countries that have exported the most protected birds to other countries in recent years is not surprising. The first is South Africa, followed by Cuba and the Philippines. That is, exotic countries, where a large number of rare bird species naturally live. However, the fourth place was taken by the state, which does not correspond to this description - Czechia.

According to data from the Ministry of the Environment, in 2020 alone, Czechs legally exported a total of 54,974 individuals of animal species protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, called CITES.

Czechia thus broke its previous record from 2019, the number of ex-

ported specimens increased by about two and a half thousand. Trade in protected species has been growing in the Czech Republic for a long time - since the beginning of the last decade, the number of exported animals has more than tripled. This comes from the State of the Environment Report 2020, which is issued annually by the Ministry of the Environment.

Most of the exported animals, almost 40,000, were birds. Especially small parrots - red-rumped Parrot, eastern rosella and crimson rosella, yellow-fronted parakeet or Fischer's Lovebird. "In the case of exported birds, these are all specimens born and bred in captivity in the Czech Republic, which shows what a breeding power in Czechia is," Dominika Pospíšilová, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of the Environment, told Aktuálně.cz.

This is also confirmed by Pavla Říhová from the Institute for the Environment, Faculty of Science, Charles University, which has been dealing with the issue of trade in endangered species for a long time. "In the Czech Republic, we have fifty to sixty thousand people who actively breed or trade species protected by CITES. We are really top in this in Europe. For example, Hungarians have about three thousand, Portuguese only six hundred," she calculates.

According to Říhová, the origin of this peculiarity can be traced back to the communist regime, when due to limited travel, Czechs were looking for ways to get closer to exotic regions, at least with the help of hobbies that they can do at home. "So they grow cacti, raise fish or just parrots. And today they also export a huge amount," he adds.

Parrots from the Czech Republic usually set out on a long journey. They most often go to Arab countries of the Middle East - Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar or the United Arab Emirates. It is common to keep small parrots as pets there.

"Really large shipments are going there, for example six hundred neophemas or fifteen hundred alexanders," says Říhová. Despite the high number of exported specimen, however, according to her, it is still mainly small breeders.

CITES aims to protect rare species from the threat of extinction in the wild due to over-exploitation for trade. Breeding, sale and

transport of these species is permitted, but is subject to stricter regulations and controls, and the breeder or trader needs to obtain a special permit.

Pavla Říhová points out that the inclusion of an animal on the CITES list does not necessarily mean that it is a rare species. This is precisely the case with the parrots that Czechs export the most. Some of them are on the list because it is easy to confuse them with rarer bird species. For greater trade control, therefore, it is more assuring that almost every parrot must be subject to a special permit.

"The goal of CITES is mainly to preserve the life of birds in nature. The specimen that Czechs mostly export have not seen nature a hundred generations ago. But there may be a rare species hidden among them," says Říhová.

This is what airport and border controls focus on, among other things - inspectors check each consignment to see if there is any rare species hidden among common parrots, such as rosellas, such as a macaw.

Veterinarians and customs officers then check that the animals are treated under the rules and that the bird trader has the necessary permit - each breeder must have an approved farm and export from the veterinary administration, as well as a CITES export permit from the Ministry of the Environment.

Checks do not only take place at airports. According to spokesman Jiří Ovečka, the Czech Environmental Inspectorate sets out several dozen inspections every year directly to breeders of exotic birds. In 2018 and 2019, they undertook a total of 59, physically inspected five hundred parrots. They focused on the rarest species, such as cockatoo, macaw or Amazon.

"Violations of the law were found in about half of the cases," says Ovečka. According to him, the most common offenses were failure to prove origin, the absence of mandatory unmistakable markings, commercial handling in violation of the law, late mandatory registration or failure to keep records of breeding or trading.

Czechia records increased numbers last year, also in terms of illegal trade in protected birds. Last year, inspectors confiscated 26 live birds during inspections at the airport or border, while in recent

years the number has never exceeded ten. Unusually, the number of dead birds seized also increased - there were 58 of them.

However, according to Říhová, the total extent of illegal trade in endangered species is difficult to deduce from the number of seized pieces. "There are very few people working like inspectors in our country, and seizures match that. We have some successes, but there could be more," he said.

According to the director of the Czech Ornithological Society, Zdeněk Vermouzek, it can be said with almost certainty that the number of undetected cases of rare bird smuggling far exceeds the number of detected ones. "We know that illegal trade exists and that its volume is alarming," Vermouzek fears.

Darren – in recent years the number of birds coming into the EU (and therefore potentially into the UK) from the Czech Republic has seen a steep rise with some people questioning the source of not just these birds, but (in the case of proven captive-bred birds) also their parents. It is likely that the vast majority of the birds included in the stats reported above are completely legitimate.

Although there is no doubt that the paperwork was completely in order, I was still interested to find via **Aracauna.cz** that Loro Parque has had 2 importations from Czechia into the collection recently (there are no indications as to the size of the importation or the species involved). I would have thought that the collection had enough birds, and would be self-sustaining, but I suppose outcrosses are always required to stop birds within a breeding project becoming in-bred, especially if there was a limited foundation stock.

A Guide to Writing

This guide was originally provided in response to enquiries from members seeking a “helpful reminder” when contemplating writing articles for the FBL magazine. It is a guide list only. Authors should use their own comfortable style.

Species: Name, common (ambiguous?) and scientific (modern/reference/source). Field and aviary description. Breeding possibilities (FBL register indications). What attracted you to this species, and these particular birds? Age of birds? How sexed? UK bred/imported? Acquisition (eg from trade, FBL show or sales day).

Accommodation: Aviary, bird room or cage. Dimensions. Materials used, double glazed panels, plastic? Control of temperature, light, humidity.

Nesting: Other species and numbers in vicinity (earshot, eyesight). Territorial behaviour, singing, contact calls. Pair bonding. Date/time of year. Weather conditions. Pre-breeding diet. Nest location. “artificial” (nest box, material and dimensions) or “natural”, on ground, in vegetation (type) how high? Materials used for nest, inside and out. Nest decoration. Sexing sharing building? Duration?

Eggs: Description and number of eggs. Laying frequency and incubation, by both birds? Behaviour of off-duty bird. Date young hatched. All eggs fertile?

Rearing: Rearing diet, natural and artificial components. Commercial products. Self bred/caught livefood? Most and least popular food. How and when presented. Both parents feeding? Description of young, colour, nakedness, onset of feathering. First “noises heard”. Chicks behaviour/mobility. Size, material and colour of rings used and at what age? Date fledged. Changes in diet? Indications of independence.

Maturation: Mortality. Moulting. Behavioural relationships with parents and other birds.

Anecdotes: Further broods. Exhibition experiences. Cage size, style,

decoration. Awards? Disposals? FBL breeding awards scheme? Second-generation breeding?

Hints and Tips Notes about items and techniques you find useful during management of your birds. Aviary security. Sketches welcome – they can be redrawn if necessary.

Our readers write: General notes of interest to other members. Birds going to nest. Unusual behaviour of birds owned. Longevity of your birds. Influences or otherwise of external factors such as weather, rodents, cats, smoke, low-flying aircraft! Visits to the FBL stands at exhibitions and shows around the country. Bird diseases, illness, post-mortems. Veterinary services.

Travels: Several members have written interesting articles concerning bird experiences during foreign holidays and travel. Art gallery, library, museum and zoo visits. Contact required with other members for occasional shared travel to shows, exhibitions and such-like.

Miscellany : In the press, radio and TV programmes. Book reviews. Future events.

IN FACT ANYTHING THAT YOU FEEL WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE

I can of course accept articles via Royal Mail, but a cheaper and faster option is e-mail. In an ideal world this would be my preferred option as it avoids me re-typing everything. If the files are typed up using Microsoft Word—PDFs are also acceptable—then this would be excellent (Apple word processing software is something that my PC cannot open I'm afraid)

Illustrations: Photographs (black and white or colour) or drawings. Ideally digital JPG files would be the best option, but I do have scanning facilities should the photos be prints.

Front Cover Bird

The **Booted Racket-tail** (*Ocreatus underwoodii*) is found in the Andean cordillera of northern Venezuela, western Colombia, and on the eastern slope of the Andes in Ecuador. There is some argument as to whether there is just one sub-species or whether it should be split into three. The individual in the photograph was very confiding and let me get quite close as it sipped sugar water from the feeder. However, it was very protective of its spot and other Hummingbirds that got close were chased off.

Racket-tails have pronounced sexual dimorphism (sexes have different plumage). Only the male has elongated outer rectrices (tail feathers) that are about 7.5 to 9 cm long. These tail feathers have bare shafts with long terminal oval shaped flags that have pointed ends. In perching birds, the rackets are held parallel with a slight overlap of the flags. In the photo below you can see the intensity of blue on the rackets (although the rest of the photo is a bit fuzzy)



Both sexes are shining green above with a small white postocular (located behind the eye) spot. The underparts of the male are also shining green with an iridescent green throat patch that can be seen in good light, but the feeder was in shade so this was not very prominent. The female has white underparts with many large dark green spots and its black tail has white tips. Both sexes have white coloured leg puffs (booties), although the male's are longer and fluffier. Juvenile males lack the tail streamers.



Juvenile male Racket-tail

Adult Female Racket-tail



The Russia-Ukraine conflict is having wide ranging economic effects—oil and gas prices are soaring and it has been reported that future Sunflower oil supplies are at risk. Will this increase the cost of our birdseed? This report on oil prices also suggests that the cost of Sunflower (and also Safflower) seeds will be under pressure to rise too. The laws of Economics states that lack of supply that outstrips demand will always push up prices. Hopefully, other producers will step up production, but of course that will take time.

Extract from “Moneyweek.com” online newsletter

Russia and Ukraine are significant exporters of sunflower seed oil. In 2020, Ukraine produced 18% of the world’s sunflower seed, safflower, and cottonseed oil; 8% of its wheat and meslin (a mixture of wheat and rye); 12% of its barley; and 13% of the world’s corn, according to the International Trade Centre. Russia is an even bigger food producer, with its sunflower seed, safflower or cottonseed production accounting for almost 40% of total global exports in 2020; and 18% of the world’s exports of wheat and meslin.

How will the war affect Ukrainian supplies?

So what happens given that so much of this supply is being cut off or disrupted? Clearly, we are looking at serious consequences for agriculture and food production, including “the disruption of business operations and trade flows, higher commodity and energy prices and a deteriorating economic outlook,” says Dutch bank ING.

Already “the impact is trickling down to many food & agriculture companies in Europe and elsewhere”. With men being called up to fight, harvests and transportation are already being drastically affected. Meanwhile, Oleg Ustenko, economic adviser to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, points out that it may be impossible for Ukrainians to sow seed this year as “those parts of Ukraine which are most productive in terms of agricultural production are now consistently under aerial attack and artillery bombardment”.

Time is running out for Ukraine’s “spring sowing campaign”, the regular window for which runs in the first ten days of March. Planting needs to be fully completed in the last week of April.

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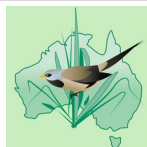
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