



# western Water Works

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*The following two articles were written by Dr. David E. Marx and were written about pigeons. Much is very applicable to our hobby.*

## **Difficulties with Eggs and Babies**

This time of the year when many of us are expecting our first round of youngsters to hatch, we are disappointed with some aspect of our breeding success. The most common problems being clear eggs; eggs which die before hatching; and babies which perish in the first few days of life.

Clear eggs tend to be the most prevalent in the first round or two. These are the eggs that never begin development because of being infertile. The testicle in the cocks gets quiescent during the shorter daylight periods. Breeding activity reawakens them and they begin producing sperm and testosterone at a higher level.

While this process is under way, there is often a low sperm count and a lower sex drive in cocks. Frequently the breeding vigor and frequency is decreased as well as there being diminished sperm in the ejaculate.

All these can produce infertile eggs. One or both eggs being infertile in the first round are a frequent finding sometimes running as high as 50% or more of the eggs. The weather plays some role in this. Colder, darker periods accentuate the problem.

Eggs that begin developing but fail to fully develop and die in the shell can be the result of several things. Poor incubation can cause embryo death. Here the parent(s) may fail to keep the eggs warm for even a short period during very cold weather.

Eggs getting jarred excessively at critical points of development may also perish. Infection in the egg is probably the most common cause. The infection may be incorporated in the egg by hens having an oviduct infection. Infection more frequently occurs through the shell.

This can happen during laying as they often become contaminated with feces during this process. It can also happen by fecal contamination after laying, frequently from parents defecating in the nest or tracking feces in the nest on their feet.

During damp periods, nesting material often gets high numbers of bacteria in it from parents tracking feces and the dampness and warmth of the sitting parents encourage bacterial growth. The higher the numbers of bacteria around the eggs the easier it is to have penetration of the shell and subsequent infection of the embryo.

Babies dying in the first few days of life occurs when they are infected either in the egg, resulting in weak hatchlings, or they become infected after hatching. After hatching they can become infected from the crop milk from either parent or from the nesting material.

During damp periods it is often helpful to change the nesting material just prior to the eggs hatching as infection enters the squabs easiest just after hatching through the umbilical area which is yet unsealed.

When certain parents experience repeated deaths in newly hatched babies, they should be separated and treated with a broad spectrum antibiotic for about 10 days, and for trichomonas, then re-mated. Pay attention to the condition of the nesting material during the times mentioned above and provide clean dry nesting material as indicated.

There are other factors that may cause the problems discussed here. Only the most frequent caused were discussed here.

Babies who die in the egg (as long as the shell remains intact) and babies who die soon after hatching are often valuable specimens for culture. A culture can be very revealing as to cause of death and possible course of action to prevent future deaths.

Dr. David E. Marx D.V.M

*This is another pigeon article, but I believe it is worth reading. I did a little research, and many "bird people" advocate disinfecting the eggs/nests. All commercial chicken hatcheries use some product. If you go to the Vanodine web site they recommend spraying their product directly on the nest. There is enough information that I will at least put "something" in the hen's bath water to keep pathogens in the nest down.*

*Richard Rolloff*

## **Young Birds Dying In the Nest Early**

This breeding season I have received about 10 consultations concerning youngsters dying at an average of 2 days of age.

There are many reasons for young to die in the nest. The obvious ones of being trampled, chilled, etc. occur only occasionally.

Trichomonas can overwhelm a squab but this is not epidemic in most cases. When it occurs in extraordinary numbers, it is usually symptomatic of a septicemic (body wide, being spread via the blood stream) infection caused by bacteria.

The infection can be started before hatching, the egg being contaminated before being laid or through bacteria penetrating the shell (this usually when conditions are damp and fecal contamination present. Most often it happens immediately after hatching.

A correlation, which I have just figured out, is the use of nest pads. Nest pads have been the common denominator in all the cases that I have been involved with this season.

Granted, nest pads are commonly used with good results, but for some reason I believe that they become a good place for bacteria to increase in numbers. These bacteria serve to infect the babies as they hatch, probably invading through the umbilicus before it dries

All babies are exposed to some bacteria, as they are never in very aseptic condition at hatching. I take an infective dose of bacteria to begin an infection, the numbers depending on many variables.

The more bacteria that are present, the easier it is for them to infect. If nest pads are used (either commercial varieties or homemade from carpet, etc.), they should be disinfected and dried thoroughly before use, and should be replaced just before the babies hatch to discourage this from happening.

This is recommended for lofts having this problem. For those who use them with no problems, it may be something to consider. A Clorox solution or Nolvasan solution can be used to disinfect, but remember to wash away as much organic material before soaking. Soaking time of an hour or so should be adequate. They should be thoroughly dry and aired before reuse.

It is possible that I am making an inaccurate assumption, but I feel it is my duty to share what I suspect to hopefully help as many fanciers prevent problems.

In cases where no pads are used, it is still wise to change nest material with each new clutch and just before eggs hatch. Culturing a fresh dead baby may also help understand this syndrome.

Babies dying early on occur occasionally but when this becomes epidemic, nest pads should be at the top of the rule-out list.

Dr. David E. Marx D.V.M.



## **AN ECONOMICAL WAY TO SHOW CANARIES**

Sara Palmer

In these tightly restricted cash times, I was lucky enough to have Bonnie Black join in my effort to have my Waterslagers shown. It took some planning and timing efforts but was worth the time and trouble. Maybe this is the wave of the future but this effort gave me the ability to have my birds shown with less expense.

The first step was coordinating an arrival date so it fit with Bonnie's work/event schedule. So we found a date she had open as she had to drive a considerable distance to her airport. I also have to drive about 60 miles one way to airport in Sarasota.

Then I had to make a pet reservation to have birds flown by cargo. I chose Delta Dash as their rates were less than other carriers and knew where they were located in Sarasota FL airport. Some of the service counters are in the airport facility and others are in airport cargo area. Made pet reservation - airlines gives you a reservation number - called Bonnie with date, flight numbers, and time of arrival. You can only make pet reservation 7 days in advance of flight.

Birds were shipped in a hard sided under the seat pet carrier. Rubber mat in bottom - kind you use in drawers to keep things from sliding around - perches inserted and water taped in one side. Seed was spread over the rubber matt. Carrier marked with signs LIVE BIRDS on sides and top. I made these signs from the computer and taped them on to the carrier.

You need to have birds to airport 2 hours before scheduled flight. All paper work was done and ready and waiting for my signature. No vet certificate required. I did have to show my driver license as ID. It is then up to airlines to get the birds to California as scheduled. The birds were sent COD so Bonnie had to pay the shipping bill when she received the birds. I had birds at airport at 7:15AM and emailed Bonnie - usually I call a person receiving birds but with the time difference, it was better to email.

My birds did not do well at the show, so Bonnie will sell them for me and we will pay the cost of shipping outright. We have agreed to split any money from others that are sold. If the birds had blown them selves off the score sheets, then Bonnie was to ship 2 back to me and keep 2 for her. Needless to say that did not happen and they will be sold as pets. All these birds were out of well scored and proven males so it just was not their day to shine!

Overall it gave Bonnie a chance to add new bloodlines, gave me a chance to have my birds scored, saved me the cost of a round trip airline ticket from CA to FL, saved the cost of a hotel room and meals out. So was a great chance to have birds shown without the entire bill/cost of my travel.

On the other hand, I did this same thing for Richard Rolloff in 2006 and his birds also did not show well. So is it the flying, difference in climate, temps, or environment???? I had Richard's birds a week before the show; Bonnie had my birds a month before the show. Guess we will just have to continue until we get this shipping down right! (Continued...)

## **AN ECONOMICAL WAY TO SHOW CANARIES**

Bonnie Black

**I was happy to do what I could to make it possible for Sara to participate in our recent WWC show even though she personally could not make the trip. Sara has outlined how we did it, but I have a few thoughts to share.**

**The "handler" of the birds takes on a big responsibility and one that I don't think should be underestimated. Before agreeing to the partnership, the handler needs to consider if they have enough cages, carriers and space to house as well as the needed time to train, feed/clean, stage, and eventually sell the additional birds. Staging and moving an addition team or two each day adds on**

## **AN ECONOMICAL WAY TO SHOW CANARIES continued...**

The handler also takes on the responsibility of the health of the birds under their care and ultimately their final presentation before the judge. I would not have considered taking Sara's birds on for this project if I didn't feel 100% sure that our friendship was strong and that she trusted me to do everything in my power to take care of her birds and train them to the best of my ability. An unexpected bad performance before the judge or a downturn in health can easily be blamed on the handler or it could go the other way if soon after the new birds arrive there is an outbreak of a pest or disease or even fault notes in the host aviary.

I'm not sure if it's best to send them out close to the show or way in advance. I guess there are pros and cons both ways. I'm inclined to think that it is probably best to send them out just a week or so in advance so that the training efforts of the breeder are what are being judged but still giving the birds enough time to settle down and adjust from the trip.

We should also mention that after the show, I contacted Sara with the show results. I have since sent her the copy of her DVD so she can see how her birds actually performed in front of the judge. She also has copies of her score sheets and if there were awards to send, the handler would send them back to the breeder as well.

In summary... the most important thing is that the breeder and the handlers need to trust each other and work together to make this work. It's not as easy as just putting the cages on a jet and hoping for the best. But it does open up the possibility of showing your birds when you can't be there in person.

Bonnie Black

## **EDITOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:**

### **SONG LESSON**

Bora Ergun sent us a note directing us to a very fine song tutorial. As the bird sings, the tour/note is printed below. Very educational and easy to follow! Go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HG-SZIDHbc> or <http://www.anadolu-malinua.com/analiz/138.html>

This website is worth visiting and very informative. I used Google translator Turkish to English. Enjoy!

### **SHOW CAGES**

Last fall several of you were looking for show cage cabinets. I have located a source at:  
<http://community-2.webtv.net/spreeman06/SPANISHTIMBRADOAND/> I purchased one and the workmanship is quite good. You will also be supporting one of your fellow members.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

For those of you who have not renewed your membership for 2009, this is the last issue you will be receiving until renewal (a renewal and band order form is part of this newsletter). Darrell is sending out individual reminders. If you are like me and can't remember, ask! We don't want to lose any of you.

## ***The Canariculture of Song Canaries: Roller-Malinois—a Parallel Study of the Harz-Roller and Malinois-Waterslager Song Canaries***

(By Sebastian Palo Guerra and translated and edited by Sebastian Vallelunga)

In terms of phylogeny, and in accord with the theory of evolution, the origin of birds can be found among the reptiles which lived during the Mesozoic period; the discovery of the fossils of ***Archaeopteryx*** in the Jurassic rocks shed much light on the evolutionary process of the birds. The ***Archaeopteryx***, by its morphology, may be considered a reptile, but the fact that its body was covered with feathers marks it as a transition toward birds; the transition reached its crucial point in the organization of the body structures to enable flight which can be seen in a rudimentary expression among the flying reptiles of the Mesozoic. Modern birds continue to have characteristics which show their reptilian inheritance: the horny plates of their beaks, the scales covering their legs and toes, etc. The characteristics which refer to birds can be enumerated as follows: small head, beak, well developed neck, an almost rigid vertebral system, feathers, extremities which are well developed and adapted for terrestrial displacement and flight. The passerine birds and, among these the common canary, by consequence of selection and the loss of certain defensive faculties, are designed to escape capture through flight, the body is more streamlined, and above all more horizontal: points from which a departure has been made in the contemporary Dutch and Belgian breeds, etc. The discovery of the wild canary may have been accomplished by the explorers who, in 1330, accompanied Alfonso VI of Aragon to the Canary Islands. It was the Spanish who later introduced it into Europe where the bird was prized and was increasingly in demand in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries to so great an extent by the upper class of the European continent that by the 16<sup>th</sup> century the methods of keeping these cage birds, as well as caring for and breeding them in the home were becoming better known. The greatest spreading of this knowledge occurred in Italy and Germany, setting off a commercial trade in domestic canaries as well as those crossed with the native birds of Isle of Elba. At the same time there developed a number of cottage industries like the making of cages and accessories, wood working, packing and shipping, and producing seeds and feeds for birds. The domestic canary differs somewhat from the wild original. The song is the consequence of a meticulous selection process and the range of colors is the consequence of various mutations and crosses between animals with distinct tones and with wild birds, as occurred in the case of the red siskin of Venezuela.

The form, as a consequence of life in captivity, under the effects of rich food, artificial climate, etc. can be characterized as: an augmentation of size and weight and the almost complete loss of the ability to fly well. Its orientation has been modified to living a life on the ground more than one in the air; the body then being held in a vertical position (rather than a horizontal one), giving rise to the stylized forms of long bodies with long legs and short wings while the neck has become long and strong. The base of the cranium, the larynx and syrinx, the things which give a better disposition for song, have all increased. Consequently, there has been a development of the interclavicles and abdominal air sacs in the song breeds in relation to the rest of the air sacs. Without doubt, the direction of development of the domestic canary is marked by advances in nutrition (referring to nutritional regimens based on the concerns of balanced diets rich in protein, minerals, vitamins, amino acids, etc.), artificial climate, hygiene, preventative medicine, and reproduction. Through the combined action of these influences and the other effects of captivity, the modern canary has acquired a very important characteristic: the character of polygamy among the males and a prolongation of the season of sexual activity of the hens, characteristics that diverge from those of the wild canary. Within the process of domestication of the canary, we will focus our studies on the scientific and competitive dimensions of the canariculture of song canaries... In this sense the end we seek is to improve these song races in all of their aspects, with order and discipline, examining adequate methods and the unique characteristics of the different lines. Quality and only quality is that which should be sought and for this reason we must take certain considerations as our points of departure. One must breed in a rational manner, seeking an end which is advantageous and scientific at the



same time. It is necessary to begin with healthy breeding birds and to recognize their condition in order to fix the characteristics sought within their descendents. R. Fratanoni, a roller breeder and author from Argentina, said that method and discipline are the scientific vehicles, above all, that bring one to the realization of goals and the advance of knowledge in roller canariculture (this can be extrapolated to all of song canariculture). Elevated to its highest expression, this constitutes a science which is also an art. It is a science because it brings us to the recognition of its phenomena, principles, and causes and because it is a body of teaching which is methodically formed and ordered and allows an authentic human understanding; it is an art because it is man who cultivates by applying the rules and precepts necessary to perfect its expression. As a consequence of what has been said, one could speak of “canariology” (this term was coined by Dr. V. C. Bianchi of Argentina) as the science that explores the breeding and improvement of the characteristics of song canaries, especially those that we study here: the roller and the malinois.

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## 2009 AWARDS BANQUET



*From left to right: Donna Gary, Sebastian Vallelunga, Manuel Soto, Liza Horst, Darrell Horst, Zeljko Aleksic, Shawn Blundell, Edith Vermeij, Val Stevens, Richard Rolloff, Bonnie Black, Tracie Stevens, and Ella Galik.*

The only way the show could have been better, is if all the members could attend! I regret that distance and traveling with birds make attending such a challenge. We did make an effort to share the experience with all members. We recorded the staging/judging this year. The top seven teams and best single will be available on a DVD. Go to our website [www.westernwaterslager.com](http://www.westernwaterslager.com), or contact Darrell Horst to purchase a copy. Our sincere thanks to all who made the 2009 show possible.

Richard Rolloff (2009 Show Chair)

# Western Waterslager Club

## Membership Application & Band Order

*Promoting the breeding, training and showing of the Belgian Waterslager Song Canary*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be listed on the website "Breeder List"? Yes - No (circle one)

If yes, do you ship canaries. Yes, No, Maybe (circle one)

(Only your name, state, email address and/or phone number will be listed on the Breeder List)

Dues are payable January 1st of each year. Bands must be ordered before October 31<sup>st</sup>. to obtain a breeder id number. (see instructions below)

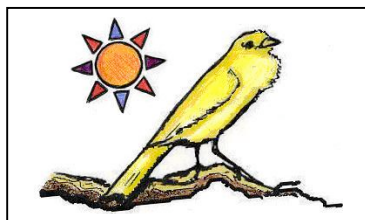
Yearly Dues    Newsletter via web (email) \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Or newsletter via US mail \$30.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Band Order:                      *Must be a member of WWC to order bands.*  
   25 bands    \$13.00    \_\_\_\_\_                      Mail or  
   50 bands    \$26.00    \_\_\_\_\_                      Pickup bands at the  
   75 bands    \$39.00    \_\_\_\_\_                      annual show.  
   100 bands    \$52.00    \_\_\_\_\_                      (Please circle one)

Total Order Including Dues                      \_\_\_\_\_

These high quality European bands include WWC, 2 digit year and band number. If you order before Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>, you can have a numerical three digit breeder identification number added. Bands ordered after Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> will be generic and will not have a breeder id or band number choice. All bands are 3.0 mm in diameter. Bands will be available at the annual show or mailed after January 1st. Circle your choice above.

*Write check payable to WWC. Send check and form to club Treasurer.  
Darrell Horst, 43 Third St., Woodland, CA 95695-3320*



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