

Breeding Birds—Record Keeping



This fact sheet gives guidance on keeping accurate records of the birds you breed.

Anyone who breeds livestock should always try to keep accurate records of all the young produced. Whether your birds are being bred as pets or as exhibition stock it is important to keep as much information as possible about the birds you breed. Where birds are bred in cages it is normally easy to know the exact parentage of each youngster produced. If aviary breeding is practiced, it may not be possible to determine the precise parentage of each youngster, but usually you will know the mother of every bird bred.

It is extremely difficult to adopt a sensible and sound breeding programme without knowing the parentage of your breeding stock. The practice of pairing together closely related birds such as brother to sister, father to daughter, mother to son etc. should be discouraged. Generally the consequences of such matings are a loss of vigour, loss of fertility and the production of mutants. While a very small percentage of any mutants produced may be 'new colours', the majority will simply display undesirable physical and mental abnormalities. However, should any new colours inadvertently be produced it will be a great advantage to have detailed records of the parentage of these birds.

When first starting in the hobby it may seem quite easy to remember which young were bred from which birds, but, with the passage of time and increases in stock numbers, parentage can become more difficult to recall. Sooner or later, unsuitable individuals will be inadvertently mated together, resulting in undesirable colour combinations, poor quality young or birds which have congenital physical disorders.

Exactly what type of records are to be kept depends on the personal needs of each bird keeper. Those who simply wish to keep a mixed collection in a garden aviary will usually only require details of the birds mated together, the young produced and the means of identifying these youngsters. This is the most important type of record to keep and all breeders should have a permanent record of every pairing made. It should specify the pairing used, the young they produced and any other relevant information, such as poor fertility etc. In addition to using numbered closed rings to identify birds, coloured split rings are often fitted to birds. If a different colour is used for each pairing made this permits easy identification of parentage, eliminating the need to catch up youngsters in order to read ring numbers.

In order to make a detailed examination of the parentage of birds it will be necessary to examine breeding records for different years. To overcome this breeders may like to keep separate record sheets for each individual bird retained. These can be very time consuming records to compile by conventional methods, however with the increase in home computers, it is now possible to maintain very detailed records and up date them easily.

Obviously, records in themselves do not produce good quality birds. However when they are used in conjunction with sound practical management and an 'eye' for a good bird, they can greatly assist fanciers in making the right decisions with regard to selecting the best birds to mate to each other.

A sample layout to record your breedings is shown below :-

BREEDING RECORD				
DATE PAIRED	CAGE No.	RING COLOUR	PAIR No.	
COCK		HEN		
COCK'S SIRE	COCK'S DAM	HEN'S SIRE	HEN'S DAM	
	No. OF EGGS	No. INFERTILE	No. HATCHED	
1st ROUND				
2nd ROUND				
3rd ROUND				
HATCHED	RING No.	COLOUR	SEX	NOTES

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