



IEFFCA *Newsletter*



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President's MESSAGE

Canary clubs are planning their annual shows, and our birds are moving from breeding season into the molt. This is also the time breeders begin watching their youngsters that have the most show potential.

I will begin separating the young birds into small cages, either singly or doubly. This is to prevent feather plucking and stress for those who I may take to a show this fall.

In summer's heat, I am careful to change seed and water daily. When cleaning cups, I soak in bleach water for 20-30 minutes and rinse well. I often add Lugol's iodine to the drinking water, which also helps to reduce bacteria.

Baths can also help a bird cope with heat, as well as being necessary during the molt. Think about how you control the climate in your bird area, as an A/C draft should be away from the bird cages.

Water quality does matter. I bring water from upstate New York for the sole purpose of using as bath water. The birds look amazing, I will use this water 3 to 4 days before a show.

Wishing everyone a good molting season.

-- Anthony Celano



2024 Show Schedule

October 5

New York Colorbred Canary Club
Fife Judge: Mr. Matt Eld, UK

October 12

Canary and Finch Society of Texas
Type Judge: Brian Byrne, USA

October 19

Society of Canary and Finch Breeders of Michigan
Type Judge: Alan Dean, USA

October 19

Pan American Canary Culturists
Type Judge: Anthony Celano

October 26

Columbia Canary Club
Type Judge: Jim Pickel, USA

November 14-17

National Cage Bird Show (NBS)
World Fair Exhibition Hall, Knoxville, TN
Fife Fancy Judge: Adam Raine, UK

**Fife Fancy Division is sponsored,
managed and worked by IFFCA in 2024.**

A complete list of all 2024 shows is posted
to our Facebook group and our website.

On The Cover:

Mom and Kids by Vicki Mihelich



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or address above

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text (406) 949-2579

IFFCAsecretary@gmail.com

**Members are encouraged to submit:
Photos, Articles, Tips & Techniques ...
and New Ideas!**

Please take the
MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

<https://forms.gle/JnC3DnjfGZvaF1i6A>

to help our club
better serve our members.

THANK YOU!

CLUB NEWS AND VIEWS

The Value of a Good Band Cutter

A top quality band cutter is an absolutely necessary tool that should be in every birdkeeper's room, or pet owner's home. Confidence in the use of a band cutter will relieve many stressful situations.

Despite our best efforts to prevent accidents or injury to our birds, mishaps do happen. Leg bands get entangled in a corner of a wire cage, or in the curved wire of a cage door. A band may become too tight, or it may slip up onto the thigh of the bird. A rare male will feed his band out of nervousness. Old age scale buildup may create irritation or a sore spot on the bird's leg. There are good uses for a band cutter besides emergency situations.

One example is using a band to correct a slipped claw, which is simply a back toe that lays forward across the bottom of their foot, rather than extending backward. A bird with a 'slipped claw' will be seen perching on top of the toe as it is folded under the other toes, rather than the toe gripping the back side of the perch.

RIGHT:

*A plastic band holding a rear claw back against the leg.
The band will be removed later.*

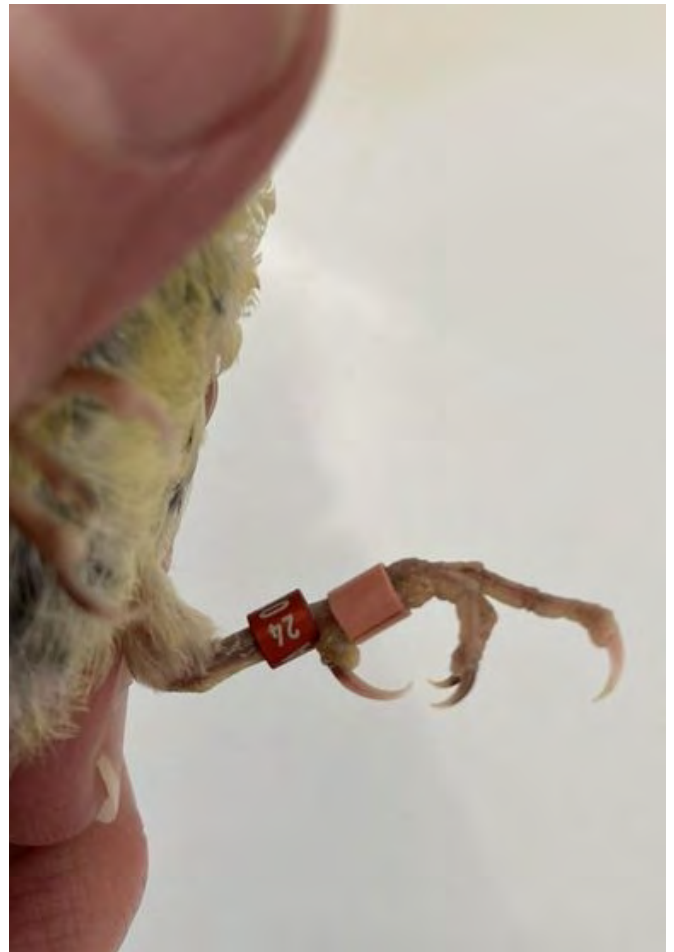
The solution is to slip on a plastic leg band in such a way that holds the toe back against the leg. The band is left on for a period of time, two months for example, then removed. The rear toe will now have the proper position and function.

When the only band cutter available is a light weight, small version most suited to cutting plastic bands, the removal may not be completely successful. The good design of a top quality tool, such as the AC Hughes brand of band cutter, makes a necessary task easier.

Susan Bergel has posted a video on Facebook, using the AC Hughes band cutter. In the video, she demonstrates holding the canary, supporting the leg and cutting first one side of the band, then the other side.

Please view the video at Susan's Canaries on Facebook, [HERE](#).

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/Tx3QmrJwanCL5vSz/>



IFFCA is pleased to offer the AC Hughes band cutter for the price of \$38 each, with instructions and a Q-tip with leg bands for practice use. Shipping cost included.

Water In Cage Bird Nutrition

by Robert G, Black, very condensed from original article, linked in the list below
PLEASE read the VERY interesting complete article!

Though water is so often taken for granted, it is the most essential nutrient and the first requirement for life. The turnover and exchange of water in the body exceeds that of any other nutrient. A 10% reduction in body content of any other nutrient usually will cause no noticeable effect, but a 10% reduction in water in the form of body fluids will cause symptoms of severe dehydration. A 20% reduction in body fluids is fatal.

Water performs a very important function for the body in the regulation of body temperature, since water evaporation removes excess heat. Whenever the body begins to overheat, the bird will begin to pant. This evaporates far more moisture and results in greater cooling.

Water serves several other functions in the body. In its most important function, it acts as a solvent and carrier for body nutrients, including the monosaccharides, amino acids, phospholipids, vitamins, and minerals. These items are all vital to life. Water also carries the hormones and enzymes necessary for the proper functioning of every cell in the body. Water further serves as a lubricant, especially in the joints, and acts as the medium for many metabolic reactions.

Water is also the carrier of the waste products of the cells. These include carbon dioxide, nitrogen compounds from the breakdown of proteins, and other compounds that are poisonous or in excess to the body's needs. These waste products are carried to the lungs and kidneys for excretion. Some also go to the liver where they are incorporated into the bile for excretion into the intestinal tract.

The most obvious symptom of a water deficiency in finches and cage birds is squinting. This characteristic seems to be specific for dehydration. The only other time you will notice this is if something is sprayed or placed directly into the bird's eyes. Squinting is a red flag of warning. Normally, a bird without water for 24 hours or less will begin squinting, and this symptom is obvious at a glance from several feet away. More severe dehydration and death are just a step away from the act of squinting.

The body contains far more water than any other substance. There is no substitute for water in the body's metabolism, and I cannot over stress the importance of a continuous water supply for the birds. If an emergency should occur that does not leave any time for bird care temporarily, make sure the birds have water along with some basic food item, such as millet for finches. All else can wait in an emergency. You can check a hundred cages for water and millet in five minutes, and a few days of such limited nutrition will not hurt healthy adult birds in the least.



The Topic of Avian Nutrition will continue in upcoming newsletters.

Full articles are posted on the [LINKS](#) page of our website:

- Basic Pet Bird Nutrition
- Introduction to Avian Nutrition
- **Water In Cage Bird Nutrition**
- Nutrition During The Breeding Season
- Preventive Health Care for Aviculture - Disinfection and Sanitation
- The Medicinal Value of Plant Food

On the National Finch and Softbill Society web page:

- Diets for Finches and Softbills: Simple or Complicated? By Robert G. Black

USDA Regulations on Birds

On February 21, 2023, APHIS published a final rule in the Federal Register establishing new welfare standards for birds. These regulations ensure the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of birds regulated under the Animal Welfare Act. These new regulations were phased in for the past year and are in full effect since February 21, 2024.

We have watched as the bird world debated, studied and explained how the new regulations may impact our members. As responsible bird owners, we hope to encourage ownership of Fife Fancy canaries and we respect the attempt to insure proper care and breeding of birds. However, from a practical viewpoint, we have been concerned about how these new regulations may affect our hobby.

We are happy to say, as canary owners, breeders, and exhibitors, most of our members will see no changes to their personal Fife Life. We may notice the occasional side effect in situations where we interact with other people, such as buying or selling birds.

Below is a brief summary of how the regulations are applied, in the case of the average IFFCA member.

- 1) If you own, or breed, canaries **for your own use and enjoyment**, the regulations do not apply to you at all. You may breed 100's of birds as long as they are for your own use. However, if you receive even a \$1 're-homing fee' from another person in exchange for one of your birds, you need to look deeper.
- 2) **The canary is considered an established common household pet**, and therefore exempt from the many regulations imposed on other exotic or larger species.
- 3) If you **sell 200 or less** small birds, bred by yourself on your premises, in one calendar year, you are exempt from registration. You can breed more than 200 birds, as long as you sell no more than 200 in one year. It does not matter how you sell: online, by mail, website, online classifieds, etc. Person to person sales at bird shows are exempt from registration.
- 4) If you **exhibit your own birds at bird fancier shows**, you will not need to be registered. You may transport your own birds to and from shows.
- 5) There are no governmental regulations on breeders shipping their own birds, even as part of a sale. All USDA rules regarding shipping need to be met by the shipping company, such as USPS, Delta, or other. These shippers have set out guidelines and requirements for bird shipments, in order to comply with the regulations they need to follow.

The good news is: the average club member will be able to continue keeping, breeding, showing our birds and acquiring new stock, in the traditional ways we have found most convenient!

For a simple video explanation from the USDA: [on the USDA website](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/awa/bird-standards)

(<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/awa/bird-standards>)

Six videos presented by Organization of Professional Aviculturists 2023-2024

<https://www.opabirds.org/virtualqa>

IFFCA Member In Focus

Name : Kevin Buttigieg

Age: 37

City/State: Whitestone, NY

Occupation: Construction Project Manager

I am a first-year IFFCA member, but I am not new to birds. I own and breed Fife Fancy, European goldfinches and my 7-year-old son has parakeets that we managed to breed this year.

How did you begin in Bird Keeping?

Coming from the small island of Malta in the Mediterranean, we used to have a season for trapping finches (goldfinches, siskins chaffinches, linnets, hawfinches, greenfinches and serins).

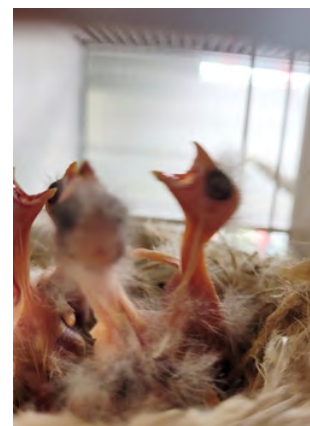
It made me fall in love with bird keeping and breeding from a very young age.

When did you begin keeping Fife?

I have had the odd Fife here and there for some time, but this will be the first year I am actually trying to breed them for showing purposes.



Full nests of healthy chicks, *right and left*, grow up and begin their show cage training, *below*.





Is there something you wish you'd known when you began in birds?

That not all birds are easy to keep and breed.

What advice would you give a novice?

Don't give up and be very patient.

Do you have a helpful TIP or TRICK you think all bird keepers should know?

Quality food and essential vitamins are key.

Sometimes a not so good looking bird produces the best looking birds.

Do you have a favorite food, tool, or piece of equipment that you think is important in the care of your birds?

Homemade "fortified egg food" I add apples, kiwi, broccoli, spinach, peas, protein powder, calcium and vitamins and when available in my yard I add fresh millet, and rape seed.

Do you have a favorite memory to share?

One odd, good thing that happened to me years ago. I had a small aviary with 4 green finches, 1 male 3 females, and had an extra canary that I decided to let go in the aviary. He managed to breed two female greenfinches twice. I tried it multiple times after that with no success. It just goes to tell you different years different results, same birds same procedure.



Canary Culture

by Tony Bucci
San Pedro, California

Practical Suggestions For Beginners During Molt

One problem that plagues canary breeders during molt is feather picking or, better described, "feather breaking." This type of feather picking should not be confused with feather picking encountered with psittacine birds, which is self-inflicted. Canaries never pick their own feathers but do inflict damage to other canaries.

There is nothing more discouraging, irritating, and frustrating, and I could add more descriptive adjectives, than to come home and find his best young canary tailless and bleeding. The bleeding comes from a feather stub left there after being broken by an offending canary. The feather stub must be removed as soon as possible using good tweezers. Once the feather stub is removed, the blood will coagulate, and the bleeding will stop. Unless that broken stub is removed, it will continue to bleed.

Bleeding will attract more offenders to cause more damage. To prevent further damage, the injured bird must be treated as mentioned above and placed in a separate cage.

To prevent other birds from being damaged, the offender must be found within that flight. The flight in question should be observed until the offender is spotted attempting to do more damage. This is easier said than done! If you have twenty yellow canaries within the flight that all look alike, it is very easy to lose the criminal while you are trying to catch it. The process can become very time consuming.

I have solved the problem by wetting the offender during the time he or she is attempting to do the number; ie. drenching him or her until he or she can no longer fly. This is easily done using a good squirt gun or squirt bottle, which holds more water. The squirt bottle should be adjusted so that it will squirt a solid stream of water. Once the criminal is wet, it can be easily identified and finally apprehended. —————▶



A young adult badly damaged, the results of feather picking by its cage mates.

Photos by Tony Bucci

It is interesting to note that when this same canary is placed in a flight with other canaries with the same criminal habit, they will not inflict the same in injuries on each other. I guess they are wise to each other. Observing them, you can see the mistrust they have for each other, as they escape when approached. I normally assign a separate cage just to hold these hoods.

Feather picking is more prevalent among Red Factor canaries and smaller breeds, in general. Among the large Type canaries, such as Yorkshire, Norwich, and Parisian frills, the problem is less frequent or nonexistent. These large breeds are less vigorous and less mischievous. It is wise to keep them apart from the smaller ones, especially during the molt.

Among the theories which explain the reasons for feather picking are insufficient protein in the diet, lack of certain minerals and vitamins, and boredom or overcrowding. Observing canaries during this period, one can note that once a canary picks a feather (always from another canary), it proceeds to manipulate the feather in its beak and ends up chewing the quill. Is the canary trying to obtain some nourishment from the part of the feather which was embedded in the skin?

If the feather is accidentally or intentionally broken during the attempt to pick it, the remaining stub will bleed. I have seen drops of blood on the floor of the cage being drunk by the offending canary—a case of a vampire canary! Perhaps chewing on the quill and the drinking of blood is an indication of a desire to obtain animal protein?

I have experimented by placing a strip of bacon in the flight. The bacon was slowly consumed by the inhabitants of the flight. Feather picking was reduced, but not totally eliminated. Perhaps the bacon served as a diversion, something to do?

I have heard from fanciers that placing string or hemp rope (never use synthetic materials such as nylon string) in the flight would help the picking problem. If placing string and rope will help, then the problem could be behavioral.

I tend to accept the behavioral theory because my large breeds do not pick feathers, yet they receive the same diet. They are calmer in contrast to the small breeds which are more active and mischievous.



Placing small breeds in larger flights gives them more room to expend their energy. Small breeds can be compared to children which are more energetic and mischievous.

Birds that exhibit possibilities for the show should be placed in individual cages which would obviously eliminate feather picking totally. I use my breeding cages for this purpose, as they are no longer needed for breeding during this time. A breeding cage, especially the box type, offers maximum privacy and gives that choice canary a chance to finish the molt undisturbed and unharmed. •

Time to VOTE in our YOUNG FIFE PHOTO CONTEST

#1) Go to this webpage:

internationalfifefancyclubofamerica.com/babyfifephotocontest

#2) Click the check boxes of **THREE photos** that are your favorites!

#3) Vote by midnight, Sunday, August 11th.

That is slightly less than TWO WEEKS!

The three photos with the most votes will be announced the following week on our Facebook Group, and will be featured in our next newsletters.



Susan B.

NOTE: *The articles we present in this newsletter are the views of those who wrote the articles. We stress the fact that there are many very different methods and diets that are being used to keep happy, healthy birds. These articles are the opinions of the authors.*