



ASA
Avicultural Bulletin

**A JOURNAL FOR BIRD BREEDING, CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND EDUCATION
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016**



NEXT ISSUE

ASA Junior Aviculture Program Featuring
Gregory Sercel & His Orange Bishop Weavers

The purposes of the Society are the study of foreign and native birds to promote their conservation and protection; the dissemination of information on the care, breeding, and feeding of birds in captivity; the education of Society members and the public through publications, meetings, and available media; and the promotion and support of programs and institutions devoted to conservation.

Front Cover: Chilean flamingo (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*) Photo: Carol Stanley

Inside Cover: Orange Bishop Weaver (*Euplectes franciscanus*) Photo: Steve Duncan

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Contents

- 3 Officers & Staff
- 3 ASA Meetings
- 3 ASA and Social Media
- 4 Courtship Display of Flamingos at Probandar (Gujarat) India *Dhaval Varagiya, Photos by Kishore Joshi*
- 18 Steve's Photo Pick
- 21 Those Fabulous Flamingos *Carol Stanley*
- 28 Coturnix Quail *Greg Sercel*
- 31 Eclectus Handrearing Tips *Rodney Malmquist*
- 34 ASA MEMBER CLUBS
- 34 ASA Affiliations
- 34 New Members
- 34 The Foreign Bird League
- 35 AVICULTURAL SOCIETY of AMERICA HONOR ROLL
- 35 ASA SUSTAINING Members
- 35 EVENTS
- 37 2016 ASA Conference

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President's Message

The New Year offers many promises of new beginnings and I can't help but look back on the things I would have liked to accomplish during the past year, or years, and ponder why I hadn't made any progress? I was willing, I had the goals yet, somehow, this or that required my attention and the goals lay forgotten until now, another year jogs my memory, and I am disappointed for not following through.

I feel aviculture has had an unrealized goal that needs to be addressed and there is no time for procrastination. This goal cannot fall by the wayside. The need for attracting prospective young aviculturists is at the top of the to do list. Without youth encouraged to participate and learn about aviculture from our vast, yet shrinking, veteran aviculturists, aviculture will surely go the way of the Edsel, with barely a whimper.

With this goal in mind, I am calling on the ASA board, membership and other organizations to work together to incubate and hatch new ideas that will promote aviculture to the next generation. From providing a beginner breeding set up with birds, cage, nest box/nest and associated paraphenalia to classroom visits, 4-H and more, we are only limited by our ideas and willingness to embrace the future of aviculture with a helping hand that will, in turn, keep aviculture alive.

To paraphrase that well known President from Massachusetts, "Ask not what aviculture can do for you but, what you can do for aviculture."

Carol Stanley

President, Avicultural Society of America

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ASA Meetings

Get the latest meeting info online at : www.asabirds.org/meetings.htm

ASA Regular Meetings are generally held the first Sunday of the Month in Southern California. Everyone is welcome to attend. Check the website for updates on speakers and their topics as well as to reconfirm dates and times etc. Come as you are and bring a friend!

ASA Yahoo Email Group

Did you know ASA has an email group? It's easy to join. Email:

asabirds-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and you will start getting messages.

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COURTSHIP DISPLAY OF FLAMINGOS AT PORBANDAR (GUJARAT) INDIA


Dhaval Varagiya

Photos by: Kishore Joshi



LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* MALE DISPLAYING IN FULL
BREEDING PLUMAGE PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



A photograph of two Lesser Flamingos in a shallow, watery environment. The bird in the foreground is the primary focus, shown in profile as it preens its feathers. Its long, thin legs are visible, and its dark, hooked beak is tucked back towards its body. The feathers are a mix of pale pink and white, with some darker pink patches. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue-grey, suggesting a vast, open wetland or coastal area. Another flamingo is partially visible on the left side of the frame, also preening.

Porbandar (21° 37' 48"N, 69° 36' 00"E) is a coastal district of Gujarat state of India. Porbandar is rich in wetland diversity. The city is the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. Porbandar is also known as Surkhabnagri which simply means Flamingo City.

LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR*- PREENING BEFORE COURTSHIP DISPLAY PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR*- WING SALUTING DURING DISPLAY
PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI

♂



LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* TIGHT GATHERING FOR COURTSHIP DANCE
PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI

♂

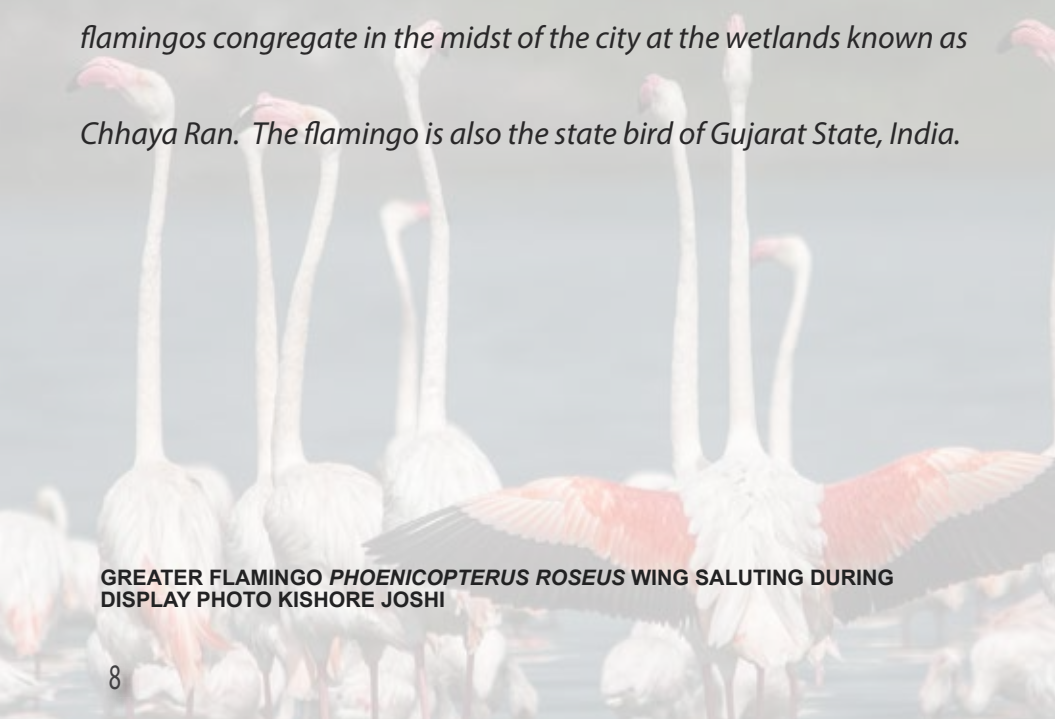


**GREATER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* IN COURTSHIP DISPLAY IN FOREGROUND
CLUSTER OF LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI**



LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR*- PIN BENDING OR BROKEN NECK DISPLAY DURING COURTSHIP MARCH PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI

Porbandar could be the world's only urban site where thousands of lesser flamingos congregate in the midst of the city at the wetlands known as Chhaya Ran. The flamingo is also the state bird of Gujarat State, India.



GREATER FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* WING SALUTING DURING DISPLAY PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



GREATER FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* WING SALUTING DURING DISPLAY PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



GREATER FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* COURTSHIP DISPLAY AND LESSER FLAMINGOS PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



GREATER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* DO NOT ASSUME COLOURFUL PLUMAGE. THEY ONLY VERTICALLY STRETCH ENTIRE BODY AND FLAP LEFT TO RIGHT PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI





LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* LARGE FLOCK LANDING AT CHHAYA RAN WETLAND OF PORBANDAR NEAR CITY PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



TAKE OFF FLIGHT OF LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* AT CHHAYA RAN PORBANDAR (IN FRONT OF RESIDENTIAL AREA) PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI

The Chhaya Rann is a natural-human-induced wetland located within Porbandar city itself. It is a depression area (having an area of approximately 1.5 sq. km) in which rain water, sewage water from the surrounding residential areas and effluents of chemical plants



(manufacturing soda ash) accumulate to form a wetland. The effluents' composition is predominated by salt and soda ash and perhaps due to the resulting highly alkaline/saline conditions created, flamingos, especially Lesser Flamingos, have regularly occurred in this area since the 1960s.



EVENING ROOSTING FLIGHT OF LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* OVER CHHAYA RAN WETLAND OF PORBANDAR PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI





TAKE OFF OF LESSER FLAMINGOS *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR*
PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI



Flamingos have also attempted mating and nesting, though unsuccessfully. There are no visible disturbances to the birds from humans.

Flamingos are very important as far as birding is concerned. Porbandar is one of the urban

places where the courtship display or courtship dance of Lesser Flamingos as well as Greater Flamingos can be observed easily. To rejoice in this spectacular natural event, Mokarsagar Wetland Conservation Committee, in collaboration with Government



**LESSER FLAMINGO *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* IN FULL BREEDING PLUMAGE
LANDING PHOTO KISHORE JOSHI**

recognized Community Science Centre of Porbandar, organized Pink Celebration 2015 and Flamingo Festival 2014 where participants observe the courtship dance and learn about flamingos and wetlands in indoor seasons. Pink Celebration 2016 will be organized somewhere

in April to July 2016. Please visit web www.mokarsagar.org to learn about birding at Porbandar (Gujarat) India. 🍆

Refrence: VARAGIYA, D. C., JOSHI, K. & TATU, K. 2015. Wetlands of Porbandar district, Gujarat, India. Jalaplavit, 6, 23-43

Steve's Photo Pick

Orange-winged Amazon – *Amazona amazonica* is very common in its native range over most of the northern portion of South America. Like other Amazons, Orange-winged Amazons will gather in large flocks outside of the breeding season and are a bit more disbursed during the breeding season. These Amazons adapt well to captivity and do breed readily when provided with a secure environment and a tall nest box to simulate their natural nesting cavities in tree hollows.







Those Fabulous Flamingos

Carol Stanley



THE 15, KING OF THE NEST MOUND - CHILEAN FLAMINGO MALE *PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS* PHOTO CAROL STANLEY

CHILEAN FLAMINGO EGGS *PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS* PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABY *PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS* PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



Anyone want some flamingo eggs?

Those words were spoken by Mike Muraco, then Director of Animals, in 2008 during a visit at Six Flags in Vallejo, CA by ASA members John Del Rio, Laurella Desborough and yours truly. Those words made me see pink and started me down the path of hand raising and caring for baby flamingos.

Fast forward to August 2013. My husband Delain and I drove to Southern California with a small brooder, and picked up 2 Chilean flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis* eggs from a friend near San Diego.

Flamingo eggs are chalky white and very thick. The oldest egg had already externally piped - discernible by the star shaped outward dent on the egg surface. Vocalizations could also be heard. Viability of the second egg was questionable since no movement was detected when candled. Flamingo eggs are very hard to candle so, the second egg was packed along with the piped egg in the brooder with a bowl of water and the temperature set at 97 degrees Fahrenheit.

Using uncooked rice or seed mix as a substrate reduces vibrations and acts as a shock absorber during travel with fertile eggs.

The first egg hatched on September 1 on the way back to Northern California. This baby was aptly named "The 15" (the eye 5) for the freeway he traveled on whilst working is way out of his shell.

This may be the first assisted hatch during car speeds over 70 miles per hour.

Once hatched, babies are left in the brooder and are given warmed lactated ringers (10 cc) every three hours before the first feeding. The down is whitish grey and is the softest feeling on earth. Their bills are straight, giving no hint as to the "D" shape it will grow into, and is pink. The feet and legs are pink, which turns to charcoal and then back to pink.

Hatch weights can vary between 76 and 126 grams. The neonate's legs exhibit edema and are fleshy and plump. The edema subsides after a couple of days.



CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABY DUNCAN *PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS* PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABIES DUNCAN AND DULCINEA *PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS* PHOTO CAROL STANLEY

A chart is made and hatch time and weight are noted. Weights are noted each morning before feeding. Babies are fed every three hours for a total of 5 feedings for the first 6-10 days. A medium metal crop needle is used for feeding after the third day to prevent aspirating. As the baby gets bigger, a French catheter is used for tube feeding. Between 3 and 5 days, the babies start walking a little and pecking at the dry

adult food in their tub. I use Mazuri Complete Flamingo bits. Babies are exercised by walking and swimming in small containers filled with enough water so their feet don't touch the bottom.

Flamingo babies bicker and lash out at each other, or the larger, stronger one dominates, and separation seems to be the best way to deal with the seeming incompatibility. After a couple of days or weeks, bickering is minimal when they

are put back together. Separation makes the heart grow fonder.

As they begin eating more of the adult food, feedings are cut back, adjusting if optimal 10% daily weight gains are not achieved. Flamingos and other avian species with long legs can develop leg deformities if an improper balance of protein is given. Exercise and weight monitoring help prevent the legs from growing too rapidly.

As the babies have a tendency to run up to you and drop to the ground, care must be taken not to accidentally step on or, trip over, a baby flamingo.

The babies will generally wean on their own around 45 days. I keep the young babies in an outside pen during the day and bring them in the house to a smaller pen for overnight. Food and water are provided in both areas. The daily procession to the outside pen includes jumping up and down and flapping wings - a flamingo happy dance! The same happens in reverse when they come in the house for the night. It is a chore to keep up with the floors but, when they come in at night, they like to lay on the dog bed in the family room and hang out, and I love having them around.

I name the babies and it doesn't take long for them to shout out a contact call when they hear me call their name. They will also come when called, although it may take some coaxing.

Each baby has its own personality. Duncan is a love. He is content for me to hold him on my chest as he rests his head over my shoulder and preens my hair. Dulcinea wants nothing to do with that but is content just hanging around with us in the family room.



**3 MONTH OLD CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABIES DUNCAN AND DULCINEA PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS COMING IN FOR THE NIGHT
PHOTO CAROL STANLEY**



**3 MONTH OLD CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABY DUNCAN PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS GETTING COZY ON THE DOG BED
PHOTO CAROL STANLEY**

Flamingos take catnaps and do not sleep through the night. Their goose-like vocalizations are either loved or hated by those who hear their moonlit serenade.



2 MONTH OLD CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABY
DUNCAN PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS
PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



1 YEAR OLD AMERICAN FLAMINGO
"PEABODY" AND FRIEND DOONOVAN JASPER
PHOENICOPTERUS RUBRA
PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



2 YEAR OLD CHILEAN FLAMINGO "THE 15"
PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS
PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABIES DUNCAN AND
DULCINEA PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS
BEING FED BY AUTHOR PHOTO ALEX CULP

2 MONTH OLD CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABIES DUNCAN AND DULCINEA PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS RESTING OUTSIDE THEIR TUB BEFORE BEDTIME PHOTO CAROL STANLEY



I have a propensity for traveling to Southern California occasionally and take the flamingo babies in their pink tubs.



2.5 MONTH OLD CHILEAN FLAMINGO BABIES DUNCAN AND DULCINEA PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS COLLECTING FREQUENT FREEWAY MILES PHOTO CAROL STANLEY

The babies generally relax and sleep most of the time whilst traveling.

I feel very, very fortunate to have been able to work with these unique and fascinating birds. They have become an intricate part of my life and are a dream come true that begets dreams of someday seeing them in the wild. Sharing their development and antics is also rewarding and fun.

Watch Dulcinea's recorded hatching on August 27, 2015 here: <https://youtu.be/igw14tdhj5U>

CAROL FEEDING CHILEAN FLAMINGOS PHOENICOPTERUS CHILENSIS AT DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM PHOTO STEPHEN SKALAK



FUN FLAMINGO FACTS

Did you know?

THERE ARE SIX SPECIES OF FLAMINGO:

Caribbean or American, Greater, Lesser, James', Andean and Chilean, each with a varying degree of color from light pink to vermilion.

THERE IS CONTROVERSY REGARDING HOW LONG FLAMINGOS HAVE BEEN AROUND.

New evidence dates back 5 million years as opposed to the previously thought 30 million.

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

Flamingos inhabit some of the most inhospitable waters on the African, Indian, South American, European and North American continents. Their habitats are large alkaline or saline lakes, with no vegetation. This decreases the number of flamingo predators since they are so hard to get to.

WHAT DO YOU CALL A FLOCK OF FLAMINGOS?

A Stand or Flamboyance.

STRONG FLIERS

Flamingos fly at speeds up to 35 miles per hour and have been known to fly at night up to 350 miles.

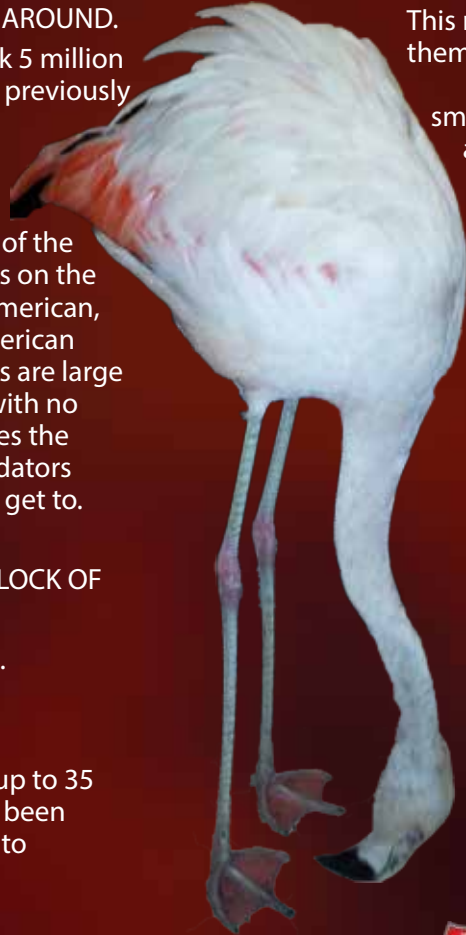
SCIENTIFIC NAME MEANING

Phoenicopterus = "crimson" (phoenix), "winged" (pterus), Greek - from Turkish Origin.

DIET

Flamingos eat in a very peculiar fashion. With their heads upside down, the soft muscles at the bottom of their D bill acts as a piston, pushing water through the spine-like papillae on their tongue whilst retaining the food they eat.

This method allows them to capture the algae, diatoms, small invertebrates and other foods.



The



Chilean Flamingo,

Phoenicopterus chilensis



Coturnix Quail (*coturnix japonica*)

Gregory Sercel

COTURNIX QUAIL (COTURNIX JAPONICA) PHOTO STEVE DUNCAN

Coturnix quail *coturnix japonica* are very common in aviculture. They have many unique features as a species. They are easy to keep, prolific, and don't require much maintenance.

Distribution and habitat: Coturnix quail mainly inhabit east Asia and Russia, although their range includes India, Korea, Japan, and China. During the winter, most Coturnix quail migrate south to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and southern China. However, many Coturnix quail have been known to migrate to certain parts of Africa. Coturnix quail mainly breed in east and central Asia, though some breed in regions of Europe, as well as Turkey.

Coturnix quail are a ground dwelling bird, and their main habitat consists of fields and meadows of tall grass, as well as bushes, and agricultural fields.

Diet: The diet of the Coturnix quail includes many different types of grass seed such as white millet and panicum. They also feed upon a variety of insects, larvae, and other small invertebrates. In captivity, Coturnix quail will feed off of high protein gamebird crumble.

Breeding: Coturnix quail mainly breed in the summer, and have been known to exhibit monogamous and polygamous relationships. A Coturnix quail clutch generally consists of 5-12 speckled eggs, which hatch in 16-18 days. Once

ONE-DAY-OLD COTURNIX QUAIL (COTURNIX JAPONICA) CHICK. PHOTO GREGORY SERCEL





COTURNIX QUAIL (COTURNIX JAPONICA) PHOTO STEVE DUNCAN

the clutch is completed, the female will drive away the male, hatch the eggs, and raise the chicks.

Coturnix quail seldom go broody in captivity, but will lay an egg almost every day, and the eggs can be artificially incubated.

Sexing: Coturnix quail cannot be sexed as chicks, but as adults, the males have a golden chest, and the females have a tan and black speckled chest. Also, in mature birds, Coturnix quail have a unique anatomical feature--in mature males, there is a sperm sack below to oil gland at the base of the tail. This is another way of sexing the birds; gently

squeeze between the vent and the base of the tail and in the males there is a soft lump, and when squeezed a foam will come out of the vent. In the females there is nothing there, and no foam.

Keeping: Coturnix quail can be kept in cages, breeding pens, or aviary floors. I keep my Coturnix quail on aviary floors, and feed them game bird crumbles. The floor is composed of sand and dirt, but can be made of wood shavings, gravel, or even concrete.

Coturnix quail do not perch, and require shelter as well as relatively dry ground. Coturnix quail will dig a small bowl shaped nest in the ground, and




COTURNIX QUAIL (*COTURNIX JAPONICA*)
MALE (LEFT) AND FEMALE (RIGHT). PHOTO
GREGORY SERCEL

will generally lay all of their eggs in it. Coturnix quail seldom go broody in captivity, but the eggs are fairly easy to incubate.

Raising: I incubate quail eggs at 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit, and keep the humidity at 50-60%. The eggs should be turned at least 2-3 times a day for the first 14-15 days of incubation. The eggs should be removed from the turner at

that time, and will hatch between days 16-18. The chicks should be kept in a brooder at 90 degrees for the first week, and at two weeks of age, the brooder temperature can be lowered to 75-80 degrees. At three weeks of age, the chicks can be kept outside, although I recommend keeping a heat lamp in the enclosure such that the chicks have the option of added heat. The chicks should be fed non-medicated game bird starter mash, which is the same as game bird crumble, but in a powder form. The crumble comes in small chunks, but are too large for chicks to eat. The mash is in a sandy form, which is perfect for the chicks. I switch from mash to crumble around three weeks of age. With chicks, be careful to use a narrow lipped water feeder so the chicks cannot drown. Coturnix quail are social birds, and will get along with button quail, finches, and other non-aggressive birds.

Coturnix quail are easy to keep, and are even good clean up birds! They will eat millet shells and scraps of greens from finches. 



COTURNIX QUAIL CHICKS (*COTURNIX JAPONICA*) PHOTO GREGORY SERCEL

Eclectus Handrearing Tips

Rodney Malmquist



My sister and I, having raised and sold over 1,100 Eclectus parrots in the past 25 years or so, most from day 1, have learned many things regarding the husbandry of Eclectus neonates. Here are some tips and things to think about if you are new to raising Eclectus, especially if you are having trouble. We now only keep Solomon Island Eclectus, but we used to keep both Red-Sided and Vosmaeri, and these observations apply to all the sub-species we have raised. These tips will also work with other difficult species, so if you don't raise Eclectus, but do hand-feed, these tips will still help you.

First, hydration. Newborn baby parrots need more hydration and less calories than you may think. As they grow, hydration becomes less and less important, and caloric intake becomes more and more important. This is something you need to get a feel for, but the skin coloring is a big indicator of hydration levels. I say you need to get a feel for, because temperatures will also have an effect on this. Babies that are too hot will be red, and too cool will be on the pale pink to white side, and it is important not to confuse the two (heat vs. hydration). Compensating for a baby that is too hot (very red) by assuming it is dehydrated, is not a

good thing! Dehydrated babies will be very red and thin, while properly hydrated babies will be pink and of a good weight, and over hydrated babies will become very pale pink to white and overweight due to all the water in their system. We have never had a problem with over hydrated babies, but in the beginning, the first 5 or 6 babies we tried to raise, we had a lot of problems with dehydrated babies. As for the hydration/calorie intake ratio above, think of it this way. A day old baby gets its warmth from the incubator, that is why calorie intake is less important. As it grows, more and more heat is produced by its body, so calorie intake becomes more important to produce this growth and heat. Since it is now eating a lot more, it is also taking in a lot more fluids, so dehydration becomes less and less of a problem. Also, for those physics geeks out there, there is something called scaling problems. Basically, as something grows in size, there is a ratio between surface area and volume that changes. This ratio decreases as the item in question grows. The smaller something is, the more surface area it has proportionally, and the less volume. This means that the smaller a baby is, the more easily it "dries out" due to the larger proportional surface area,

and also the less moisture available to this “drying” due to the much smaller volume of water in its tissues. So, smaller babies dehydrate quicker than larger ones, which is exacerbated by their more delicate nature of being newborns. This is a little more complicated than I have stated because it is not just the surface area of their skin you are concerned about, but also the surface area of their lungs and air sacs and respiration rate, but the concept is the same.

How do you handle this problem? There are two ways. You can keep very high humidities and temperatures in the incubator when the baby is first born, and gradually lower both the humidity and temperature as the baby grows to compensate for the scaling problem (the surface area to volume ratio changing). Or, as we have learned, change the baby’s diet. Of course, you have to handle temperatures in the incubator the same way, starting very warm and lowering the temps. as the baby grows. Changing its diet is definitely the way to go. If you keep such high humidities in the incubator, you will drastically increase medical problems. Fungal and bacterial infections thrive in these overly humid environments, so you want to avoid these extreme humidities. So how do you change their diet? We start off with a product called Lafeber’s Nutri-Start handfeeding formula. This is a rice based diet. We make it by adding a saline solution and boiling in the microwave. There are two reasons we do this. The first is, that by boiling it, the starch cells in the rice rupture, and this thickens it. This is important because a formula that is too thin in consistency is dangerous. Babies can more easily breath in the thinner formula into their lungs when being hand-fed (called




aspiration) which will usually kill them instantly. If it doesn’t kill them instantly, there is a good chance the resulting lung infection will kill them slowly. A slightly thicker formula is more easily swallowed and more difficult to aspirate into the lungs, and thus, safer. The second reason is that by boiling it, you can add drastically more water, or saline, to the formula, thus increasing the hydration potential of the formula and lowering the caloric content, which is what you want as mentioned earlier. There is even a third reason for doing this. You will sterilize the formula, and the container you cook it in from the steam, so less possible bacterial problems. We keep the prepared formula in the refrigerator in the same container we cook it in, for this reason. Glass baby food jars, or other very small glass jars work well for this. To make saline solution, we add 9 grams of salt to a liter of tap water. Basically the same as Pedialite or Ringer’s solution (a 0.9% saline solution), but it is always available (I don’t have to run to the store every time a baby hatches and I’m worried my opened Pedialite is spoiled!) it is extremely cheap, and it doesn’t have any sugars added. Not having sugars



does two things for you. The solution has a much longer shelf life. Without all those sugars, the solution doesn't spoil from bacteria/fungus, and you prevent candida infections in your babies. Candida loves sugar! and it is one of the more common problems we encountered before we were as experienced as we now are. (Note: 9 grams of table salt added to 1000 grams of tap water (a liter) = a 0.9% saline solution) Preparing the formula will take a bit of experimenting on your part because the formula will thicken a bit as it cools. We like the consistency to be similar to a thin yogurt when cool. We use this formula exclusively for the first 4-6 days or so, and then start feeding Kaytee Exact as the last feeding of the day around day 4-6. This varies a bit from baby to baby, depending on how hydrated the baby in question is. If it is well hydrated, we will start earlier, if we think it should be more hydrated, we will wait till day 6, or even longer if needed. This gives us time to sleep a little! Exact will stay in their crop a lot longer, so that is why we feed it as the last meal. We continue feeding the Lafeber formula during the day for the next few days and Exact at night, and

gradually feed more and more meals with Exact and fewer and fewer meals with Lafeber until the baby is eating nothing but Exact.

You will notice a couple of things using this method. At higher and higher hydration levels, the baby Eclectus' eyes will open much sooner. When first experimenting with this (both high humidity in the incubator and a hydrating feeding formula), we have had babies open their eyes as young as 5 days old! The less well hydrated a baby is, the longer it takes for it to open its eyes. The baby will grow a lot quicker. Not being dehydrated when very young will cause the baby to develop faster. We can sex babies at 20 to 21 days of age, as this is when their feathers emerge from the feather sheath. This can take another week or so if the neonate isn't hydrated well in the beginning. Just for reference for you, with lower humidities in incubators and the hydrating formula above, we typically get eyes to open around day 12-14 and feathers emerging to the point you can easily sex them, around day 20-22. I hope these tips help you if you are experiencing problems with newly hatched Eclectus chicks. 

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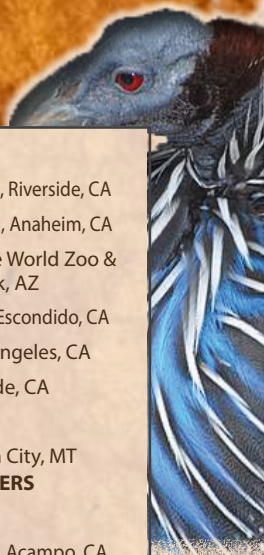
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