



SEPTEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER NEPEAN BUDGERIGAR SOCIETY

UPCOMING EVENTS

State UBC Championships:

Sunday 7th September
Carwatha College
43-81 Browns Road,
Noble Park North

Benching of birds in classes:
between 9.30am and 10.

Judging: 10.00am to 11.30am

FINAL JUDGING: 11.30am to
12.00pm

Auditorium Session 12.00pm
to 1.30pm approx

Viewing of exhibits: Until
1.30pm approx.

Presentation of trophies:
1.30pm approximately.

Checking out & cleaning of
hall: Following completion of
programme

October Training Night :

Tuesday 15th October @ 7.45
Guest Speaker & Topic TBA

President report from John Freeman

Most of us are either just getting ready to breed or have already started. With the extra day light hours and the day's becoming a little warmer, the time is ideal to breed. Just watch your birds in the aviary and you will see the difference in the birds behaviour indicating its breeding time naturally.

We had a presentation from James Smith (Secretary of the BCV) on preparing your birds for showing. It was an excellent presentation, I think all in attendance took away many tips and methods to further themselves in showing exhibition Budgerigars.

James was very professional in his presentation and took time out to answer all questions (of which there was a lot off!). I personally got a lot out of this as I believe did all. I look forward to listening to James again and his time and efforts are greatly appreciated, much thanks must go to James for the presentation.

On the 31st Aug the Nepean club held its UBC selection day. We did not have many birds entered, but it was a good day with the BBQ held later, thus a good chin wag and catch up by all who attended.

We will only get bigger from here with the Adult Shield being held in FEB, we should have a much larger team to enter as our club grows. Good luck to Chris and Debra with the birds entered and a big thanks to Mim and Rohan for all effort they put in to organize the day.

Good luck with birds and good breeding.

John Freeman

Nepean Budgerigar Society

Would like to



You!

October Training Night

Nepean will be holding its next training night on Tuesday October 15th. We are still just waiting on our final confirmation on our guest speaker and topic, so watch this space for information about another informative evening! The venue will be at our usual Dingley Village Community Centre location.

Bunnings December Sausage Sizzle

Nepean has been lucky enough to be offered a 2nd Bunnings Sausage Sizzle fundraiser for the year. This will be on Tuesday 3rd December. Thank you to those who have already put there hand up. If you can help, please let Mim or Rohan know so we can organize a roster for the day. Any amount of time you can come along for will be appreciated! For 2020, please also pop into your diary, our Saturday date we have been allocated, 18th April. These fundraisers are an important component to the future plans for our club, and are a great opportunity for us.

Upcoming Club Shows

There are plenty of club shows coming up for the remainder of the year all around Victoria, for young birds and ubc's. These are usually well run, great events to attend. It's a really good opportunity to put your birds forward to see how they are going, as well as chance to meet & get to know other bird enthusiasts and have a chat. You never know what tip you just may pick up from an experienced breeder! And of course showing your birds gives you a chance to put into practice all the valuable information that James Smith shared with the club recently. Keep an eye out in your emails or Facebook for further details about the clubs shows.

Here is a reminder of what is happening the next few months:

8	Su	Sept	<i>UBC S/Champs</i>	<i>BCV</i>	Carwatha College, Noble Park	Rod Turnbull	
22	Su	Sept	<i>UBC Show</i>	Geelong	Lifestyle Pavilion Geelong S/Grounds	Tiffany Stephens	
12	Sa	Oct	<i>UBC Show</i>	United	Scout Hall, Irvine Road, Ivanhoe	Brian Reynolds	
13	Su	Oct	<i>Club Champ</i>	Goulburn	Congupna Comm. Hall, Congupna, 3633	Andrew Collyer	
26	Sa	Oct	<i>UBC Show</i>	S.W. Victoria	Fonterra Comm. Hall, Drummond St, Dennington	Tim Patterson	
27	Su	Oct	<i>Club Champ</i>	Eastern	Bedford Pk Yth Hall, Rosewarne Ln, East Ringwood	Robert Dagg	
3	Su	Nov	<i>Club Champ</i>	Clyde	Carwatha College, Noble Park	Con Herouvim	
10	Su	Nov	<i>Club Champ</i>	Western Sub.	Masonic Hall, Werribee	Wayne Cachia	
16	Sa	Nov	<i>UBC Show</i>	Colac	Colac Youth Hall, Hearn Street, Colac	Ray Slade	
17	Su	Nov	<i>Club Champ</i>	Baw Baw	Exhibition Hall, 15 Howitt St, Warragul	Darren Macfarlane	

Good luck and happy showing!

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 fertilisation 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.

Total Bird Supplies – Rob Ponsioen

Most of you will have by now met our newest club member, Rob Ponsioen. Rob has a business that supplies bird products. This includes seed, supplements, toys etc. He is based in Langwarrin, and will look after our Nepean members as best he can. So please, support our members, and hopefully save yourself some money at the same time. Give him a call and have a chat to see what he can do for you!

Rob can be contacted on: Mobile 0418 533 322 or email robertponsioen@hotmail.com

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

Nepean Budgerigar Society Club Events October – December 2019

September 8th UBC State Show Venue – Carwatha College, Noble Park
October 15th Training night - Dingley Community Centre @ 7.45pm. Topic TBC
November 19th Committee meeting
December Christmas get together – Date and Venue TBC

Club Contacts

Emails – info@nepeanbudgerigarsociety.org

Venue – Dingley Community Centre 31b Marcus Rd, Dingley Village

President: John Freeman 0419 146 911

Secretary: Mim McQualter 0421 085 974

Treasurer: Rohan McQualter 0428 857 897