



## Moving With Birds

By Marcy Covault

Compared to caravansaries over great distances and with hundreds of animals, mine was but a small journey from Austin, Texas to Lawton, Oklahoma. However, I'd never moved state to state with 50 birds along with all household and aviary accoutrements, so this new venture required some planning. Fortunately, the positive "will" was there, since I was finally getting to retire to a new life outside of corporate America.

I had shut everyone's nest boxes down in late spring, so I wouldn't have to worry about moving eggs/babies in nest boxes. The move was actually the end of August, and by that time, most spare birds were sold and gone, and any youngsters were weaned. I actually "retired" from work on August 10, so I had a couple of weeks to get everyone and everything packed and ready to go.



My birds are smaller species, the largest being sun conures, and the smallest being parrotlets. That meant that I could use relatively small cages, and logistically, it meant I could get everyone in the back of my SUV. The transport cages were 14 pet taxis for conures and 8 small cages for parrotlets.



Besides perches and food and water bowls, these had no toys or other hanging articles on which a bird might get hung. Plus, I threw lots of seed mix on the bottoms of the cages so they could browse at will. I also used nylon cable ties to fasten all cage doors so there would be no chance of a bird sliding a door open or one popping open.

The pet taxis were stacked in the SUV back along both sides (ends to the outside), with the front doors facing each other and a 1"x6" board that ran the length down the center to keep cages from sliding across the aisle and into each other. Pet taxis went on the bottom and one second tier, and parrotlet cages were set on the other side second tier. This second tier had a strap running through the tops and fastened to the vehicle so that they couldn't slide off. There were sun-screens behind on both sides and in the back to further protect from afternoon sun coming in the car window. Since it was summer, the A/C

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# Why Do I Breed Birds?

By Steve Duncan, President, Avicultural Society of America

Breeding birds is just one of the ways I enjoy them. I am also a life-long bird watcher. I enjoy photographing them in the wild and in captivity as well. I also have a degree in Biology (I took biostatistics too).

The fact that you ask this question in the context of this discussion along with some of the statements you made implies that you do not think it is appropriate to be breeding birds for pets. You are implying that there are too many birds for too few homes and the fact that some birds exhibit problems indicates to you that they are not suitable for public sale as pets. I absolutely disagree with this opinion.

According to the APPMA survey, the number of pet birds in the US is around 17 million. Many in the industry consider this number to be artificially low. For instance, they only include household pet birds. The figures don't include birds kept in outdoor aviaries or birds kept by breeders so these statistics certainly do not indicate the total number of captive birds in the U.S. One thing the statistics do indicate is that the number of birds in the U.S. is fairly stable with only minor fluctuations from year to year.

I have extrapolated the APPMA statistics to get an idea of the number of birds that must be bred to maintain a stable population. The data indicate that about 85% of the 17 million birds in the U.S. are Cockatiels, Budgies, Finches, Canaries, Doves or other short-lived species. The other 15% are longer-lived species of medium to large parrots.

Most Budgies, Finches and Canaries never make it anywhere close to 10 years of age. Many Cockatiels do make it to 10 years of age, but probably not a majority. The 15% of the population that is comprised of longer-lived species would not pull up the average life-span much. Since the vast majority are short-lived species, it is reasonable to use 10 years as an average life-span.

Using 10 years as an average life-span, it would require breeders in the U.S. to produce 1.7 million baby birds annually just to supply the demand for pets. This figure would NOT include the additional birds that would need to be produced to replace the breeding stock, nor would it include birds that are not destined for the traditional pet bird trade. Additionally, because it is based on figures that are artificially low, the actual number of baby birds produced annually is very likely to be much higher than 1.7 million.

Are there birds out there that are not taken care of properly? Sure. Is there an epidemic of poorly cared for birds? No. Of those 1.7 million baby birds destined for the pet trade, the vast majority are happy, healthy and are destined for a life that is better than they would have encountered 10-20 years ago. This is because of the advancements we have made and continue to make because our knowledge of bird husbandry improves as long as aviculture remains strong and active. Avian medicine continues to improve because there are enough pet birds out there to support continuing advances in that field as well.

There is plenty of demand for pet birds. The vast majority are well cared for. Maintaining a healthy avicultural market allows for further advances in the avian husbandry and veterinary fields. I don't see a reason not to breed birds for pets.



## Steve's Short Answer:

"Because I am fascinated by birds, and I love working with them in lots of different ways."

## Steve's Long Answer:

"I also love to share my knowledge about birds, and I take great pride in producing the best quality birds to send out into the pet trade for others to enjoy and hopefully become more deeply interested in birds in captivity as well as in the wild. There is nothing that can inspire people more to care about the plight of wild birds than providing them with every opportunity to get close to live birds in our busy urbanized lives. Our pet birds do more to improve peoples' awareness of conservation and habitat preservation than all the Nature programs combined. (Sorry, I don't have a research paper to cite. That's my opinion based upon 35 years in birds, thousands of conversations with pet owners, and many public speaking engagements.)"

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in the SUV was blasting, and the driver wore layered clothing to keep from getting too cold!

All birds got moved with nary a mishap. They did have to stay in their carriers an extra day while we reassembled cages, however. That was a miscalculation on my part. I thought I had enough trailer space to take all cages intact, and I was dead wrong. We had to disassemble most of the permanent cages to get everything into the transport space—which of course meant reassembly at the arrival end! I think I have more bird paraphernalia than I do human stuff!

It seemed really strange to not be doing any handfeeding from August through, as it turns out, February. That did give me a lot of time to unpack and get adjusted to the new place, for which I was grateful. I also found out that there are different viruses circulating up here. I am NOT prone to colds, but had \*three\* within 6 months after moving. Again, good thing I wasn't having to worry about handfeeding.

Fortunately, I have a \*large\* inside bird room at my new place, so everyone is settled in for now—air purifier going full blast!



Next time I'll talk about adventures in building my outdoor aviary. I started with a 12'x24' TuffShed...



# Stop PDD News Update From Dr. Ritchie

Tuesday, February 5, 2008

Posted to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stoppddnews>  
Posted by [kbheaton@swbell.net](mailto:kbheaton@swbell.net)

Dr. Ritchie called me today with an important update. After a decade of repeated attempts, the Emerging Diseases Research Group has established a neural cell system from a psittacine bird. This will provide the Group with a completely new way to attempt to grow the suspected PDD virus in the laboratory.

Dr. Ritchie said that the group needs fresh samples (blood, feces and God forbid, bird parts) from birds that have been recently confirmed with PDD before any treatment is started. If you have a bird that has been recently diagnosed, please have your veterinarian contact Dr. Ritchie or Dr. Gregory to discuss sample collection and submission by submitting their contact information to [testing@StopPDD.org](mailto:testing@StopPDD.org) - messages will be forwarded.



## Treasurer's Report:

(as of end of December 2007)

November Balance	\$4010.65
Deposit from Pay Pal	\$19.88
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Balance as of 12-28-07 in bank	\$4030.53

## Welcome To Our Newest Members!

Thomas Mark, NY  
Monika Frank, TX  
Brigette Gray, MI  
Sarah Aknine, France  
Sylvia Denton, FL

# Painted Valentines

By Marcy Covault



Itsy and Bitsy were the last two 2007 females from Mary Arunski's pet pair of painted, and she wanted them to go to a special home. That's where Eve Soto (or rather, her husband, as a Valentine's present) came in. Eve contacted me looking for Painteds, and I knew Mary's were tops, so I referred her, hoping Mary still had at least one left.

Here's what Mary told me. "Eve in Tennessee is getting my two Painted girls (June 2007 clutch) as a Valentine/Anniversary gift from her husband Bill. Isn't that sweet?!"

"Bill was playing like he was a meanie who wouldn't let his wife have any more birds. Then he secretly sent me an email asking if I still had the Painted girls which they had received photos of. He tried to keep it a secret but just couldn't hold in his excitement.



"Bill told me that it was not only Valentine's day but also his and Eve's 28th wedding anniversary and he wanted a special surprise for her. She would have been happy with just one Painted baby...but he was certain he wanted to buy her BOTH of the baby girls I had!"

"Eve tells me she is stunned at how enthusiastic Bill is about these little birds. She predicts that Bill will adopt the birdies as his own. This makes Eve happy.

"Since Eve has had the Painted girls Itsy and Bitsy (named by Bill), she has seen the birds nestled into Bill's shirt while he sat watching TV. It was cute that Bill named the birds...apparently he'd never named any of their previous birds. In Eve's note she wrote: 'He's in love.' Apparently Bill loves not just the birds; Eve is truly his Valentine."

As Eve said, "My husband contacted her [Mary] and together they tried to keep it a secret, but Bill can't keep a secret."



Eve has them home and has commented on how sweet and beautiful these little jewels are! She says, "They are very outgoing and playful. They love eating just about anything I give them. Bill will take them out and sit and watch Law and Order and the evening news with them while they nuzzle into his shirt."



# Animal Legislation Around the World

## Korea

**Seoul** - Owners of all pet dogs will have to register with the regional government from next year. They will be also required to attach an identification tag to their pet's neck.

## Switzerland

**Zurich** - government wants to make all dog owners in Switzerland liable for damage caused by their pets - **regardless of breed**. Under a draft law, to be discussed by parliament at a later stage, dog owners would also have to take out **mandatory** insurance. Bans on dangerous dogs have been imposed or are under discussion in several cantons, but so far there have been no specific nationwide laws on the issue.

## United Arab Emirates

**Dubai** - Sixteen breeds of dogs face seizure by Dubai Municipality inspectors if they are found loitering in public places without a leash and a mask. The municipality had issued a notice on November 28 branding as dangerous breeds like Doberman, Rottweiler, Husky, Tosa, Bull Terrier, American Pitt Bull Terrier,

*Look at Dubai—  
and we think  
we have tough  
pet restrictions  
in the U.S.!*

American Bull Dog, Miniature Bull Terrier, Argentinean Mastiff, Shar Pei, Old English Bull Dog, etc as dangerous. The civic body stated that these dogs were prohibited in residential areas, public places, markets and shopping centers from January 1. The notice cautioned that the municipality would seize the dogs after the lapse of the grace period. The notice had sparked protests from canine lovers. Hisham Fahmi, head of the Veterinary Services Section in Dubai Municipality, said, "These dogs are not allowed in residential apartments. The order has been passed as we were getting a lot of complaints from the people residing in the residential apartments. People going for prayers had complained that these dogs were creating a lot of menace and dirt. Also, there were many cases of dog bites in areas like Jumeirah, Al Barsha, Umm Suqeim and Deira," he said. "If someone in a particular apartment complains about a dog menace, we would be confiscating the dog immediately. The rule has come into effect yesterday. Also, if a dog is taken in a public park or any public place, it should have a mask and a leash. The dog collar should have its registration number and the dog should have been vaccinated. The municipality would be strict if these regulations are not maintained," he added. The official pointed out that people in the villas could keep one dog. "Though we would not be visiting all the apartments for checks right now, complaint would be handled in a strict manner," added Fahmi.

