



JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Nepean Budgerigar Society

UPCOMING EVENTS

13th September
UBC State Championships

16th October 7.30pm
BCV Triennial AGM



PRESIDENTS REPORT FROM JOHN FREEMAN

There's not much happening at the moment by way of shows and Auctions. But I have noticed some breeders and clubs are selling birds online for those that are desperate to have a budgie shopping fix. A few of our members are well into breeding and are having fair to good results ringing a number of young birds. Myself, I haven't started yet hopefully in the next couple of weeks, although this cold is making me think twice. We shall see but it does depend on whether I can finish the new bird room it seems to be taking forever. With this cold weather we are having it is extremely important to keep plenty of seed up to the birds.

Some extra hulled oats are always a good idea in the cold or when breeding this helps to keep a bit of weight on which will aid in keeping the birds warm. Another must in this cold weather the use of roll up plastic blinds to cover wire openings on outside aviaries at night which are very good at keeping drafts and chilled air at bay.

One last tip is take time to have a good look at your birds and look for any bird that appears fluffed up, on the floor or going a bit light, if any birds are found like this get them warm asap and monitor.

All stay well and take care in these hard times with the Covid 19 virus.

John Freeman

[A big welcome to our new Nepean member Peter Allsop!](#)

[Our club members look forward to meeting you soon.](#)

Nepean Budgerigar Society

Would like to



You!

Current Restrictions

In line with the current restrictions, all Nepean club events are still cancelled or postponed. Disappointing we know, but as most of our members fall into a high-risk category for contraction of the Covid-19, we believe it is the right thing to do.

UBC State Championships

This is a statement from the BCV in regards to the 13th September 2020 UBC State Championships:

‘The BCV definitely wish to hold the UBC State Championship Show. At this stage we certainly would hope that it would be an Open Show – however with the Corona 19 restrictions currently on a hold due to a spike in cases it may need to be a Closed Show – this has been discussed by Council and will be further discussed as the situation evolves.’

So in the hope Nepean are able to put together a team and show at the state UBC’s, now is the time to make sure your birds breeding!

2021 National Young Bird Show

The BCV have confirmed that Victoria will be hosting the 2021 National Young Bird Show. The ANBC made the decision to push back the 7 year rotation one year so Victoria did not miss out.

BCV Triennial Annual General Meeting

All welcome!

When: 16th October, 2020 - Friday 7.30pm

Where: Kingston Trophies Boardroom 141 Woodlands Dr, Braeside VIC 3195

Closing Date for Nominations will be Wednesday, 2nd of October, 2020 at Midnight to “The BCV Secretary”

Nomination Form is available from your Club Secretary on request, the completed form needs to be sent to the BCV Secretary:

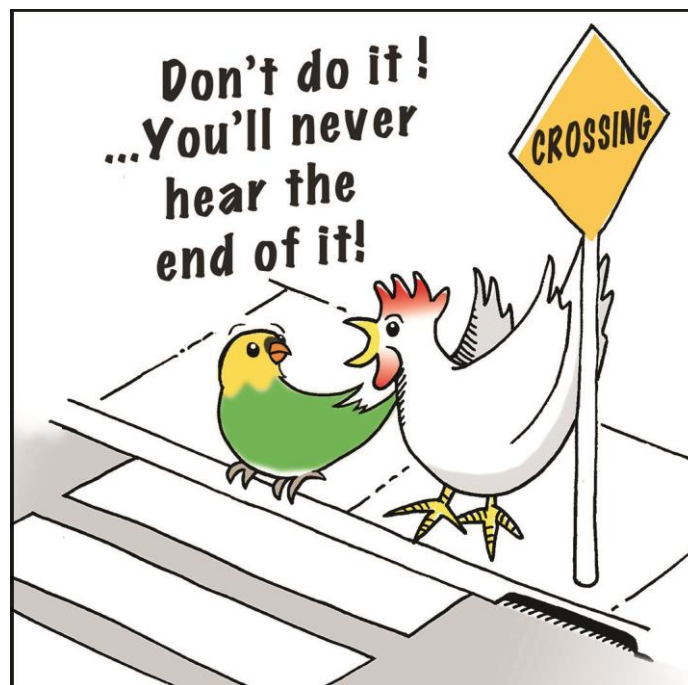
BCV Secretary,
James Smith

PO Box 5129, Cranbourne, VIC, 3977
OR email budgeman77@hotmail.com

Monthly Chuckle...

A guy is sitting at home when he hears a knock at the door. He opens the door and sees a snail on the porch. He picks up the snail and throws it as far as he can.

A year later, theres anither knock at the door. He opens it and sees the same snail. The snail says ‘what was that all about??’



This Month's Article

Breeder Management & Fertility

Obviously, copulation is necessary for fertilisation, but it also doesn't guarantee it. One often overlooked practice that improves our birds chances of fertilising eggs is trimming the vent feathers on the cock and the hen. This is especially true of birds, which are of intermediate feather, buff feather or double buff feathering. There is, by the way, no truth to the notion that birds have guide feathers, which 'guide' the sperm to the cloaca of the hen. If you don't have apposition of the cloacas, you don't have passing of sperm from the cock to the hen!

One Cock with Multiple Hens

Budgerigar hens, as is common among a number of species of birds, have the ability to store semen for a limited period of time. Some evidence suggests that this period is up to 20 days long.

Biologically, this is quite adaptive as it insures fertilization of a clutch of eggs if for some reason, such as death by predator, the cock is unavailable.

Some knowledgeable breeders, taking advantage of this, have used a single outstanding cock bird to fertilise a number of hens during the same time frame. This is not a particularly difficult procedure and there are several variations used by different breeders, all of which have been effective. One of these methods is, once having selected three complimentary hens for the cock that is to be used, set them up in breeding cages one above the other. This arrangement is used so that:

1. They are out of sight of each other.

2. It keeps one from getting confused as to which breeding cage the cock will be rotated to next.

Next take the cock bird and place him in one of the cages and watch for signs of acceptance by the hen, if they are present then leave him with her for one half of a day. The rest of the day do the same in the next cage and on the second day move him to the third hen. If any of the hens reject him, try several others until all three hens find him suitable. For the rest of the second day, place him back in cage one where he stays until the next morning. Then rotate him to cage two for one day and then cage three for one day. From this point on he should be rotated from one hen to the next on a daily basis until the last egg is laid.

If you wish you may leave him with the hen that finishes egg laying last. In this case, the other two hens are left to raise their clutches on their own. These hens cannot be used for a second round as it is too taxing on them, to both lay eggs and feed chicks by themselves.

Alternatively, remove the eggs as they are laid from all three hens, to be fostered to pairs specifically for this purpose or to other nests where there are clear eggs. In this way, you can get the equivalent of two rounds of eggs from each hen without putting any of them in a position of having to raise chicks on their own. This also allows time to rest the hens for a month and then mate them to different cocks. This alternative method is preferable, but circumstances do not always favour it.

Sawdust

In the wild, small amounts of wood dust/shavings and feathers are often found in the nest. It is common practice for Budgerigar breeders to do the same. While some believe that the purpose of providing sawdust is to simulate a natural nesting site, a more practical purpose is that it cushions the eggs from contact with the hard surface of the concave when the hen rotates them. As well, sawdust helps keep the eggs from being scattered and accidentally broken if the hen is startled off the nest. Once chicks are hatched, it also absorbs the moisture from droppings, helping the nest box environment remain clean.

What should be remembered is that new sawdust/wood shavings can have a drying effect on the nest box atmosphere if put in a box with existing eggs. This drying effect, by absorbing humidity in the box, can have a disastrous effect on the developing eggs. In light of this, new sawdust and shavings should be left exposed for several days before being used so that they may pick up humidity from the air in the breeding room.

Nest Box

Nest box design, size, shape, and material of construction have been a matter of preference. A standard box is approximately 9" (h) X 6" to 8" (w) X 6" to 7"(d) with an entry hole of 2 inches diameter. The depth of the box is one of preference but should be no less than 9 inches high as shallow boxes encourage chicks to leave the nest early. Generally nothing of consequence will happen to these early exiting chicks other than you have to keep putting them back in. However, this exposes them unnecessarily to attacks by the parents or to extremes in temperatures while partially fledged and quite vulnerable.

Step-down Blocks and Double Compartments

Some nest boxes are provided with a step-down block, which is nothing more than a block of wood placed in the nest box next to the entry hole. A number of fanciers believe that the purpose of the step-down block is that they allow entering and exiting adults access to the nest box without the danger of damaging eggs in the process. However, in reality seldom is there a problem with hens or cocks damaging eggs when not provided with a step-down block. This is true even in box designs where the concave is directly below the entry hole. The primary function of the block is to protect second round eggs from the still unweaned chicks from round one.

Developing fledglings will move to the higher location next to the nest hole where they are fed by the cock. In doing this, they abandon the nest hollow, decreasing the chance that they will damage or soil newly laid eggs.

A very interesting design is a nest box divided into two compartments. When the hen enters this nest box, she is in a holding chamber that is higher than and partitioned off from the concave. To get to the concave, she has to enter another entry hole into the breeding chamber. As chicks mature, they are lured by the light of the nest box entry hole and climb through the divider hole into the holding chamber where they are fed by the cock. This removes them from the vicinity of the nest hollow and also allows the hen to proceed with incubation of a second round with little interference.

Factors Affecting Nest Box Entry

There is no evidence supporting the belief that there is an increase in nesting behaviour or readiness to mate by blocking off the nest box hole with cardboard and making a hen chew her way into the box. There is also no evidence that using two nest boxes on a breeding unit stimulates the natural

breeding process by offering the hen a choice of nesting sites. The factors most significantly influencing early nest box entry are:

1. The stimulus of loud warbling by the cock bird during the first few days of breeding cage occupancy.
2. The position of the nest box entry hole in relation to the perch position.

Hens do not show early nest box oriented behaviour when the hole of the nest box is 5cm above or below the perch. They do, however, show almost immediate exploration of the nest box when the nest box hole is 15cm (5 to 6 inches) above the perch. Once having entered the nest box, it is the soft warble of the cock bird coupled with the relative darkness that the nest box provides that initially stimulates the hens ovarian and oviduct development. Contrary to the common practice of providing air holes or breathing holes during nest box construction, a properly built and positioned nest box should provide as much darkness as possible. Mounting position of the nest box, whether internal or external, is of little consequence as long as it is securely mounted and the nest hole faces in a direction that minimises the amount of external light that enters the box.

Concaves

In nest boxes provided without a nest hollow, but supplied instead with a soft pulp paper nest bottom, hens showed 2-3 times more gnawing activity than hens in nest boxes with a nest hollow. The peak duration of gnawing occurs 4-6 days prior to egg laying but never exceeds 30% of the total time a hen spends in the nest box. It is believed that this gnawing activity is a remnant of nest building behaviour but ultimately it is of little consequence to ovarian development. There are no differences in latency of laying the first egg between groups supplied with a nest hollow or without a nest hollow. As nest hollow gnawing behaviour is exhibited whether a nest box is provided with or without a nest hollow, it would suggest that nest hollows (concaves) are optional in nest box construction. However, they help keep eggs from scattering whenever a hen leaves the nest.





Do you have anything bird related for sale you would like to advertise in our newsletter? Or are you looking for something?

Please email Mim on info@nepeanbudgerigarsociety.org with a short description, and a image if you have one. Also please feel free to email through any news, information or tips you think may be of interest in our newsletter.

Would you like to join a family friendly budgerigar club?

Please call or email one of our club contacts. We would love to hear from you!

Club Contacts

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