



The vast and exciting world of aviculture can be entered at any point in a person's life. Many are fortunate to be exposed to their first birds as young children and are able to maintain that connection to their feathered friends throughout their lives. Others learn to appreciate birds later in their adult life with as much enthusiasm as a child. Whatever the case the outcome is the same, a lifelong passion for the variety of birds and an endless thirst for knowledge of their proper care, breeding and natural history. Few things can make an aviculturist's heart fill with joy like the discovery of a fertile egg, the hatching of a chick or the fledging of a young bird. The only comparable feeling is when an aviculturist can inspire another person to enter our world.....

OUR WORLD OF BIRDS!



www.asabirds.org

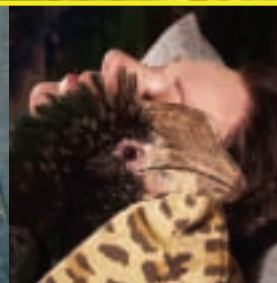
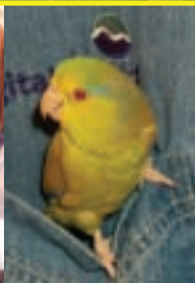
Publishers of the critically acclaimed ASA Avicultural Bulletin
Information for bird owners and bird breeders.
For more information on bird care and how to support
aviculture, visit the ASA website at www.asabirds.org.

The following organizations have important information
for bird and animal owners.

AAW www.americananimalwelfare.org	National Animal Interest Alliance (general information about bird and animal welfare) www.naiaonline.org
Central California Avian Society (ASA Chapter 1) www.ccasbirds.com	National Animal Interest Alliance Trust (legislative information and activities) www.naiatrust.org
Model Aviculture Program (MAP) www.modelaviculture.org	PIJAC Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council www.pijac.org



ASA AVICULTURE 3/07



Where Did My Pet Bird Come From?

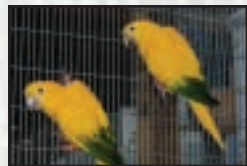


AVICULTURE AND AVICULTURISTS

*a-vi-cul-ture Pronunciation[ey-vi-kuhl-cher]
a noun meaning the rearing or keeping of birds.*

No matter what species your pet bird is, its beginning was very similar. It came from birds owned and cared for by an aviculturist. Whether small hobbyist or commercial facility, aviculturists must keep their birds in good health and in a clean, safe environment to feel secure enough to raise a family. Only good diets, proper care and appropriate housing will enable the parent birds to produce healthy offspring.

The role of aviculturists goes beyond producing healthy offspring for pets. Wild birds are suffering from a tremendous rate of habitat loss. It is projected that 25% of wild bird species will become extinct this century. Imports of wild-caught parrots into the U.S. for the pet trade have been banned since 1992. Because of this ban and the loss of habitat in the wild, the role of the aviculturist is more important than ever for the very survival of some species. Thanks to the efforts of aviculturists, many species that are facing extinction in the wild are actually thriving right here in the United States.



Golden Conures

Now that you've met the aviculturist, let's look at what it takes to make a pet bird.

NATURE AND THE EGG

Birds, of course, come from eggs. Before the birds will lay eggs, the conditions must be just right. Most birds will not lay eggs unless they are happy with their mate, in good health, properly fed, and feel safe and secure. Each species has specific requirements that must be fulfilled before they will successfully breed. When the



A Hyacinth Macaw egg

aviculturist has carefully met all the conditions necessary, the birds may decide to reproduce.

Egg laying intervals and incubation periods vary depending on species. Eggs can be incubated by the parents, but eggs can also be hatched in an incubator using precise temperature and humidity levels. 13 to 28 days is the normal incubation period for most pet birds.



American White Parrotlet mom watches over her eggs and hatchlings

WELCOME TO THE WORLD

Hatching is hard work for the little baby. It will take 24 to 48 hours or more to hatch. Using the egg tooth on the end of its beak, the baby chips away from within the shell creating a circular crack around the large end of the egg. An enlarged neck muscle then enables the baby to push the shell open.

Parrots are altricial which means they enter the world without any feathers and require the warmth of their parents or a brooder to keep them alive. Weighing less than one ounce, the baby is tiny but is already demanding food every few hours. At this young age, the baby's job is to eat, sleep and grow. As feathers start to grow in, the baby begins to have the ability to regulate its own body temperature. They also begin to become more



A healthy chick takes a well deserved rest after hatching

aware of their environment, but they still mostly sleep and will cuddle with one another for warmth. Depending on species, most baby birds will take only a few weeks to a few months to become adult-sized and fully weaned. Even though the babies may look like full grown birds, their social and behavioral development continues for some time.



Sun Conure chick

Once weaned, the baby bird is ready to become part of your family. Sharing your life with a pet bird is a rewarding experience. Choosing a bird that fits your lifestyle, space and pocketbook should be carefully considered and not done impulsively. Your commitment to its care and well-being will encourage your bird to remain a great companion for many years to come.



Dr. Brian Speer confers with a Hyacinth Macaw

An Avian Veterinarian will help you to keep your bird in good health and should be called at the first sign of any illness or abnormality. With proper care, your pet bird will live a long and healthy life.

THE WORLD OF AVICULTURE

With over 9000 different species, birds are one of the most diverse, interesting, and beautiful groups of animals to learn about. For more information about the world of aviculture and the proper care of birds, please visit the Avicultural Society of America website:



Royal Crown Pigeon gets a visit during an aviary tour

www.asabirds.org