

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE



VOLUME 116  
No. 3  
2010

## THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Avicultural Society was founded in 1894 for the study of British and foreign birds in the wild and in captivity. The Society is international in character, having members throughout the world.

Membership subscription rates per annum for 2010 as for 2009: British Isles £18.00; Overseas £21.00 (plus £6.00 for airmail). (U.K. funds please). The subscription is due on **1st January of each year** and those joining the Society later in the year will receive back numbers of the current volume of the AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE.

THE HON. SECRETARY AND TREASURER, THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY, SHERATON LODGE, STATION ROAD, SOUTHMINSTER, ESSEX CM0 7EW, UK.

Subscriptions and other payments can be made direct to The Avicultural Society Account, Barclays Bank, Southminster Branch. Please quote Account No.13296954, Sort Code 20 54 30, and ensure you send your name as the account reference, or else we cannot match payments. In case of difficulty please contact the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer at the address above, or e-mail: [otusscops@talktalk.net](mailto:otusscops@talktalk.net)

Website: <http://www.avisoc.co.uk>

THE AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE welcomes original articles that have not been published elsewhere and that essentially concern the aviculture of a particular bird or group of birds, or that describe their natural history. Articles should be preferably typewritten, with double spacing, and the scientific names as well as the vernacular names of birds should be given. References cited in the text should be listed at the end of the article. Line drawings, black and white or colour photographs which illustrate a particular point in the article will be used where possible and should be clearly captioned. If authors wish their eventual return, they must say so when submitting the article and write their name on the back of each photograph. Tables and graphs will also be used wherever possible but authors should be aware of the constraints of reproduction, particularly regarding the width of the page which is 105mm.

### ADDRESS OF THE EDITOR

Malcolm Ellis, Hon. Editor, The Avicultural Magazine, The Chalet, Hay Farm, St. Breock, Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 7LL, England.  
E-mail: [editor@avisoc.co.uk](mailto:editor@avisoc.co.uk)

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE

THE JOURNAL OF THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

---

Vol. 116 - No. 3    All rights reserved    ISSN 0005 2256    2010

---

## KEEPING AND BREEDING THE TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD *Mimus gilvus gracilis*

by Gary Bralsford

In 2006, I bought three Tropical Mockingbirds *Mimus gilvus gracilis* from my friend Bob Jewiss in Kent. Earlier that year he was the first person in the UK to breed this species. I had the three 2006-bred birds DNA sexed and found that all three were males. I arranged with Bob that should he breed any more that year, I would have them DNA sexed in the hope of getting a female. He did not, however, succeed in breeding any more in 2006.

The following year, I visited the premises of M. A. J. Peckett in Preston to look at a few softbills he had for sale and, discovered that among them, were two Tropical Mockingbirds, neither of which had been sexed. I bought both birds and on returning home with them, released the two into a flight with one of the males, having first placed coloured split rings (bands) on them and taken a few feathers from the breast for DNA sexing. Almost immediately I noticed that the male appeared to be displaying to the two new birds and was also singing to them. A week later I received confirmation that both of the new birds were females.

This was great news and meant that I was able to make-up two unrelated pairs, which I housed in flights 9ft long x 4ft wide x 6ft 6in high (approx. 2.7m long x 1.2m wide x 2m high). In each flight I placed a Cockatiel nest box with the section by the hole cut away to create a large, open-fronted nest box. On the advice of Bob Jewiss I placed some apple tree twigs in the bottom of each box and provided plenty of coconut fibre for building the nest. Within two weeks one of the pairs had begun to build in the box, so I placed some animal hair and sisal string, etc. in the flight. Within four days the nest was completed. It was a very tidy nest like that of a thrush, though without any mud having been used. The following week the female was sitting in the nest, with her long tail just visible. When she came off the nest to feed, I looked in and saw two eggs. They were pale blue to pale greenish-blue like Blackbird's *Turdus merula* eggs, except that the brown freckles were less pronounced.

The female sat for approximately 12 days before the first egg hatched, followed by the second egg the next day. Buffalo worms were used for the first six days, after which both parents fed the chicks with mealworms and crickets. The pair went on to rear a total of six young during the 2007 breeding season.

Towards the end of the year, I had a call from Bob Jewiss, who told me that the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (formerly Jersey Zoo) had been in contact with him regarding the behaviour of mockingbirds. It had the opportunity to take into captivity up to three pairs of Galapagos Mockingbirds *Nesomimus parvulus*, a species coming under threat from tourism and introduced rats. Before doing so, however, it wanted to study and record the behaviour of a commoner species such as the Tropical Mockingbird.

It was suggested that Bob and I provide two unrelated pairs, so that their behaviour could be studied and recorded. I decided to let them have three birds, two males and a female, and Bob provided a pair. All five arrived in time for the 2008 breeding season. I bred a further six that year, and let them have another female so that they had three pairs. Quite a few were bred at Jersey that year, which was good preparation for the Galapagos breeding project. Between Bob Jewiss, the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and myself, about 16 young were bred during 2008. In addition, we knew of another private aviculturist who had bred at least five young which, so far as we knew, were unrelated to our birds.

The Tropical Mockingbird is not a colourful bird, but it is lively and is ideal for a mixed species softbill aviary. Pairs are though best given an aviary to themselves if a serious attempt is going to be made to breed this species.

It is 9in-10in (23cm-25.5cm) in length, much of this accounted for by its long tail, which it sways from side to side when displaying. My birds have pale yellowish eyes and a blackish bill, legs and feet. The face, throat and underparts are whitish. They have dusky coloured lores and an indistinct darkish eye-stripe and, above it, a white eye-brow stripe. Otherwise, the crown, nape and upperparts are grey. The wings are blackish with the white tips of the median and greater wing-coverts forming two wing-bars and the secondaries have a white edge. The tail is blackish with most of the feathers having a white tip. (It looks very similar to the Northern Mockingbird *M. polyglottos*, with which it sometimes interbreeds.) On fledging, the youngsters look similar to their parents, except for the presence of dark tick-marks on the chest and belly and their short, stumpy tail which, after a few days, quickly begins to grow longer.

The song is a variety of gruff notes that are often repeated. The alarm call is a harsh "chek" or "shack." I have heard my birds trying to copy a few

of the notes of my White-rumped Shamas *Copsychus malabaricus*.

The Tropical Mockingbird occurs from southern Mexico, down through Central America and parts of the West Indies to Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and Brazil. There are 10 subspecies. *M. g. gracilis* occurs from southern Mexico (Oaxaca) to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

In the wild this species inhabits arid and semi-arid scrubland, with scattered bushes and trees, as well as open areas around human dwellings and agricultural land. The male often perches on the tops of bushes and on roadside telephone wires. The species is also often seen on the ground, running or hopping and, when it does so, often cocks its tail at an angle. The bulky nest of grasses and twigs, with hair or wool in the lining, is built at low to mid-level in a bush or tree. A clutch of three to five eggs is laid.

I have found keeping and breeding this species very interesting and a lot different to keeping many other species of softbill. Because it is not very colourful, it is often overlooked and considered to be boring and with little to offer. How very wrong those who think this are though, for it is a fantastic aviary bird.

I plan to keep my two breeding pairs and, hopefully, bring in some new, unrelated birds in the not too distant future.

\* \* \*

## DO YOU KEEP CAPE DOVES?

A further call has gone out for UK keepers and breeders of the Cape Dove *Oena capensis* to come together and form a Special Interest Group to safeguard the future of this dove in UK aviculture.

Jerry Fisher, who made the call, has located 30-40 captive-bred Cape Doves here in the UK, but suspects that it is only a fraction of the true number. He particularly wants to locate female Cape Doves, as they are becoming increasingly scarce, and anyone who is breeding Cape Doves and wants to exchange birds to establish new pairs and/or new bloodlines and is prepared to cooperate in a joint breeding project.

If you can help, please contact Jerry whose phone number is: 07974 995304. Alternatively, you can contact David Woolcock at Paradise Park or John Meek at Newquay Zoo. E-mail: david@paradisepark.org.uk/john.meek@newquayzoo.org.uk

# REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR OF THE SADDLE-BILLED STORK *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* AND DEVELOPMENTAL BEHAVIOUR OF ITS CHICKS

by J. J. Elston, K. Unger and R. Dunn

## Introduction and background

The Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*, with its unique and colourful bill and black and white plumage, adds beauty and variety to aviary and savannah exhibits in zoos. Adults are sexually dimorphic; males are slightly larger than females and have a dark brown iris, whereas females have a yellow iris. Native to Africa, these birds inhabit marshes and typically reside singly or in life-long pairs (Kahl, 1973). Although not currently threatened in the wild, populations could be vulnerable if degradation of wetlands occurs within their range (BirdLife International, 2009).

Despite the presence of Saddle-billed Storks in zoos worldwide, there has been relatively limited success in breeding this species in captivity. In a review of the 2007 ISIS species holdings (ISIS, 2008), 35 institutions worldwide held at least one male and one female Saddle-billed Stork, but only two institutions, one of them Fort Worth Zoo here in Texas, reported the successful hatching of chicks. The female of our pair had produced eggs prior to 2007, but had not hatched or reared any chicks. Because there is only limited published information available regarding the Saddle-billed Stork's reproductive behaviour in zoos, the objectives of this study were to document the reproductive behaviour of the pair at Fort Worth Zoo and detail the developmental behaviour of the chicks.

## Materials and methods

### Animals and housing

A full-winged pair of Saddle-billed Storks was housed in a 18.3m x 15.2m x 6.1m (60ft x 50ft x 20ft) outside aviary at Fort Worth Zoo. The aviary was covered with 7.6cm (3in) nylon mesh netting and contained natural vegetation and an artificial pond. At the time of this study in 2007 each bird was approximately 14 years of age. The birds were hatched in the wild but had resided in captivity since 1993 and had lived together at Fort Worth Zoo since 2003. In September 2007, the pair began building a nest on top of a 1.2m x 1.2m (4ft x 4ft) plywood platform that was elevated 1.2m (4ft) above the ground. The completed nest measured approximately 1.2m (4ft) in diameter and 22.9cm (9in) deep. It had been made using sticks, leaves, grasses and reeds found in the exhibit, as well as from brush piles provided by keepers. In mid-October 2007 the female began laying eggs and in mid-

November two chicks hatched. The birds were fed twice a day a diet of commercial meat, Capelin *Mallotus villosus* supplemented with Thiamin E paste and small mice supplemented with a vitamin and mineral mix. After the chicks hatched superworms were added to the diet.

With the onset of cold weather in November, with near freezing temperatures at night, the zoo management determined it was necessary to move the entire nest inside a heated small barn within the stork enclosure. This was done successfully and the parents continued to tend the chicks inside the barn. The move also provided an opportunity for staff to examine the chicks, weigh them and give them a supplementary meal.

### Data collection

Documentation of behaviour began two weeks prior to the female laying eggs and continued throughout the incubation, chick rearing and post-fledging stages. The developmental behaviour of the chicks was observed until they were 150 days old (approximately three months after they fledged from the nest). Behavioural observations were undertaken daily in 20 minute sessions. All occurrences of selected behaviours by the adults (Table 1) were documented throughout the study and each bird's location (sitting on nest, standing on nest, not on nest) was recorded at one minute intervals (see Behaviour and Instantaneous Sampling respectively in Martin & Bateson, 1993) until the chicks fledged from the nest. In the case of the chicks, all occurrences of selected behaviours were documented and each bird's activity was recorded at one minute intervals (Table 2). As the chicks began to perform newly-developed behaviours, some activities were observed more frequently than others. As a result, during data analysis certain behaviours were grouped together under the sub-heading: Activity; and certain other behaviours were grouped together under the sub-heading: Other (Table 2). A total of 40.7 hours of behavioural data were collected for the adults and a total of 25 hours of behavioural data were collected for the chicks.

## Results

### Parental behaviour

Prior to the eggs being laid in the nest, the male frequently carried materials to the nest (4.7 times per hour) and was often present on the nest, whereas the female was observed carrying nest materials and was present on the nest less frequently (Fig.1). The male was also observed filling his bill with water from the pond and then flying onto the nest and regurgitating the water from his bill onto the nest (2 times per hour); he was also on various occasions observed stomping on the nest with his feet. The male and female performed a wing display throughout the study and, on one occasion,

Table 1. Ethogram used to document behaviour of adult Saddle-billed Storks in 2007-2008.

Behaviour	Description
Aerial display	Bowing and/or jumping in presence of conspecific; wings may be extended and bird may pick up item(s) and toss them in the air.
Wing display	Walking or running with the wings extended.
Nest construction	Gathering sticks, leaves and grass etc. and depositing materials on the nest platform.
Nest presence	Sitting or standing on the nest when no egg is present or standing on the nest when egg(s) and/or chicks are present.
Incubation	Sitting on egg(s) in the nest.
Brooding	Sitting on chicks in the nest.
Regurgitating food	Food is dropped from beak into the nest for the chicks.
Regurgitating water	Water is dripped from the beak into the nest.

Table 2. Ethogram used to document behaviour of Saddle-billed Stork chicks in 2007-2008.

Behaviour	Description
Resting	Laying down; the eyes may be open or closed.
Sitting	Seated in an upright position.
Standing	In an upright, vertical position on its legs.
Activity:	
Aerial display	Bowing and/or jumping in presence of conspecific; wings may be extended and bird may pick up item(s) and toss them in the air.
Begging	Opening bill and directing it towards an adult in an attempt to solicit food; it may use its bill to make contact with the adult's bill.
Flying	Airborne movement from one location to another.
Pecking item	Manipulating objects.
Preening	Manipulating feathers with the bill.
Walking	Movements using legs or hocks.
Wing display	Walking or running with the wings extended.
Other:	
Bathing	In full body contact with the water in the pond.
Beak clapping	Rapid opening and closing of the bill.
Beak gape	Bill is opened and directed at another bird.
Pecking bird	Using bill to make contact with conspecific.
Sparring	Grasping the bill of another bird.
Tossing	Using the bill to throw an item into the air.



Fig. 1. Time spent on nest by adult pair of Saddle-billed Storks during three reproductive stages. Pre-lay and post-hatch stages include time spent sitting and standing (nest presence and brooding behaviours) and the incubation stage includes only time spent sitting on the eggs (incubation behaviour). Post-hatch data were collected until the chicks fledged from the nest.

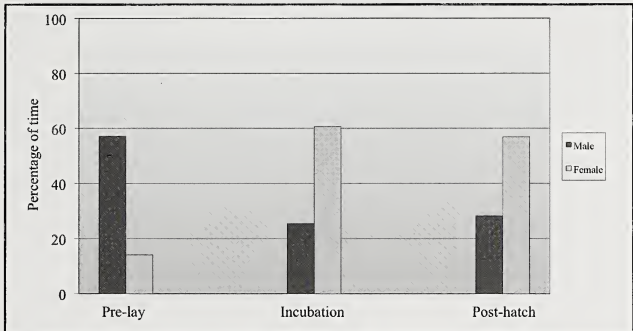
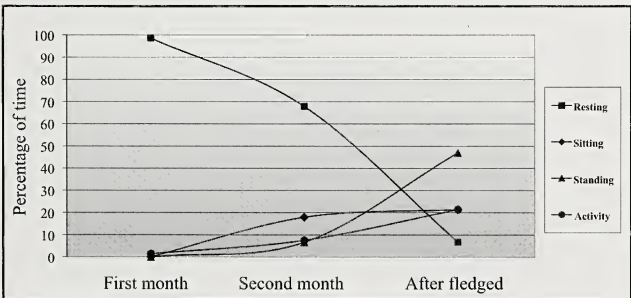
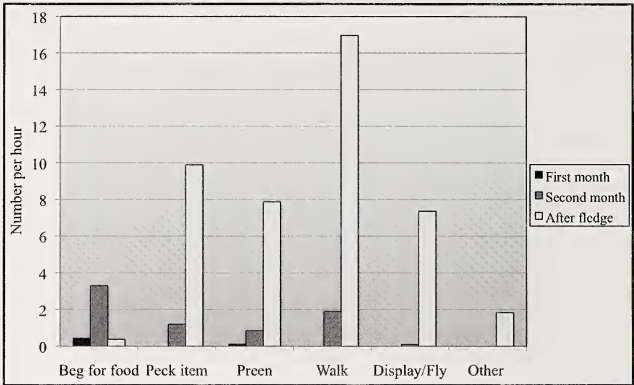


Fig. 2. Average percentage of time Saddle-billed Stork chicks ( $n=2$ ) spent performing behaviours during three age stages. The chicks were in the nest during their first and second months of life.



the male was observed performing an aerial display, after the chicks had fledged from the nest. The female was not observed performing the aerial display. No obvious courtship displays, nor any courtship feeding, were observed. Copulation occurred on the nest, with the male flying onto the female's back, balancing himself while standing, then lowering himself to make cloacal contact. This brief sequence lasted approximately 10 seconds from start to finish.

Fig. 3. Saddle-billed Stork chicks (n=2) activity during three age stages. The chicks were in the nest during their first and second months of life.



The female produced a clutch of four eggs, which were laid approximately two days apart. At this time, keepers reported that the storks had become very protective of the nest and yard, but no aggressive behaviour was observed by the two birds towards one another at any time during the study. Two chicks hatched in mid-November, after an incubation period of 31-32 days. The remaining two eggs were placed in an incubator but failed to hatch. Necropsy revealed that one egg was infertile and the other egg contained a chick that was malpositioned and had died before pipping.

Both parents shared responsibility for incubation of the eggs and care of the chicks. However, whereas the male spent more time nest building prior to the eggs being laid, the female spent more time than the male incubating the eggs (Fig. 1). Both parents took turns brooding the chicks for approximately five days after the first chick hatched, after which they continued to stand over them until they fledged from the nest. The female, however, spent more time than the male on the nest brooding the chicks and standing over them after they hatched (Fig. 1). Typically, only one adult was observed on the nest at a time; when both birds were present it was usually because they were exchanging positions. The parents fed the chicks by regurgitating food directly into the chicks' bills and also by regurgitating it onto the bottom of the nest. Both parents were observed regurgitating food for the chicks well after they had fledged from the nest and were feeding on their own. Both parents continued to add materials to the nest even after the two chicks had



*Richard Dunn*

**Female standing over two chicks, the older is aged 18 days and the younger chick is 15 days old.**

hatched, the male though did so more frequently (approximately once an hour) than the female, who did so only occasionally. The male also continued to regurgitate water onto the nest, though only occasionally.

### Chick development and behaviour

The newly-hatched chicks were covered with white down and began developing black wing feathers within the first month. To allow the parents the opportunity to rear them with minimal disturbance, staff contact with the chicks was limited and subsequently they were weighed on only three occasions. Five days after hatching the chicks weighed 218g; at 18 days of age they weighed 1.06kg; and at 78 days of age they weighed 4.07kg (these are an average based on the ages and weights of the two chicks).

The chicks spent their first 30 days alternatively resting and begging for food and gradually increased their activity during their second month of life (Figs. 1 & 2). Sitting up, standing and walking briefly, commenced at an average age of 33 days. The two chicks fledged from the nest on the same day; the average age of fledging was 60.5 days (the older chick fledged after 62 days and the younger chick after 59 days). The chicks continued to beg for food from their parents even after they fledged from the nest and had been feeding on their own (the chicks were still observed begging for food at 83.5 days, an average based on the two chicks). They were capable of short bursts of flight by 76.5 days (again an average based on the two chicks). Both chicks proved to be females.

### Discussion and conclusions

It appeared that the flight capability of the male contributed to his ability to effectively mount the female and copulate with her. It was necessary for him to land on top of her and then balance himself on her back, before lowering himself to make cloacal contact, which he did using his wings to balance. With another long-legged bird, the flamingo *Phoenicopteridae*, there has been speculation that flight capability may be an important component of successful mating (King, 2008). The presence of full-winged males is believed to have contributed to the success of the Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* breeding programme here at Fort Worth Zoo (Unger & Elston, 2009).

Kahl (1973) found that in the wild Saddle-billed Storks that had already established long-term pair bonds did not engage in elaborate displays during the breeding season. During this study neither the male or female were observed offering food to one another or performing elaborate breeding displays prior to copulation and egg laying, perhaps because the pair had been housed together for several years and likely had established a strong bond. However, throughout the study both birds engaged in a wing-display behaviour, which is similar to a behaviour engaged in by the Black-necked Stork *E. asiaticus* and the Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria*, and described as a "flap-dash" by del Hoyo et al. (1992). It is believed to be performed to strengthen

the pair bond.

Both parents took part in the rearing of the chicks, however, while the male contributed more time to nest construction and maintenance, the female invested more time in incubating the eggs and tending the chicks in the nest. It is currently unknown whether a similar behavioural pattern will emerge in subsequent years if, as hoped, the pair breed again, or whether this differential behaviour occurred as a result of the birds being first-time parents.

The incubation period was within the range reported for the Saddle-billed Stork in the wild, i.e. 30-35 days (del Hoyo et al. 1992). The chicks' behavioural development followed a similar pattern to that recorded for the Lesser Adjutant Stork *Leptopilos javanicus* (Maust et al. 2007), with passive behaviour (resting) occurring first followed by more active behaviours (preening, sitting, standing) and, finally, locomotion (walking, flying). However, contrary to the development of Lesser Adjutant Stork, Saddle-billed Stork chicks in this study were observed flying approximately 20 days earlier. The chicks in this study were also observed flying at a much earlier age than that reported for Saddle-billed Storks in the wild, which was estimated to be about 100-115 days (Kahl, 1973).

It is important for zoos to continue to develop and refine breeding programmes for birds and other taxon in order to establish self-sustaining captive populations that maximize genetic diversity and reduce the need to collect animals from the wild. Successful reproduction in captivity may also be a factor indicating good animal welfare, which is a high priority for today's zoos (Elston & Plasse, 2008). This study provides information on the reproductive and developmental behaviour of the Saddle-billed Stork, which may assist other institutions in their efforts to breed this species and successfully rear the chicks. It may also be helpful to those attempting to breed other species of storks and closely related species.

### **Acknowledgements**

We thank Fort Worth Zoo's Bird Department for the excellent care of the storks.

### **Products mentioned in the text**

Commercial meat: Dallas Crown, Kaufman, Texas, USA.

CaCO<sub>3</sub>/Vionate vitamin and mineral mix: Gimborn Pet Specialties, LLC, GA, USA & Rep-Cal, Rep-Cal Research, Labs., CA, U.S.A.

### **References**

BirdLife International. 2009. Species factsheet: *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*. Downloaded from: <http://www.birdlife.org>

- del Hoyo, J., Elliot, A., Sargatal, J. (eds.) 1992. Family Ciconiidae (Storks). In: *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. Vol.1. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Elston, J., Plasse, C. 2008. Bird welfare in zoos: it's not just about having fun. In: Bettinger, T., Bielitzki, J. (eds.) *The well-being of animals in zoos and aquarium-sponsored research: putting best practices forward*. Scientists Center for Animal Welfare, Greenbelt, MD, USA.
- International Species Information System (ISIS). 2008. <http://www.isis.org>
- Kahl, M. P. 1973. Comparative Ethology of the Ciconiidae. Part 6. The Blacknecked, Saddlebill, and Jabiru Storks (Genera *Xenorhynchus*, *Ephippiorhynchus*, and *Jabiru*). *The Condor* 75,1:17-27.
- King, C. E. 2008. A hypothetical husbandry point system for breeding flamingos in captivity. In: Childress, B., Arengo, F., Béchet, A. (eds.) *Flamingo*, Bulletin of the IUCN-SSC/Wetlands International Flamingo Specialist Group 16:57-61. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, UK.
- Martin, P., Bateson, P. 1993. *Measuring behaviour an introductory guide*. Second edition. Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.
- Maust, M., Clum, N., Sheppard, C. 2007. Ontogeny of chick behavior: a tool for monitoring the growth and development of lesser adjutant storks. *Zoo Biology* 26:533-538.
- Unger, K., Elston, J. 2009. Successful *ex-situ* breeding of Lesser Flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*). In: Childress, B., Arengo, F., Béchet, A. (eds.) *Flamingo*, Bulletin of the IUCN-SSC/Wetlands International Flamingo Specialist Group No.17. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, UK.

*Jennifer J. Elston, PhD., Curator of Conservation and Behavior, Fort Worth Zoo, 1989 Colonial Parkway, Fort Worth, Texas 76110, USA. Tel:(+1) 817 759-7315/E-mail: jelston@fortworthzoo.org*

*Katy Unger, Curator of Birds, Fort Worth Zoo. Tel:(+1) 817 759-7170/E-mail: kunger@fortworthzoo.org*

\* \* \*

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT INDIGOBIRDS

A new website - [www.indigobirds.com](http://www.indigobirds.com) - has been created to collect and disseminate information about the brood parasitic indigobirds *Vidua* spp. (formerly known as combassous). The multimedia website summarises research on these birds and includes locality records, range maps and sound recordings. One of the primary objectives is to increase our knowledge of these birds by collecting information, photographs and recordings of their songs. Because indigobirds all look so similar and are difficult to identify in the field, the songs of the males, mimicking those of their host species, help identify the different species and the host species that raised them.

## DIARY OF A WEEK SPENT PHOTOGRAPHING BIRDS AT WELTVOGELPARK WALSRODE

by Pierre de Chabannes

Visiting Weltvogelpark Walsrode, as it was recently renamed, is always an amazing experience. I have been fortunate enough to visit it on six occasions, beginning in 2006 during the bird flu scare. In 2007, following two visits as an anonymous visitor, I got the opportunity to meet Simon Bruslund Jensen, the Danish aviculturist who had returned to Walsrode to take charge of the collection. Simon was already well-known to the international avicultural community for his work with birds-of-paradise Paradisaeidae and Spix's Macaw *Cyanopsitta spixii* at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation (AWWP) in Qatar. It was wonderful meeting Simon and I am happy to say that we have remained good friends ever since.

In 2008, Simon asked me to photograph some of the birds showcased in the park to help complete its photographic database for the park's bird identification panels and various publications. As a result, the following year I was lucky enough to spend an entire week at this bird extravaganza, taking photographs and seeking out new species I had not seen before. I spent time with people working there, including Simon and his two new enthusiastic biologists, Julia Gottschlich and Anne Hoppmann (the present Curators), as well as many of the keepers, who kindly answered my questions and allowed me to photograph their daily activities.

Here, my main goal is to provide members with an insight into life at Weltvogelpark Walsrode and the some of the many birds kept and bred there. I also want to say something about some of the many achievements that have earned this park in northern Germany the reputation as one of the world's leading bird collections, and the conservation projects around the world that it supports.

### Day 1

The train from Hanover to Walsrode, being diesel rather than electric, is quite noisy, but is very comfortable and passes through forest, agricultural land and other attractive countryside in which Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*, storks *Ciconia* sp., herons *Ardea* sp. and other wildlife can be seen. On arriving at Walsrode railway station, a taxi can be booked by those, who like me, are travelling with heavy bags full of clothes and cameras. Otherwise, a very pleasant 30 minute walk along a road, which goes deep into forest, leads one to the park entrance.

There I was greeted by Julia Gottschlich and taken to the well maintained and welcoming guest room by the park's main office. Having unpacked

my photographic equipment, I headed into the park and, while waiting for Simon, decided to pop into the free-flight Indonesian hall to look for the Sulawesi Crested Mynah *Basilornis celebensis* a bird I had tried, but failed to photograph, during the previous five years. I had failed to see this striking bird in 2005, during my first visit to a number of south-east Asian zoos. This was despite having spent three days in Jurong Birdpark, a good portion of which was spent in the aviary housing south-east Asian birds. I was similarly frustrated a few days later when visiting Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens, which had a male in a large outside aviary. In late-2006, I made another unsuccessful attempt to photograph the male in Jurong Birdpark, Singapore. A further opportunity occurred in mid-2008, when Walsrode received a male. Unfortunately, however, the bird became sick and was taken behind the scenes in order to be treated. Luckily, it recovered but I was left frustrated when it proved impossible to get a single photo of it. One can, therefore, imagine my excitement when, a few days before setting off on this photographic assignment, I learned from Simon that the park had acquired a pair of Sulawesi Crested Mynahs and the pair was living in an aviary in the Indonesian hall.

So there I was, anxiously looking around the hall for one of the main targets of my visit and - there it was - a beautiful male sitting on a branch in a perfect position for me to take a nice photo of it. Altogether I took about 60 photographs. The aviary also housed Javan Hill Partridges *Arborophila javanica* and a pair of Pink-spotted Fruit Doves *Ptilinopus p. perlatus*.

In order to see as many as possible of the birds in the Indonesian hall one must, of course, carefully examine the various layers of vegetation and pay attention to any sound which may betray the presence of an avian rarity. Unusual scratching sounds coming from behind the Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus* aviary attracted my attention and when I pinpointed the source of the scratching, I came face to face with a male Misool Wattled Brush-Turkey *Aepyodius arfakianus misoliensis* displaying on his newly built nest mound. This species is rare in captivity and seeing a captive male displaying is quite an event and for me, was extra special, because I had first seen the male in Artis Zoo in Amsterdam, where he was in poor condition, living in a small aviary with little or no vegetation. I later learned from Simon that the female was obtained from Poland and her introduction to the male had gone perfectly. Simon was amazed how quickly the male had recovered and began building mounds and displaying.

My first day ended all too soon with some nice views of the usually very shy Elegant Quail *Callipepla douglasii*, housed in one of the parrot aviaries along with Blue-headed Macaws *Primolius couloni* and Elegant Crested Tinamous *Eudromia elegans*. There was one final highlight that day when



one of the Kagus *Rhynchotus jubatus* in an aviary in the pheasantry began to call loudly, followed by other individuals in different parts of the park. The Kagu's melodious "barking" is usually heard each morning at about 5.45am and during my stay acted as a wake-up alarm for me.

As I headed back to my room, some of the birds, including an old female Arfak Wattle Brush-Turkey *A. a. arfakianus*, were already roosting, the latter having flown up onto a perch about 2m (6ft 6in) above the ground.

## Day 2

Having been awake since just before 6.00am, thanks to the Kagu, I had to wait an hour-and-a-half before Simon arrived with the list of birds he wanted me to photograph - it filled four pages! I wanted to make an early start before the first visitors arrived. Up to about 10.00am is the best time to visit the oldest building in the park, the Paradise Hall (*Paradieshalle*). It is divided into three different areas, the first of which is a small exposition hall usually used for exhibitions, then there is a long corridor on either side of which are beautifully landscaped medium-sized aviaries with appropriate habitat for the species housed in them and, thirdly, there is a free-flight hall, with luxuriant vegetation and two ponds.

I spent most time in the aviaries section, with its rich variety of species. Although it was not on Simon's list, I took the opportunity to take some more photos of the last remaining Long-tailed Ground-Roller *Uratelornis chimaera* in a zoological collection outside of Madagascar. The park used to display two species of ground-rollers but, unfortunately, at the beginning of 2009, lost its last Pitta-like Ground-Roller *Atelornis pittoides*. Other gems housed in the aviaries included the last known Madagascan Sakalava Weaver *Ploceus sakalava* in a European collection, a newly arrived pair of African Grey Hornbills *Tockus n. nasutus*, an enormous group of Sudan Golden Sparrows *Passer luteus* and two pairs of Stone Partridges *Ptilopachus petrosus*, all species that were new to me. It was interesting to note that one of the pairs of Stone Partridges was housed in a rainforest-type exhibit, along with Sunbitterns *Eurypyga helias*, a pair of Sumatran Trogons *Harpactes mackloti* and Orange-headed Ground Thrushes *Zoothera citrina melli* and, the other pair was kept in a drier environment, along with the Sudan Golden Sparrows, Carmine Bee-eaters *Merops nubicus*, a Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*, an Egyptian Plover *Pluvianus aegyptius* - a species becoming increasingly rare in captivity in Europe - and a pair of Spot-flanked Barbets *Tricholaema lachrymosa*.

The colony of Sudan Golden Sparrows occupied me for a long time. Simon wanted me to take as many photos as possible showing different types of behaviour, such as nest building by both sexes, males singing and



Pierre de Chabannes

**Sulawesi Crested Mynah.**

displaying with their wings spread, females at the nest and parents feeding their young. These highly social birds are a delight to observe as, at almost any time of the day, one can witness different activities within the group. It was the first time I had seen this species in a European collection and, I think, more attention should be paid to it, as the bright colours of the males and the fact that the species is so active, make it an interesting addition to a public collection.

Attempting to describe all the species in the Paradise Hall is quite a challenge, so I am just going to pick out some of the other birds that caught my eye. Birds such as the pair of the rarely kept Black-necked Weavers *P. nigricollis* that was building a tightly woven new nest against the roof of the aviary, alongside remnants of previous nests. There were some beautiful but shy Red-and-white Crakes *Laterallus leucopyrrhus*, a pair of Red-fronted Barbets *T. diademata* and a pair of Snowy-crowned Robin Chats *Cossypha niveicapilla* with two young. There were three species of minla: *Minla strigula*, *M. cyanouroptera* and *M. ignotincta*, each represented by a single old individual, the now rarely encountered Rüppell's Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureopterus* and a pair of Congo



Pierre de Chabannes

**Male Misool Wattled Brush-Turkey.**

Peafowl *Afropavo congensis*. The aviaries house an amazing collection of tropical Columbidae, including Superb Fruit Doves *P. superbus*, Mindanao Bleeding-Hearts *Gallicolumba crinigera*, a breeding pair of Beautiful Fruit Doves *P. pulchellus*, numerous Golden-Heart or Cinnamon Ground-Doves *G. rufigula*, the beautiful Pink-headed Fruit Dove *P. porphyreus* - one of the park's finest specialties with many breeding successes recorded - and two species of American quail-dove: the Jamaican Crested Quail-Dove or Mountain Witch Dove *Geotrygon versicolor* and the rarely seen Ruddy Quail-Dove *G. montana*.

With the arrival of a new male from the birdpark at La Londe-les Maures in France, it is hoped that the Great Blue Turacos *Corythaëola cristata* in the free-flight hall will breed very soon. Other birds in the free-flight hall include Southern Red Bishops *Euplectes o. orix*, Orange-bellied Fruit Doves *P. iozonus humeralis*, Cinnamon Hornero (Ovenbird) *Furnarius leucopus cinnamomeus* and, most important of all, a breeding group of Madagascar Blue Pigeons *Alectroenas madagascariensis*. This striking looking bird is

among a number of Madagascan species brought into captivity by the park in an attempt to establish viable captive populations and, so far, in the case of this species, has been a great success.

Along with the Zoologischer Garten Berlin and the zoo in Plzen in the Czech Republic, Weltvogelpark Walsrode houses one of the largest collections of small seed-eating birds. Its impressive collection built up over the past few years, includes Dybowski's Twinspot *Euschistospiza dybowskii*, Madagascar Munias *Lonchura nana*, various waxbills *Estrilda* spp., the Blue-billed or African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubicata*, Tri-coloured Parrotfinches *Erythrura tricolor*, Black Mannikins *L. stygia* from New Guinea and both types of Zebra Finch, the Australian *Taeniopygia guttata castanotis* (*T. castanotis*) and the Timor Zebra Finch *T. g. guttata* (*T. guttata*), as well as lots of other Australian finches.

### Day 3

I stopped briefly to look at the ostriches *Camelus* sp. and then moved on to the Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* enclosure, before heading to the main ratite area, which consists of four grassy enclosures, each with a pond and a small night shelter. The Greater Rheas *Rhea americana* were already busy foraging, but frequently raised their heads in the early morning sun, which enabled me to take some nice portraits of them. I was also able to get some nice portraits of the Emus *Dromaius novaehollandiae* and the recently arrived Lesser or Darwin's Rheas *R. (Pterocnemia) pennata*. The rarer of the two rheas in zoological collections, it is now being bred regularly at Parc Zoologique et Botanique at Mulhouse in France and in some other parks, so is likely to become a more familiar sight in European collections. Living in the fourth enclosure was a Northern, Single-wattled or One-wattled Cassowary *Casuarius unappendiculatus (rufotinctus)*. At the time it was believed to be the last remaining one in Europe, but earlier this year on March 9th, a male was acquired from a private collection in Spain, and the two have turned out to be a pair. Although this species has never been common in European zoos, it has been bred in a few parks, including at Walsrode in the early 1980s.

I next headed for the raptor aviaries. Most of the birds were out and some of them, such as the Harpy Eagle *Harpia harya* (for which a male hatched at Nuremberg Zoo in 1991, was recently acquired as a potential mate) and the newly-arrived African White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus*, were sunbathing. I then spent time watching the pair of Steller's Sea Eagles *Haliaeetus p. pelagicus*, Andean Condors *Vultur gryphus*, Bateleurs *Terathopius ecaudatus* and Griffon Vultures *G. fulvus*. Simon pointed out the two corvids sharing the aviary with the Griffon Vultures, one an albinistic Carrion Crow *Corvus c. corone* and the other the only known example of a

leucistic Rook *C. frugilegus*.

Weltvogelpark Walsrode has a good reputation for breeding raptors such as the Andean Condor and, more recently, the Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*. The next step in the park's breeding programme is to get the Harpy Eagles to breed.

Towards midday I moved on to the crane section. Most of the species are exhibited in large, grassy enclosures, either side of a large pond in which European Pond Terrapins *Emys orbicularis* breed. All of the species of cranes at Weltvogelpark Walsrode have bred there on several occasions, including rarer species such as the Hooded Crane *Grus monacha*, Brolga *G. rubicunda*, Black-necked Crane *G. nigricollis* and Siberian Crane *G. leucogeranus*. The park has always done well breeding cranes, with almost all taxa apart from the Whooping Crane *G. americana*, having been kept and bred there. Except for the Hooded Cranes which are now housed behind the scenes, all of the other cranes are on view to the public. The aviary that used to house the Hooded Cranes, now houses the Siberian Cranes, as well as two Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor* and a breeding flock of Asian Open-billed Storks *Anastomus oscitans*. At the time of my visit, the female White-naped Crane *G. vipio* was sitting on two eggs and Simon showed me Brolga and Hooded Crane chicks being reared off-display. Other species, such as the Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus*, Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum gibbericeps* and Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*, are housed in enclosures nearer the park's entrance, which they share with birds such as Bar-headed Geese *Anser indicus*, Red-billed Ducks *Anas erythrorhynchus* and Yellow-billed Storks *Mycteria ibis*.

#### Day 4

The next group of birds on the list to be photographed were the Anatidae. These make nice photogenic subjects, but are often sleeping during the morning when the light is at its best and only become active later when there is bright sunshine, which often makes it difficult to get really interesting photographs.

With nearly 80 taxa of ducks and allied species, Weltvogelpark Walsrode has (along with Tierpark Berlin, Ker Anas Park at Saint-André-des-Eaux, La Baule on the Atlantic coast of France and Blackbrook Zoological Park in England), one of the largest collections of captive waterfowl in Europe and, not only are almost all of them on exhibition, but a significant number of them are breeding.

I chose to begin with the ducks in the largest enclosures, along with the pelicans and flamingos. My first targets were the South American species, such as the Speckled (Chilean) Teal *A. flavirostris oxyptera*, Black-necked Swans *Cygnus melanocoryphus*, Coscoroba Swans *Coscoroba coscoroba*



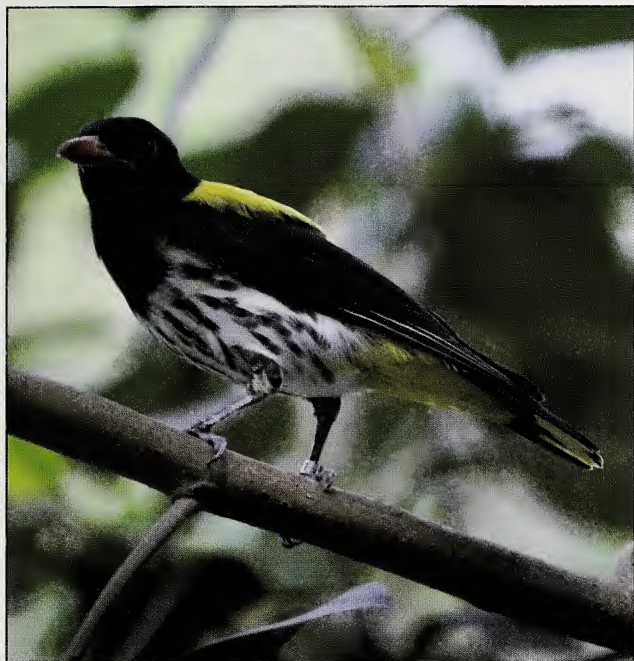
Pierre de Chabannes

#### Golden Mynah.

and the rarely seen Andean Goose *Chloephaga melanoptera*. Getting good photos of the latter is always a challenge because the male is so aggressive towards photographers and often comes right up to the fence, where he is joined by the female.

I took several photos of the Peruvian Pelicans *Pelicanus thagus*, a species shown and bred for the first time in Europe at Weltvogelpark Walsrode and now to be seen at Blackbrook and Hanover and elsewhere. I then moved on to a nicely landscaped rocky enclosure that houses a breeding colony of Humboldt Penguins *Spheniscus humboldti*. Up until 2008, the second part of this installation housed sea ducks such as Spectacled Eiders *Somateria fischeri*, King Eiders *S. spectabilis*, Harlequin Ducks *Histrionicus histrionicus* and a Gannet *Morus bassanus*, but due to refurbishment work, most of the ducks were housed behind the scenes and only the Gannet remained on show.

Two other species of pelican, the Great White *P. onocrotalus* and the Dalmatian Pelican *P. crispus*, together with Goosander *Mergus merganser* and Greater Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*, live in a beautiful, large enclosure nearby. When I first visited the park, a Peruvian Pelican used to cross the low fence of its enclosure and visit the other pelicans. The public feeding sessions are the best time to get good photos of these birds, especially



Pierre de Chabannes

**Male Dark-throated Oriole.**

the Goosander, which often steal fish from the pelicans. The first of two nearby ponds is home to a mixed flock of Caribbean *Phoenicopterus ruber* and Chilean Flamingos *P. chilensis*, together with Brazilian Teal *Amazonetta b. brasiliensis* and Hooded Mergansers *Lophodytes cucullatus*, and the second pond is occupied by Australian Pelicans *P. conspicillatus*, Maned Geese *Chenonetta jubata* and Paradise Shelduck *Tadorna variegata*.

Many more ducks live in the crane and ratite enclosures, but there are far too many to name them all here. Some of the rarer ones include Freckled Ducks *Stictonetta naevosa*, Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*, New Zealand Scaup *A. novaeseelandiae*, New Zealand Shoveler *A. rhynchotis variegata*, Blue-winged Goose *Cyanochen cyanopterus* and Australian Pochard *A. australis*.

Left with a little time to spare, I decided to investigate the nocturnal birds, most of which are housed in medium-sized aviaries in front of the penguin enclosure. The most unusual species is the Ashy-faced Owl *Tyto glaucops*, a bird found in only a few other European collections. There are a pair of Brown Wood Owls *Strix leptogrammica bartelsi* from Java, a pair of Spectacled Owls *Pulsatrix perspicillata*, one of which is a leucistic bird, some Oriental Bay Owls *Phodilus b. badilus*, Southern White-faced (Scops) Owls *Ptilopsis granti*, Tawny Frogmouths *Podargus strigoides* and a breeding pair of Verreaux's (Milky) Eagle-Owls *Bubo lacteus*, the female of which often lays her eggs right up by the wire, in preference to the sheltered nest site provided by the staff.

Most of the Eurasian owls are housed in the Old Castle (*Uhu-Burg*), a huge replica of a medieval castle. These include Eurasian Eagle-Owls *B. b. bubo* and Barn Owls *T. a. alba*. It also houses Ravens *C. corax*. A breeding colony of Blue-eyed Ibis *Threskiornis b. bernieri*, a species specially brought over from Madagascar, African Open-billed Storks *A. lamelligerus*, Meller's Duck *A. melleri*, Madagascar Teal *A. bernieri* and a colony of Madagascar Pond Herons *Ardeola idae* live in one of two large aviaries on the side of the replica castle. The other houses European waterbirds such as Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* and Eurasian Spoonbills *P. leucorodia*.

### Day 5

I woke up at 5.00am in order to be at the park's kitchens by 6.00am to take photos of the keepers preparing the food for all the different birds. Then, after a short break, I set off for the pheasantry and the parrot section. The pheasantry houses a rich variety of birds, many of which are rarely seen in zoological collections. The buildings are basically divided into four main areas, each with 10 smaller aviaries with both indoor and outdoor accommodation. They are very nicely landscaped, which sometimes made it difficult to get good photos, because the birds remained hidden away.

During the last three days of my stay a number of changes were made and some European species, previously housed elsewhere, were transferred to these aviaries. These included a Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*, some Rosy or Rose-coloured Starlings *Sturnus roseus*, a pair of Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula*, some Yellowhammers *Emberiza citrinella* and Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus*. The partitions dividing some of the aviaries were removed to create more space for larger birds such as Sulawesi Red-knobbed Hornbills *Aceros cassidix*, Great Hornbills *Buceros bicornis* and Javan Rhinoceros Hornbills *B. rhinoceros silvestris*. During the past few years Weltvogelpark Walsrode has recorded a number of breeding successes with the Sulawesi Red-knobbed Hornbills. I noticed that it no longer keeps species such as the Wreathed Hornbill *A. undulatus*,



Blyth's or Plicated Hornbill *A. plicatus* and the White-crested Hornbill *Berenicornis comatus*.

Smaller aviaries are used to keep and breed some of the park's specialities such as the Cuckoo-Rollers *Leptosomus discolor*, also known as Courols, and other Madagascar endemics such as the Red Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*, Madagascar Turtle Dove *Streptopelia picturata*, Crested Coua *Coua cristata*, Blue Coua *C. caerulea* and, most recently, the impressive Giant Coua *C. gigas*, which could be seen close to the wire sunbathing early in the morning. Walking along the row of aviaries, other colourful birds that caught my eye included a Golden Mynah *Mino a. anais* and a Golden-crested Mynah *Ampeliceps coronatus* - both of which are quite rare in zoos, even in Asia - a breeding pair of Papuan Mountain Pigeons *Gymnophaps albertisii*, a nice group of Crested Mynahs *Acridotheres cristatellus*, a pair of Great Argus Pheasants *Argusianus a. argus*, Green Magpies *Cissa chinensis*, replacing the Yellow-breasted species *C. hypoleuca* which lived there until 2009, Black Francolins *Francolinus francolinus*, Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*, a recently arrived Omei Shan Liocichla *Liocichla omeiensis* and the only known Piapiacs *Ptilostomus afer* in a European zoological collection.

The pheasantry is, of course, also home to several species of Galliformes such as the beautiful Malayan Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron malacense*, Swinhoe's Pheasant *Lophura swinhoii*, White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon drounyi*, two *Tragopan* spp. and (Jones's) Silver Pheasant *L. nycthemera jonesi*. A pair of Elliot's Pheasant *Syrnaticus ellioti* and a surplus female were also housed in the pheasantry.

I could easily have spent two days making sure that I had seen everything, but it was time to move on to the equally impressive parrot section. First on my list was the house built initially to house large and delicate species of parrot. Inside are three large central aviaries with a dozen smaller aviaries at the sides. This hexagonal building was in 2009 transformed into a Brazilian house, with fewer parrots and a greater emphasis on endemic Brazilian birds. The central aviaries now house two female Golden-headed Quetzals *Pharomachrus auriceps*, Toco Toucans *Ramphastos toco*, a Nocturnal Curassow *Nothocrax urumutum*, an Andean Cock-of-the-Rock *Rupicola peruviana aequatorialis* and a pair of Razor-billed Curassows *Mitu tuberosum*.

Some parrots continued to occupy some of the smaller aviaries, the most interesting of which included a Plain Parakeet *Brotogeris tirica*, the rarely kept Buru Racquet-tail *Prioniturus mada*, a pair of oddly-coloured Vinaceous Amazons *Amazona vinacea*, the beautiful Purple-bellied Parrot *Triclarina malachitacea*, Hawk-headed Parrots *Deroytyus a. accipitrinus*, some Cobalt-winged Parakeets *B. cyanoptera* and the Golden Conure



Pierre de Chabannes

### Madagascar Blue Pigeon.

*Guarouba guarouba*. A pair of Masked Crimson Tanagers *Ramphocelus nigrogularis*, a species which has almost disappeared from European zoological collections, a pair of White-tailed Trogons *Trogon viridis*, the White Woodpeckers *Melanerpes candidus* that used to live in the Paradise Hall, a pair of Silver-beaked Tanagers *R. carbo* and a rare subspecies of the Pale-legged Hornero *Furnarius leucopus longirostris*, are among a number of other birds that have been moved into the house since 2009 and now occupy some of the smaller aviaries.

*Pierre de Chabannes***Collared Imperial Pigeon.**

The outside aviaries house larger parrots such as Scarlet Macaws *Ara macao*, Green-winged Macaws *A. chloroptera*, Keas *Nestor notabilis*, Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus*, which are not as rare as they used to be, and a lone male Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*. The Critically Endangered Blue-throated Macaw *A. glaucogularis* is bred regularly as part of Weltvogelpark Walsrode's conservation and breeding programme.

Most parrots are housed in smaller aviaries on the right-hand side of a large floral display in the centre of the park. Species in these aviaries are mostly grouped geographically and, at the beginning of 2009, Simon decided to keep other species with the parrots to show visitors the variety of birds which can be found living alongside each other in countries around the tropics. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the New Caledonian aviary, which Kagus share with a breeding group of Horned Parakeets *Eunymphicus cornutus*. Australian finches, doves and pigeons, share an aviary with Elegant Parakeets *Neophema elegans*, Bourke's Parrots *Neopsephotus bourkii*, Barraband Parakeets *Polytelis swainsonii* and Princess of Wales' Parakeets *P. alexandrae*. Two South American aviaries house Blue-headed Macaws, an Hispaniolan Amazon *A. ventralis*, Blue-throated Conures *Pyrrhura cruetata*, Elegant Crested Tinamous, Red-crowned Conures *P. (picta) roseifrons*, Illiger's Macaws *P. maracana* and Plush-crested Jays *Cyanocorax chrysops*. Other interesting birds include a male Samar Tarctic Hornbill *Penelopides affinis samarensis*, a pair of Red-browed Amazons *A. rhodocorytha*, a breeding colony of Black-cheeked Lovebirds *Agapornis nigrigenis*, a pair of Blue-eyed Cockatoos *Cacatua ophthalmica* and, in the largest of the parrot aviaries, a breeding group of Hyacinth Macaws *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*. Other parrots, such as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoos *Calyptorhynchus banksii*, that hatched their first chick in early 2009, are kept in off-display breeding aviaries.

The Lori Atrium welcomes visitors to the colourful and noisy world of lorries and other Australasian fruit-eating birds. The one-storey facility is divided into many small aviaries either side of the pathway used by visitors. In addition, some larger aviaries have been built in three different places in the centre of the building. With almost 30 different species and subspecies of lorries and lorikeets Weltvogelpark Walsrode has, along with Loro Parque in Tenerife, one of the largest public collections of Loriinae. The most recent addition is a pair of the New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands subspecies of the Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus deplachii*. Many of the lorries and lorikeets are quite rare in captivity and some of them are not displayed anywhere else in continental Europe. These include the Blue-eared Lory *Eos semilavata*, Purple-bellied Lory *Lorius hypoinochrous*, Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna*, Edward's Lorikeet *T. capistratus*, Goldie's Lorikeet *Psittenteles goldiei*, the unusual Yellow-and-green Lorikeet *T. f. flavoviridis*, Emerald Lorikeet *Neopsittacus pullicauda*, Rajah Black Lory *Chalcopsitta atra insignis*, the beautiful Collared Lory *Phigys solitarius* and the incredible Tahiti Blue Lory *Vini peruviana*, which has so far proved almost impossible to breed because the birds are so aggressive towards each other.

Some of the others, such as the Purple-capped Lory *L. domicella*,

Duyvenbode's Lory *C. duivenbodei*, the Cardinal Lory *C. cardinalis*, the beautiful Steller's Lorikeet *C. papou goliathina*, a breeding group of Blue-crowned Lories *V. australis* and the Mount Apo Lorikeet *T. johnstoniae*, are a more familiar sight in European collections.

Two rarely seen fig parrots, the Orange-breasted *Psittaculirostris guliemitertii* and the Double-eyed Fig Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* are also kept and bred in this building. Two others, Edwards's *P. edwardsii* and Desmarest's *P. desmarestii*, have been moved to one of the large aviaries in the Indonesian hall. Species such as the tiny Whiskered Lorikeet *Oreopsittacus arfaki* are now kept behind the scenes for breeding purposes and the last remaining Striated Lorikeet *C. multistriata* died recently of old age.

The first large aviary, which once housed Tahiti Blue Lories and Squatter Pigeons *Geophaps scripta*, now houses a male Pesquet's Parrot *Psittirichas fulgidus*. This unusual species has never been well represented in zoological collections, even in Asia, because of the difficulties in feeding and breeding it. The second large aviary houses a breeding group of Western Crowned Pigeons *Goura cristata minor* cohabiting with Blue-faced Honeyeaters *Entomyzon cyanotis*. The third large aviary houses Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots *Loriculus galgulus* with Beautiful Fruit Doves *P. pulchellus* and Golden-Heart or Cinnamon Ground Doves.

Just outside the building are two small aviaries that used to house two rare subspecies: (Riedel's) Eclectus *E. r. riedeli* and (Cornelia's) Eclectus *E. r. cornelia*. The first of these now houses Swift Parrots *Lathamus discolor* and Gouldian Finches *E. gouldiae* and the second aviary houses Purple-bellied Lories.

## Day 6

It was a bright sunny morning and I decided to begin by visiting the temperate bird area, which basically consists of two rows of beautifully landscaped aviaries that fit nicely into the wooded surroundings. The first aviaries house two leucistic Carrion Crows, two White-throated Magpie-Jays *Calocitta formosa*, which may belong to different subspecies, a Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, which occupies a small aviary that previously housed a male Greater Prairie-chicken *Tympanuchus cupido* and, finally, a pair of Himalayan Snowcocks *Tetraogallus himalayensis kozlowi*, hatched at Tierpark Berlin, sharing an aviary with Desert Finches *Rhodopechys obsoleta*. The other side of the pathway is a nice grassy enclosure housing a pair of Greater Magellanic Geese *Chloephaga picta leucoptera*, the subspecies most commonly seen in European zoos. Then there is a much larger aviary, also nicely landscaped. It used to house a number of species, including a pair of Western Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*,

but is now shared by a pair of Reeves's Pheasants *S. reevesi* and three Red-billed Blue Magpies *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*, possibly belonging to more than one subspecies.

After passing the Wattled Crane enclosure, there are aviaries which until recently housed smaller European birds such as Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra*, Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla* and Corncrakes *Crex crex*. Today, the first of these aviaries houses Waxwings *Bombycilla garrulus*, Stock Doves *Columba oenas*, Goldfinches *Carduelis carduelis*, Bullfinches *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* and Golden Pheasants *Chrysolophus pictus*. Living in the second aviary are Azure-winged Magpies *Cyanopica cyana swinhoei* and Red-legged Partridges *Alectoris rufa*.

Then there is an enormous aviary imaginatively landscaped to replicate a stream flowing through a grassy area of northern Europe where dozens of waterbirds and other species come to feed and breed. There were a pair of Garganey *A. querquedula*, Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Pied Avocets *Recurvirostris avosetta* and Ruffs and Reeves *Philomachus pugnax*, along with some Grey Partridges *Perdix perdix* and a group of European Rollers *Coracias garrulus*. During my stay, however, the aviary was emptied in order to be prepared for a breeding group of Lesser Kestrels *Falco naumanni*, housed elsewhere in the park. Once the kestrels have settled in, the waterbirds will be reintroduced, which should result in a unique and very interesting mix of species.

The European zone ends with an aviary housing European Starlings *S. vulgaris* and European Rollers, a Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* and an Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* which is, so far as I know, the only specimen of this species displayed in a European zoo.

It was time to enter one of the larger structures in which the birds and visitors come in close contact with each other. The most amazing of these is a cylindrical structure that is one of the largest outdoor walk-through aviaries housing tropical birds in Europe. At the time of my visit, it was gradually being emptied, so that it could be renovated. However, I was fortunate enough to see a number of interesting species that were still living in it. These included a small group of Montezuma Oropendolas *Psarocolius montezuma*, the only such group in Europe and a Renauld's Ground-Cuckoo *Carpococcyx renauldi* that would approach visitors for mealworms, which visitors can buy for €0.50 (approx. £0.60 or US\$0.95) at the entrance. Other species still present in the aviary included Speckled Pigeons *C. guinea*, a large group of recently arrived wild Turkeys *Meleagris gallopavo*, a breeding group of Hamerkops *Scopus umbretta*, a pair of Kori Bustards *Ardeotis kori*, two Secretary Birds *Sagittarius serpentarius*, Green Peafowl *Pavo m. muticus*, a large group of White-faced Whistling Ducks



Pierre de Chabannes

#### Asian Open-billed Stork.

*Dendrocygna viduata*, a number of Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber* and Abdim's Storks *Ciconia abdimii*. I liked the atmosphere in this exhibit and the close proximity of the birds. When the visitors went off to the main restaurant to eat, I took a little nap on one of the benches, and was awoken 30 minutes later by a Hamerkop tugging at my jacket.

At the end is a smaller walk-through aviary devoted to shorebirds such as Inca Terns *Larosterna inca*, Brown Pelicans *P. occidentalis carolinensis*, Boat-billed Herons *Cochlearius c. cochlearius*, Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus*, Lesser Pied Cormorants *P. melanoleucos*, Pied Avocets and the last known captive specimen of the Guanay Cormorant *P. bougainvillii* in Europe. A wave machine has been installed and it is a joy to watch the terns flying low above the waves trying to catch the small fish thrown into the water by keepers.

I spent the afternoon in the Indonesian hall looking for any birds I might have missed. I was there for quite a time, as the size of the hall and the thick foliage, mean that birds can easily hide away. My favourite spots for photographing them are around the three main feeding points, which most species visit at least once a day. I station myself nearby and then it is mostly a matter of patiently waiting for the birds to appear. I especially wanted

to photograph each of the Victoria Crowned Pigeons *G. victoria* and each of the Scheepmaker's or Southern Crowned Pigeons *G. scheepmakeri*, so that Simon could identify each bird and decide which subspecies it belongs to. All of the Scheepmaker's I have seen in Europe, south-east Asia and Indonesia have belonged to the southern New Guinea subspecies *G. s. sclaterii*, recognisable by its conspicuous white wing patch, purplish-red lesser and median wing-coverts and purplish breast shading into grey blue on the lower breast and belly. Two subspecies of pheasant pigeons live in the hall, the Green-naped *Otidiphaps n. nobilis* and the rarer White-naped *O. n. aruensis*. Smaller species living on or near the ground include the last known Giant Pitta *Pitta caerulea* in a European collection, a pair of Javan Whistling Thrushes *Myophonus glaucinus* and Javan Orange-headed Ground Thrushes *Z. c. rubecula*. Living in the hall are also a number of Columbidae from the rainforests of Indonesia. These include the White-bibbed or Jobi Ground Dove *G. jobiensis*, Nicobar Pigeon *Caloenas nicobarica*, the beautiful and rarely seen Elegant Imperial Pigeon *Ducula concinna*, Pied Imperial Pigeon *D. b. bicolor*, the rare Reinwardt's Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtsii* and the equally rare White-throated Pigeon *C. vitiensis halmaheira*.

The last remaining Dark-throated Oriole *Oriolus xanthonotus* and a number of other interesting species such as the Asian Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella crinigera*, Black-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus a. atriceps*, Thick-billed Ground Pigeon *Trugon terrestris*, the unusual Chestnut-backed Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus montanus*, Bar-shouldered Dove *G. humeralis gregalis* and Black-hooded Oriole *O. xanthornus* share an aviary with Crested Firebacks *L. ignita macartneyi*. Among the many other species are the Salawati King Parrot *Alisterus amboinensis dorsalis*, Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons inornata*, Helmeted Friarbird *Philemon buceroides*, the rare and beautiful Collared Imperial Pigeon *D. m. muellerii*, Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush *Garrulax mitratus*, Sulawesi Black-naped Oriole *O. chinensis celebensis*, White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*, a large group of Grosbeak Starlings *Scissirostrum dubium* and some Green Pygmy Geese *Nettapus pulchellus*.

## Day 7

On my way back to the guest room on my last day I took time to visit three further aviaries - those nearest the entrance. The largest of these currently houses a breeding colony of Northern Bald Ibis or Waldrapp *Geronticus eremita*, together with Eurasian Spoonbills and a pair of recently arrived Ring-necked Pheasants *Phasianus c. colchicus*. Of the two remaining slightly smaller aviaries, the first houses one of Weltvogelpark Walsrode's rarest exhibits, the beautiful yet weird looking Horned Guan *Oreophasis derbyianus*. The park has two pairs, one of which is on exhibition sharing



an aviary with a pair of Crimson-rumped Toucanets *Aulacorhynchus haematopygus*, while the other pair is kept behind the scenes in the breeding section. These are the only representatives of this species in captivity in Europe. Living in the other aviary are birds from Madagascar, such as Crested Ibis *Lophotibis c. cristata*, the Madagascar Fody *F. madagascariensis* and Greater Vasa Parrot *Coracopsis vasa*.

Finally, I returned to the free-flight area of the Paradise Hall to see some Layard's (Common) Bulbuls *P. barbatus layardi* which had been released into the exhibit early that morning. I also wanted to see the new pair of Green Woodhoopoes *Phoeniculus purpureus senegalensis* in one of the aviaries. There had also been a few changes made in the Indonesian hall, with the pair of Sulawesi Crested Mynahs being released into the free-flight area and the arrival of a group of Short-tailed Starlings *Aplonis minor*.

On my next visit to Weltvogelpark Walsrode, I will probably see a whole lot of new birds and find some nice surprises awaiting me.

### Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks to Simon, Nicole, Julia, Anne and everybody at the park for their kindness and for their helpfulness, and for making themselves available to answer my questions and for providing me with a wealth of data and information, which made my stay in 2009 among the most memorable times I have spent visiting a zoological collection. I would also like to thank Josef Lindholm, Senior Aviculturist at Dallas World Aquarium, whose many articles in the *AFA Watchbird* (American Federation of Aviculture) magazine, encouraged me to write about my visits to zoological collections around the world.

*Pierre de Chabannes lives in Le Chesnay in France. E-mail: pedroyadrums@yahoo.com*

\* \* \*

### SOCIAL MEETINGS 2011

On Saturday, May 7th, the society will visit Richard Abrey's collection at Edwardstone, Sudbury, Suffolk.

The President's Garden Party will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, July 16th, at Chestnut Lodge, Cobham, Surrey.

The Autumn Meeting will be at Paultons Park, Ower, Romsey, Hampshire, probably on Saturday, September 24th, but this date has still to be confirmed.

## A NEW PARROTLET FROM COLOMBIA, *Forpus flavicollis*

by Paola Bertagnolio and Luigi Racheli

### Abstract

A new species of parrotlet of the genus *Forpus*, from Colombia, is described based on a colour photograph of a group of caged individuals of different ages and of both sexes.

### Resumen

Se describe una nueva especie de perico del género *Forpus*, procedente de Colombia, en base a una fotografía en color de un grupo de ejemplares de sexo y edad diferente.

### Introduction

Twenty years ago during a trip from extreme northern Colombia and Venezuela to Paraguay and Argentina, the senior author and Francesco Nardelli, at the time Curator of Mammals at Howletts and Port Lympne Wild Animal Parks in the UK, stopped briefly at Melgar (430m (approx. 1,400ft) above sea level), some 100km (62 miles) south-west of Bogotá, at a local market where parrots and passerines were displayed for sale.

On being asked about uncommon parrots species in central Colombia, a dealer/trapper who proved to be very familiar with the Golden-plumed Parakeet *Leptosittaca branickii*, Yellow-eared Parrot *Ognorhynchus icterotis*, Rusty-faced Parrot *Hapalopsittaca amazonina* and Fuerte's Parrot *H. fuertesi*, mentioned *Pericos de cuello amarillo* (the Yellow-necked Parrotlet). At the time we thought he was referring to the Black-headed Parrot (or Caique) *Pionites melanocephala* or perhaps the Saffron-headed Parrot *Pionopsitta pyrilia* and pursued the matter no further. However, on January 23rd 2010, in the course of a regular worldwide survey of less well known websites carrying parrot data, we came upon a colour photograph of some parrotlets which brought back to mind the incident in Colombia 20 years earlier.

The photograph by an unnamed photographer dates back to January 1st 2005. It shows a group of 32 parrotlets in a small cage lying on the ground. It appears very likely that the birds were on sale in a local open air market. Some Yellow-hooded Blackbirds *Chrysomus icterocephalus* can be seen in another cage nearby. The caption mentioned: "Perico Cascabelito *Forpus conspicillatus*". There is no doubt the birds are *cascabelitos* (the name commonly used for *Forpus* parrotlets in Colombia), however, with the possible exception of the bird marked by the arrow, they are definitely not *F. conspicillatus* (Spectacled Parrotlets). Their colour pattern does not correspond with that of any known species.



The photo found on the internet showing a cage of parrotlets which, with the possible exception of the bird marked by an arrow, have a colour pattern that does not correspond with that of any previously described species.

### Description

*Forpus flavicollis* Bertagnolio & Racheli sp. nov.

Type material: syntypic series depicted in photograph.

Although the birds are crowded together and are partly obscured by the wire and by each other, it can clearly be seen that, except for the bird marked by the arrow (seemingly a female *F. conspicillatus*), they are green with a broad yellow collar. The forehead is yellowish-green, yellow or orange; the area surrounding the eye is blue or bright green; the bend of the wing and carpal edge are cobalt blue or green. Although the birds have their wings closed, it is possible to see that at least two of them have a cobalt blue rump and a few others have a bright green rump. They have a pale horn coloured bill and pinkish-flesh coloured legs and feet. The underside of one bird can be seen and the rectrices (the main tail feathers) appear to have a yellow or creamy-yellow tip.

Based on the secondary sexual characteristics which are typical of members for the genus *Forpus*, the blue colouring of some of the yellowish-green, yellow and orange fronted individuals, would seem to indicate that the different colouring in this area is a trait linked to age (in chronological order) rather than sex. To this end, it is worth recalling that *Forpus* females

have no blue and that juvenile males resemble the adult, though they may possibly be a little duller.

While the blue eye-ring denotes the close relationship to *F. conspicillatus*, the broad yellow collar and distinctive yellowish-green, yellow or orange frontal band clearly distinguish it from all other *Forpus* species.

As far as body size is concerned, considering the relative uniformity in size of members of the genus *Forpus*, it seems reasonably safe to assume that *F. flavicollis* is no exception and is similar in size to *F. conspicillatus*, which measures 12cm-13cm (approx. 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in-5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in) in length.

### **Distribution**

The photograph appeared on the website of the Ibagué Wildlife Recovery Centre (Centro de Atención y Valoración de Fauna Silvestre de Ibagué), Tolima, Colombia, together with photos of other species of rescued birds and mammals, all of which are known to occur in central Colombia. Our attempts to contact the Ibagué Centre for further information proved unsuccessful and the site disappeared from the internet shortly after we discovered it. The fate of the birds shown in the photo remain unknown. It is likely that being freshly captured birds, they were confiscated and released soon afterwards.

For such a distinctive looking bird to have been overlooked for so long is probably due to it having a small range and/or it being restricted to an inaccessible area, not yet visited by ornithologists (see Mayr & Vuilleumier, 1983).

There are a few probabilities to take into consideration when trying to define its geographic origin. Firstly, wild birds are usually offered for sale close to where they were captured. Secondly, as the photo was posted on the website of the Ibagué Wildlife Recovery Centre, a reasonable hypothesis would seem to be that the birds (although not mentioned by Parra-Hernández et al. 2007) came from Quindío or the surrounding area, likely within the range of the Yellow-hooded Blackbird, the other species in the photograph.

### **Discussion**

The description of a new species based on one or more type specimens preserved in a museum, has for many years been the standard procedure (LeCroy & Vuilleumier, 1992). Today, however, at a time of rapidly improving electronic storage of data and communications, such a process may no longer be strictly required and a colour photograph of a group of birds, such as the photograph reproduced here, may prove sufficient to establish the existence of a new species.

Dubois and Nemésio (2007), however, doubted the utility of photographs and other materials for the description of a new taxa, while Donegan (2000, 2008), though underlining the importance of a type specimen, supports the

use of descriptions and other techniques (*cf* Gentile & Snell, 2009; Donegan, 2009; Mendes Pontes et al. 2009; Nemésio, 2009).

On the other hand, the ICZN (1999) does not state that a dead or live specimen is required to name a new taxon. Article 73.1.4 declares: "Designation of an illustration of a single specimen as a holotype is to be treated as designation of the specimen illustrated; the fact that the specimen no longer exists or cannot be traced does not of itself invalidate the designation."

This clearly means that when other specimens of this parrotlet are found, a type specimen can be properly designated. The procedure also fulfils the philosophy of modern naturalists of conserving animal species and avoiding scientific killing.

We hope in the near future to travel to central Colombia in search of more definite information on this parrotlet's area of distribution, or that someone else will succeed in discovering this based on the data we have presented here.

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Dr Alfredo Guillet (Referee for the Environment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome) for the critical reading of the manuscript and for his suggestions.

### References

- Donegan, T. M. 2000. Is specimen-taking of birds in the Neotropics really "essential"? Ethical and practical objections to further collections. *Ornitologia Neotropical* 11:263-267.
- Donegan, T. M. 2008. New species and subspecies descriptions do not and should not always require a dead type specimen. *Zootaxa* 1761: 37-48.
- Donegan, T. M. 2009. Type specimens, samples of live individuals and the Galapagos Pink Land Iguana. *Zootaxa* 2201:12-20.
- Dubois, A. and Nemésio, A. 2007. Does nomenclatural availability of nomina of new species or subspecies require the desposition of vouchers in collections? *Zootaxa* 1409:1-22.
- Gentile, G. and Snell, H. 2009. *Conolophus marthae* sp. nov. (Squamata, Iguaniae), a new species of land iguana from the Galapagos Archipelago. *Zootaxa* 2201:1-10.
- ICZN. 1999. *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*, Fourth Edition. International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, London.
- LeCroy, M. and Vuilleumier, F. 1992. Guidelines for the description of new species in ornithology. *Bull. B. O. C.*, Centenary Suppl. 112A:191-198.
- Mayr, E. and Vuilleumier, F. 1983. New species of birds described from 1966 to 1975. *Journ. Ornithol.* 124:217-232.
- Mendes Pontes, A. R., Malta, A. and Asfora, P. E. 2009. A new species of Capuchin Monkey, genus *Cebus* Erxleben (Cebidae, Primates): found at the very brink of extinction in the Pernambuco Endemism Centre. *Zootaxa* 1200:1-12.
- Nemésio, A. 2009. On the live holotype of the Galapagos Pink Land Iguana, *Conolophus marthae* Gentile & Snell, 2009 (Squamata: Iguanidae): is it an acceptable exception? *Zootaxa* 2201:21-25.

Parra-Hernández, R. M., Carantón-Ayala, D. A., Sanabria Mejía, J. S., Barrera Rodríguez, L. F., Sierra Sierra, A. M., Moreno Palacios, M. C., Yate Molina, W. S., Figueroa Martínez, W. E., Díaz Jarmillo, C., Florez Delgado, V. T., Certuche Cubillos, J. K., Loaiza Hernández, H. N. and Florido Cuellar, B. A. 2007. Aves del Municipio de Ibagué, Tolima, Colombia. *Biota Colombiana* 8 ( 2 ) : 199-220.

*Paolo Bertagnolio and Luigi Racheli, Centro per lo Studio e la Conservazione degli Psittaciformi, Rome, Italy. E-mail: p.bertagnoliocscp@gmail.com/luigi.gi.racheli@alice.it*

\* \* \*

## CONSERVING PRINCE RUSPOLI'S TURACO

Recent field work on Prince Ruspoli's Turaco *Tauraco ruspolii* in southern Ethiopia organised by Addis Ababa University and funded by a number of organisations, including the Avicultural Society, Chester Zoo and the International Turaco Society (ITS) and led by CEPA (Conservation des Espèces et des Populations Animales, France), suggests that the rate of habitat change has been rapid in the northern part of its range, where large areas have been converted to agriculture and plantations of exotic trees. It is in this part of its range that hybridization with the White-cheeked species *T. l. leucotis* occurs.

Thankfully, in the central part of its range, the woodlands bordering Sede and Lela Lemu forests remain largely intact and support high densities of Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. Clearly, this area is a key site for the conservation of this species, as it probably supports the most important surviving sub-population of Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. However, the survey also found increased illegal logging and agriculture in the area and habitat destruction is bound to increase as the road system is shortly to be upgraded to support the expansion of mining, which is already flourishing in the area.

Alazar Daka, Luca Borghesio, Jean-Marc Lernoald and Afework Bekele say that urgent action is necessary to improve the conservation of Sede and Lela Lemu forests and the woodlands surrounding them.

Prince Ruspoli's Turaco was the emblem of this year's British Birdwatching Fair, which was raising funds in support of a BirdLife International project to help conserve the birds of Ethiopia's Southern Highlands.

## THE RUFOUS-LEGGED OWL *Strix rufipes*

by Peter Stocks

The South American Rufous-legged Owl *Strix rufipes* is, compared to other members of the genus *Strix*, a comparative newcomer to aviculture. The nominate subspecies *S. r. rufipes* is found in central Chile and west-central Argentina down to Tierra del Fuego and *S. r. sanborni* is confined to Chiloe Island off the Pacific coast of Chile (Clements, 2007). There used to be a third subspecies *S. r. chaoensis*. In *Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica* del la Peña and Rumboll (1998) noted that it was likely there were in fact two species, *S. chaoensis* in the north and the typical form in the Patagonian Andes. They added that their measurements and calls are noticeably different, though not their plumage. Nowadays, they are in fact treated as two separate species, with the northern birds that inhabit the Chaco or Gran Chaco of southern Bolivia, western Paraguay and northern Argentina, called the Chaco Owl *S. chaoensis* (Clements, 2007).

Both are small to medium-sized owls measuring 13in-15in (33cm-35cm) in length and are therefore slightly smaller than their supposed close relative the Tawny Owl *S. aluco* (and the North American Barred Owl *S. varia* and Spotted Owl *S. occidentalis*). I say supposed relative, as very little is known about them outside of captivity and, I suspect, that following detailed studies they may, along with the Rusty-barred Owl *S. hylophilia*, one day be placed in a new and separate genus of their own.

Although predominately brown, the Rufous-legged and Chaco Owls are strikingly handsome birds with strong, contrasting, colours. The head and upperparts are rufous/deep brown with fine white horizontal barring and the underparts are orange-buff with cream and dark brown cross-barring. The eyes are dark brown and the facial disc is barred dark brown and white and may be suffused with deeper rusty brown or dark orange. A white or creamy coloured V-shaped line runs down between the eyes to the horn-coloured beak, just below which is a creamy-white crescent-shaped collar. The colours of the juveniles are more muted and, subsequently, until they moult into adult plumage they lack the visual impact of the adult birds.

Here is the UK the initial founder stock was imported from Germany in 1983 by the Hawk Conservancy in Hampshire. However, seven years later they had still failed to breed successfully and were sent on breeding loan to Bernard Sayers, who went on to record the UK first breeding in 1992. (Dave Coles's additions and corrections (2001) listed the UK first breeding of *chaoensis* as having occurred in 1998.) Although the initial stock took some time to begin breeding, this owl eventually became established in the

UK and regularly nested in its second year, with some pairs even laying in their first year, though not always going on to nest successfully.

A modest-sized, open-fronted aviary approximately 9ft x 6ft (2.7m x 1.8m) should be provided, with at the front and in the middle a choice of approximately 4in-5in (10cm-12.8cm) diameter posts of varying heights for the birds to perch on and, preferably at the rear under the covered portion of the flight, a horizontal perch and adjacent to it a nest box.

The latter should measure approximately 1ft x 1ft x 1ft 9in high at the front and 2ft high at the back (30.5cm x 30.5cm x 54.5cm high at the front and 61cm high at the back), with a sloping roof. The nest hole should be approximately 5in (12.8cm) in diameter. The bottom of the box should be filled with a substrate of wood shavings some 4in-5in (10cm-12.8cm) deep (do not use peat as it has a tendency to become very dry and powdery and can cause respiratory and eye problems). The female lays a clutch of one to four eggs (the average number is three). They are slightly elliptical in shape and measure approximately 38mm x 32mm and, as with most hole nesters, are chalky white.

Unlike some other members of the genus *Strix*, especially the Tawny Owl, the Rufous-legged Owl has proved to have a placid nature and can therefore safely be described as non-aggressive, even when breeding. This attribute, combined with its contrasting colours, make it an attractive species to keep.

## References

- Clements, J. F. 2007. *The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World* Sixth Edition. Christopher Helm, London.
- Coles, D. 2001. Additions and Corrections to UK First Breeding Records. *Avicultural Magazine* 107,3:125-135.
- de la Peña, M. R. and Rumboll, M. 1998. *Collins Illustrated Checklist, Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica*. HarperCollinsPublishers, London.

*Peter is the new Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the Avicultural Society. His contact details can be found on the inside of the front cover of the magazine.*

*According to the most recent Foreign Bird Federation Register of Birds Bred in the UK under Controlled Conditions, covering the period 2005-2008, three Rufous-legged Owls were bred in 2005 and three in 2007, but none in 2006 and 2008. During the same period a total of 14 Chaco Owls were bred.*



## BOOK REVIEW

### INTERNATIONAL ZOO YEARBOOK

Earlier this year I was sounded out about the possibility of perhaps devoting a special issue of the magazine to pigeons and doves. My response was that while I am happy to publish more articles about pigeons and doves, if they are forthcoming, I feel that special issues devoted to a single group, such as pigeons and doves, although of great interest to the many pigeon and dove enthusiasts, might well, understandably perhaps, leave those whose interests lie elsewhere feeling short-changed.

What can happen was illustrated a few weeks later, when the latest *International Zoo Yearbook* Volume 44 (the subject of this review) arrived and I discovered that the first 15 articles (175 pages) are devoted to bears and canids (wolves and foxes) - groups I have never taken a great interest in. It has only one article about birds, an evaluation of hand-rearing records of Spix's Macaw *Cyanopsitta spixii* at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation (AWWP) in Qatar.

The feeding and growth rates of 14 Spix's Macaws hand-reared at AWWP from 2005-2007, all of which survived and were weaned successfully, are evaluated. The average weight of the chicks, the mean brooder temperature, the number of feeds per day, the formula used, the ratio of the total amount fed per body weight and the number of times chicks regurgitated per day were analysed.

In contrast to other macaws hand-reared at AWWP, the authors conclude that a strictly controlled feeding strategy is crucial for hand-rearing Spix's Macaw (which is, of course, not a true macaw but is believed to be more closely related to the *Aratinga* group). Of the four hand-rearing protocols evaluated, it was decided to follow the one used to rear the four chicks hatched in 2007 (Group 4), who were fed Nutribird A21 until day 99 and then Nutribird A19 until weaned at the age of 120 days. In addition, apple baby food and mixed vegetable baby food were added to the formula from day 26 until they were weaned.

Volume 44 has the usual reference section at the end. The lists of associations and international studbooks for rare species can also be found online at: <http://blackwellpublishing.com/izy>

The *International Zoo Yearbook* Volume 44, paperback, 464 pages, is published on behalf of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) by Wiley-Blackwell, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK. For further information visit: [www.interscience.wiley.com/journal-info](http://www.interscience.wiley.com/journal-info)

**Malcolm Ellis**

## NEWS & VIEWS

### CONFUSION IN THE PAST

On seeing Simon Matthews's photo of the Moustached Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla cineracea* (Vol.116, No.2, p. 60 (2010)), I was immediately reminded of two unidentified birds that arrived in the Bird House at London Zoo towards the end of 1956. The two were part of a consignment of birds presented to London Zoo by Dr K. C. Searle, who was living in Hong Kong. J. J. Yealland, Curator of Birds, eventually identified them as *Trochalopteryx sukatschewi* and gave them the English name Kansu Babbler, in preference to the more difficult to pronounce Sukatschew's (or Sukatschew's) Babbler. He wrote that there was only one skin of this species in the British Museum (Natural History). A further two were sent from Hong Kong to London Zoo by Dr Searle in 1966 and there may have been others.

In 1970, however, Colin Harrison wrote a note in the magazine (Vol.76, No.3, p.194) saying that after examining some museum skins, he had come to the conclusion that most, perhaps all, the birds which had in recent years appeared in collections of live birds as the Kansu Babbler, were in fact the Grey-headed *Garrulax cineraceus* (i.e. the Moustached Laughingthrush). He went on to give fairly detailed descriptions of both species pointing out, for example, that the former lacks black on the wings and tail and its bill is more slender, tapered and very slightly decurved.

In the course of going through my back issues and checking and noting down the above information, I re-read Ken Simmons's description (Vol.68, No.6, pp.182-188 (1962)) of how, when offered acorns, his pair of Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *G. rufogularis* almost collided in their eagerness to reach them. They either buried them in the leaf mould covering the aviary floor and retrieved them later, or proceeded to bring down their bill "like a pickaxe" as they hammered them open and then consumed the contents. They also hammered open the shells of peanuts and dealt with sunflower seeds in a similar way. He kept the birds mainly to study their anting behaviour. When Ken Simmons's went to Ascension Island he gave the two Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes to Colin Harrison, who published his observations on their general behaviour, excitement and aggression, vocabulary, food and (unsuccessful) nesting in the same issue of the magazine (Vol.68, No.6, pp.188 -197 (1962)).

In a postscript to his article, Simon wrote to say that the pair of Moustached Laughingthrushes in the off-show aviary at Waddesdon Manor raised four young this year. Corolux is the trade name of a brand of corrugated PVC sheeting.

## AROUND UK COLLECTIONS

At Leeds Castle Aviary nest-cams enabled staff and visitors to follow the progress of two young Bali Starlings *Leucopsar rothschildi* and two young Channel-billed Toucans *Ramphastos vitellinus*. Another new arrival was a young Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*.

More than 50 owl chicks were reared, most of them by their parents, at the World Owl Trust collection at Muncaster Castle, near Ravenglass, Cumbria, which enjoyed a record breeding season. Spectacled Owls *Pulsatrix perspicillata* had not bred for several years, so the rearing of a chick this year was especially pleasing. Pairs of Southern White-faced Owls *Ptilopsis granti*, Mackinder's (Cape) Eagle-Owls *Bubo capensis*, Western Screech Owls *Megascops (asio) kennicotti* and Eurasian Scops Owls *Otus scops* all bred for the first time. Most are young pairs, with the notable exception of a 22 year old male Mackinder's (Cape) Eagle-Owl which is paired with a five year old female. Clutches of five Long-eared Owls *Asio otus*, five Northern Hawk Owls *Surnia ulula*, four Great Grey Owls *Strix nebulosa* and four Little Owls *Athene noctua* were hatched and reared.

The World Owl Trust now has 51 species, having recently added to the collection a female Vermiculated Fishing Owl *Scotopelia bouvieri*, for which a possible mate has been located in Belgium.

Two Northern Bald Ibis or Waldrapp *Geronticus eremita* were bred at Colchester Zoo in Essex. The chicks hatched on June 12th. The parents, an 11 year old male and a 10 year old female, originally came from Twycross Zoo nine years ago. Colchester Zoo now has a colony of 12 Northern Bald Ibis, five males and five females and the two 2010 birds which have yet to be sexed. As part of European breeding programmes the zoo has received a pair of Rhinoceros Hornbills *Buceros rhinoceros*, a pair of Rufous Hornbills *B. hydrocorax* and a pair of Victoria Crowned Pigeons *Goura victoria* from the Rare Species Conservation Centre at Sandwich, Kent.

Having lost its old male Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella*, who was 18 years old, Paradise Park at Hayle, here in Cornwall, borrowed a 2006-bred male from Waddesdon Manor Aviary to pair with its young female and the pair produced two chicks, one of which fledged successfully. Paradise Park also succeeded in breeding the White-crested Turaco *Tauraco leucolophus*, a species it bred for the first time in the UK back in 1982. Two Ross's Turacos *Musophaga rossae* were raised earlier in the year at the Cotswold Wildlife Park.

Madagascar Partridges *Margaroperdix madagarensis*, four Madagascar Turtle Doves *Streptopelia picturata*, a Madagascar Red Fody *Foudia madagascariensis* and five Madagascar Munias *Lonchura nana* have gone on show at Tropiquaria, at Watchet, in Somerset, after being donated by a vet.

## ANOTHER EXCELLENT BREEDING SEASON

Loro Parque Fundación's Spix's Macaw *Cyanopsitta spixii* hatched on March 11th, which was hand-reared and became independent 135 days later, is a female. She was raised by Curator Dr Matthias Reinschmidt in his office where, during the latter stages, she was kept with her older sister hatched in 2004, whose role was to act as a "socialization partner." By August, Loro Parque Fundación's two breeding pairs of Lear's Macaws *Anodorhynchus leari* had hatched five chicks, bringing to 15 the total number of Lear's Macaws bred since 2007.

Almost twice as many lory chicks as last year had been ringed (banded) by August. The most important of the 25 species and subspecies reared were three Red-and-blue Lorries *Eos histrio*, eight (Fergusson Island Lorries) *Lorius hypoinochrus devittatus*, the subspecies of the Purple-bellied Lory from south-east New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago and adjacent islands, five Collared Lorries *Phigys solitarius* and two Mount Apo Lorikeets *Trichoglossus johnstoniae*.

The Ouvéa Parakeets *Eunymphicus cornutus uvaeensis*, whose chicks had previously had to be hand-reared because they failed to feed them, surprised staff by rearing two chicks for the first time.

\* \* \*

## NEWS FROM WUPPERTAL ZOO

I recently received a copy of Wuppertal Zoo's 2009 *Annual Report* (Zoo Wuppertal, 128. *Jahresbericht* 2009), which helpfully includes an English summary.

During 2009 the zoo had 626,808 visitors, a considerable increase on the previous year. The most important new birds included: 6.10 Gentoo Penguins *Pygoscelis papua*, 0.1 Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*, 2.2 Snowy Owls *Nyctea scandiaca*, 1.0 White-tailed Trogon *Trogon viridis*, 0.1 Spangled Cotinga *Cotinga cayana* and 1.1 Red-backed Shrikes *Lanius collurio*.

Birds bred during 2009 included: nine Elegant Crested Tinamous *Eudromia elegans*, six Black-footed or African Penguins *Spheniscus demersus*, three Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber*, three Northern Bald Ibis or Waldrapp *Geronticus eremita*, various species of waterfowl, four Cape Dikkops or Spotted Thick-knees *Burhinus capensis*, 1.0 Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis*, 0.1 White-naped Crane *G. vipio*, a Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*, a Victoria Crowned Pigeon *Goura victoria*, a Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, six Yellow-rumped or Golden-rumped Tinkerbirds *Pogoniulus bilineatus*, a Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (the zoo has been breeding this species since 1975), 0.1 Purple-throated Fruitcrow

*Querula purpurata*, three Vermillion Flycatchers *Pyrocephalus rubinus*, two Brown-breasted Bulbuls *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous*, four Brazilian Tanagers *Ramphocelus bresilius*, 12 Timor Zebra Finches *Taeniopygia g. guttata* (or *T. guttata*), two Gouldians *Erythrura gouldiae* and three Bali Starlings *Leucopsar rothschildi*.

The Avicultural Society is planning a trip to Germany over the weekend of September 9th-September 12th 2011. Members will have the opportunity to visit Wuppertal Zoo, Ludger Bremehr's collection and Köln Zoo. Further details are available from: Karli Lisiecki, Howard Travel, 12/13 Church Walk, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8DX. Tel:01225 777227/E-mail:karli@howardtravel.com

\* \* \*

### NEW BOOK ON BIRDS-OF-PARADISE

Clifford and Dawn Frith, who some members may recall giving an illustrated talk on the birds of Aldabra Atoll at one of our meetings at the Linnean Society in Piccadilly, have written and published a new book on the birds-of-paradise to go alongside their previous book on the bowerbirds, published by Oxford University Press in 2004. Their lavishly illustrated new book about these spectacular birds covers not only their natural history, but their place in human art and culture, the history of their discovery and the people, art and artefacts involved. There are references to the birds-of-paradise in aviculture, the men who collected them and the *Avicultural Magazine*. I was surprised to find a picture of a pair of King Birds-of-Paradise brought to the UK by Walter Goodfellow and painted by H. Goodchild for the *Avicultural Magazine* in 1908 and a most attractive picture of a pair of Magnificent Birds-of-Paradise brought to the UK by Goodfellow and painted by the same artist for the *Avicultural Magazine* in 1912, neither of which I can recall having seen before. The many fascinating old black-and-white photographs include one of Fred Shaw Mayer with a Pesquet's Parrot. *Birds of Paradise: Nature, Art & History* can be purchased from the authors price £68.00. Website:www.FrithBirdBooksAndPhotos.com/E-mail:frithandfrith@bigpond.com It can be purchased in the UK from Natural History Book Service, Totnes, Devon. Website:www.nhbs.com

\* \* \*

### WINGZ BIRD SANCTUARY

Earlier this year Grenville and Anita Allen opened their bird collection to the public. Wingz Bird Sanctuary at Moorlands Park Farm, Treesmill, Par,

near St Austell, Cornwall has some 300 birds. There are just over 70 species, these include the Lesser Vasa Parrot *Coracopsis nigra*, Double Yellow-headed Amazon *Amazona ochrocephala oratrix*, Chattering Lory *Lorius g. garrulus* and a number of other species of parrot, Hawaiian Goose *Branta sandvicensis*, Red-breasted Goose *B. ruficollis*, Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*, Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea*, White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus* and Bali Starling *Leucopsar rothschildi*. Grenville and Anita also have a female Crimson-rumped Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus haematopygus* for which they are anxious to find a mate.

\* \* \*

### AT RISK OF EXTINCTION

Analysis of monitoring data collected by the Australian Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team, which is made up of government, zoo and non-government representatives, indicate that the Orange-bellied Parrot *Neophema chrysogaster* is in more serious decline than was previously thought. In January 2010 a survey of its known Tasmanian breeding sites showed that breeding is now restricted to the Melaleuca area and that the wild population is estimated to number only 50 or so birds. The number of breeding females appears to have declined to a very low level and modelling suggests that the risk of extinction in the wild is very likely in the next three to five years.

The captive-breeding population, established to safeguard the species against such an eventuality, numbers approximately 160-170 birds, housed at Healesville Sanctuary in Victoria, a Tasmanian Government breeding facility in Hobart and Adelaide Zoo. The breeding success of the captive population has remained stable over the past 12 years. There is a high number of nesting females, but egg fertility is about 30% below that of the wild population, which may be a sign of inbreeding. The current captive-breeding population can be traced back to just six original birds. Bird Australia's genetics experts recommend a founder population of some 25-30 birds. Therefore, there is an urgent need to introduce some fresh new birds into the captive-breeding population.

Despite the failure of an attempt to establish a second viable breeding population of released captive-bred birds (at Birch's Inlet in south-western Tasmania), the release programme has taught the team some valuable lessons for the future. It has shown, for example, that captive-bred birds can successfully become established in the wild, and can pair and breed within weeks of being released. They have also successfully undertaken the trans-Bass Strait migration in both directions, survived through the winter and returned to their release site in subsequent years to breed again. There is,

therefore, a good case to be made for future releases of captive-bred birds.

While preservation of the Orange-bellied Parrot or Parakeet in captivity is important to ensure its survival, Birds Australia believes that the conservation of the species in the wild is paramount. Earlier this year Federal Minister for Environment Protection Peter Garrett announced funding until the end of this year to assist the Recovery Team implement a new Action Plan. Addressing the decline in the number of females breeding in the wild, where some do not nest every year, will be a key part of this.

\* \* \*

### FURTHER SUCCESS WITH BLUE MACAWS

Six Spix's Macaws *Cyanopsitta spixii*, one male and five females, have been raised this year at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation (AWWP) in Qatar. Two of the young are the first in the international breeding programme to be bred from a second-generation parent, in this case their mother. Their father is 36 years old and one of only a few surviving founders. He is said to be the oldest Spix's Macaw ever to reproduce and the oldest Spix's Macaw ever recorded. The Spix's Macaw *International Studbook* now has 73 birds, 29 males and 44 females, of which 56, 22 males and 34 females are held at AWWP. Two Lear's Macaws *Anodorhynchus leari*, both females, were also raised this year at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation.

\* \* \*

### MADAGASCAR'S THREATENED DUCKS

Amidst fears that delay might jeopardise the survival of the Critically Endangered Madagascar Pochard *Aythya innotata* - rediscovered as recently as 2006 by researchers working for the Peregrine Fund - three clutches of eggs were collected in 2009, from which 24 ducklings were hatched in captivity. One died but all of the others, seven males and 16 females, are doing well. Avicultural staff from either the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) or the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (formerly Jersey Zoo) have been continually present on the island to oversee their care. They will all be housed in a conservation breeding centre on Madagascar, where it is hoped to breed this species in captivity. In the past, the Madagascar Pochard was bred successfully by Jean Delacour in France, and was bred in the UK and the Netherlands, so there should be a good chance of success. Of Madagascar's other endemic species of duck, Meller's Duck *Anas melleri* remains under considerable threat, while the Madagascar Teal *A. bernieri* is probably the most secure. There are now well over 200 in captivity and an estimated population of 1,500-2,500 in the wild.

## OBITUARIES

### FRANK WOOLHAM

Members will be saddened to learn of the death of Frank Woolham, who took over the editorship of the magazine from Prof. J. R. (Bob) Hodges and edited the magazine during the society's Centenary Year and the first three issues of Vol.101 (1995). Frank died on October 4th, a few months after his 79th birthday, having been in poor health for quite a time.

In his early days Frank worked as a keeper at Belle Vue Zoo in Manchester (a zoo that no longer exists), and it was while working there that he met his wife Meg. Frank later went into industry, working for such industrial giants as General Motors and the Shell Oil Company at Ellesmere Port, where for some 30 years or more he edited and oversaw the production of a variety of industrial publications.

Like many other members, especially those here in the UK, I think I first got to know of Frank from his articles in the weekly magazine *Cage & Aviary Birds* and his book *Aviary Birds in Colour* (first published in September 1974). For a great many years, it seemed that barely a week went by when *Cage & Aviary Birds* did not include at least one or two articles by Frank. He also compiled a review of UK zoos and bird gardens, that the magazine published each year around about Easter time. Frank wrote three books, the best known being the aforementioned *Aviary Birds in Colour* (with photos by Dennis Avon & Tony Tilford) and later *The Handbook of Aviculture* (both published in the UK by Blandford Press).

I first met Frank almost 30 years ago and we immediately became firm friends, often talking on the phone three or four times or more a day. Frank was reluctant to talk about himself and would usually say, "Let's talk about something more interesting." To jog my memory and fill in one or two gaps I have re-read two articles he wrote for the *Avicultural Magazine*. I began with his article entitled *Aviculture's Golden Age* (Vol.103, No.3, pp.126-129 (1997)) - which Frank suspected was in the years between the two world wars and perhaps extended into the early post-1945 era. Surprisingly, Frank began (and ended) with a reference to cricket (another of his great loves), before going on to some of the great collections and eminent aviculturists of the time and the handful of collectors, whose expertise they relied on to obtain many of their choicest birds. Frank met two of these men - Cecil Webb and Wilfred Frost. He wrote of travelling from Manchester down to London (then a five-hour train journey) with Gerald Durrell (who I sure he told me he worked with at Belle Vue Zoo) and visiting London Zoo, where they bumped into Cecil Webb and talked with him for several hours, "attempting to soak



up some of his enormous knowledge of the care and management of exotic birds in the critical period after capture." At the time, Durrell was planning his first expedition to West Africa (with John Yealland), so this must have been before December 1947. Frank wrote of becoming aware of Frost's impending arrival via cables with brief details of what birds he would have for sale - with birds-of-paradise invariably high on the list.

I could not recall Frank mentioning his childhood, but re-reading *Another Bird-Keeping Cleric* (Vol.104, No.3, pp.118-123 (1998)), I found that it was his father who first instilled in him an interest in bird keeping and later he came under the influence of Jack Lowe (Canon Lowe), who he first met in the early 1960s. Frank wrote that at the time, he (Frank) kept foreign softbills and seed-eaters, a few British finches, Light Sussex bantams, the odd pheasant and wader, some small doves and quail and several hemipodes. Canon Lowe, it seems, kept an even more varied collection with, like Frank, little or no attempt at specialisation. However, as time went by Frank tended to concentrate on small softbills and seed-eaters, and was extremely knowledgeable about both groups. There are very few species you could mention that Frank had not at some time kept. He had a remarkably wide knowledge of birds and aviculture and his knowledge was by no means confined to birds, he was also remarkably knowledgeable about the zoo world and took a keen interest in wildlife conservation. There seems to be few people in the bird world and the zoo world who Frank did not know.

He is survived by Meg and their sons, John, Mark, Michael and Andrew, two of whom, Michael and Andrew, work in zoos. Michael is Animal Manager at Banham Zoo (having previously worked at the Cotswold Wildlife Park) and Andrew is part of the birdkeeping team at Chester Zoo, Frank and Meg having moved from Manchester to Chester (just across the road from the zoo) in the early 1960s.

### CLAUDE PAYNE OBE

Claude Payne died on October 20th aged 96. He joined the Avicultural Society in 1950 and was awarded the society's medal for the first breeding in the UK of the Knysna Turaco, Spotted Towhee and Evening Grosbeak. He was President of the Foreign Bird League from 1970-1971 and also acted as its solicitor, was legal consultant to the NCA (National Council of Aviculture) and was a member of The Parrot Society UK and a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London.

Avicultural Society President Raymond Sawyer remembers the lovely aviaries in Claude's garden in Warwickshire and his large collection of parakeets, including the Derbyan, and his cranes. He also kept fancy pigeons

and racing pigeons.

He studied law and became senior partner of Claude M. Payne & Co., solicitors, in Coventry, where he was born. Claude Payne was a lover of the countryside and, whenever possible, spent time on his farm, on which he bred Aberdeen Angus and Hereford cattle.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he joined the RAF and served in Burma and the Far East until 1946. Claude Payne was for many years Chairman of Coventry Area Health Authority and was instrumental in the building of Walsgrave Hospital. In 1970 he was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) for his voluntary work and later received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

He retired to Little Shrewley, near Warwick, where he enjoyed his large garden and continued to keep and breed birds, and built two greenhouses for his orchid collection.

He is survived by his son, Martin.

\* \* \*

## **AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE BACK ISSUES**

The Avicultural Society is keen to reduce its large stock of back issues. These have been sorted by year into complete sets and are being offered for sale at £10 per set, per year, plus postage at cost.

Complete sets are available for the years: 1928, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Before sending any money, it is advisable to check that the magazines you require remain available. To do so, please contact Stewart Pyper, 21 Primrose Hill, Nunnery, Nr. Frome, Somerset BA11 4NP, UK. Tel: 01373 836293/E-mail:stewartpyper@yahoo.co.uk

## SAVING THE GOULDIAN

During the past three years, researchers working for the Save the Gouldian Fund in Australia have been busy making and installing in suitable habitats specially designed nest boxes for Gouldian Finches *Erythrura gouldiae*, that are modelled on the natural tree cavities used by the birds. The number of suitable natural nest sites is limited, so the idea is to increase the number of nest sites and thereby also reduce the effects of competition for these sites from Long-tailed Grassfinches *Poephila a. acuticauda*. In just a few years, there has already been an increase of over 200% in the breeding densities of Gouldian Finches in areas in which the boxes have been installed, a result that has surprised even the reseachers. It has also been found that the number of offspring produced by each pair each breeding season in these high quality predator-proof nest sites has nearly doubled. It is evidence that the shortage of suitable nest sites has restricted the number of birds. A secondary benefit is that the researchers can easily gain access to the nests and offspring, enabling them to collect important data and gain a greater insight into the Gouldian Finches' reproductive biology in the wild.

The more boxes that can be built, the more nest sites the fund can provide for Gouldian Finches, to help boost the numbers of these iconic birds. It costs A\$35.00 (roughly £23.00/US\$35.00) to provide a nest box for a pair of Gouldians. For further details on how to sponsor a nest box or make a donation members can visit the Save the Gouldian Fund Website: <http://savethegouldian.org> or post a donation to: Save the Gouldian Fund, PO Box 147, Cooranbong, NSW 2265, Australia.

\* \* \*

## ACCESS TO EARLIEST ISSUES OF MAGAZINE

As a reseach scientist associated with the University of Michigan Museums of Zoology and Paleontology, Janice L. Pappas has access to a complete set of the *Avicultural Magazine*. If at any time a member needs a copy of an article published in some of the earliest issues that may not be readily available, Janice will, if requested, be happy to obtain a photocopy of the required article. Requests should be addressed to: Ms J. L. Pappas, Museum of Paleontology, The University of Michigan, 1109 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1079, USA.



## CONTENTS

Keeping and breeding the Tropical Mockingbird <i>Mimus gilvus gracilis</i> by Gary Bralsford .....	97
Reproductive behaviour of the Saddle-billed Stork <i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i> and developmental behaviour of its chicks by J. J. Elston, K. Unger and R. Dunn .....	100
Diary of a week spent photographing birds at Weltvogelpark Walsrode by Pierre de Chabannes.....	109
A new parrotlet from Colombia, <i>Forpus flavicollis</i> by Paola Bertagnolio and Luigi Racheli .....	128
The Rufous-legged Owl <i>Strix rufipes</i> by Peter Stocks.....	133
Book Review International Zoo Yearbook .....	135
News & Views .....	136
Obituaries Frank Woolham.....	142
Claude Payne OBE .....	143