Before entering and feeding the youngster, the adults would land on the entrance hole of a large smooth-trunked log that was originally used for a Toco Toucan.

At approximately three weeks of age the juvenile shows the awareness of an adult. The chick looks like its father—much more colorful than the mother.

Crested or Levallant's Barbet

By Dale R. Thompson, Lemon Cove, CA

The Crested Barbet, *Trachyphonus vaillantii*, originates from a large part of Africa. It ranges from Angola, Zambia, SE Zaire (now the Republic of Congo), Tanzania south to Nambia, Botswana and the eastern part of South Africa. In modern references the Crested Barbet is being referred to as the Levallant's Barbet. There is an excellent photograph of this barbet depicted in Martin Vince's book *Softbills-Care, Breeding and Conservation*.

The Levallant's Barbet was quite common in the zoological world in the past decade, but since it has not been placed on a SSP or TAG program it is not receiving the attention given to birds who are listed on the programs. The International Species Identification System (ISIS), March 1997, records show 7.6.17 (7 males, 6 females and 17 unknowns) with no listed hatchings. It is very important that the private sector work with this species and work toward establishing it in captivity.

Barbets originate from Africa, Asia and Indonesia, and Central and South America and belong to a wide range of genera. All are tunnel nesters and will most often utilize an abandoned (or even an active) woodpecker hole that has been tunneled into the trunk or branch of a tree. Barbets can be quite pugnacious and in the wild have been known to take over a nest of less dominant birds. The breeding morphology of the barbet family is very similar to that of the toucan family.

In 1995, I received a pair of Levallant's Barbets from Jim Gunderson who has reared a considerable number of softbills in his lifetime including the Levallant's Barbet. The pair I received consisted of a wild-caught male with a handfed female. The male was very nervous and skittish while the female was not afraid of humans in any way.

The Levallant's Barbet has a wonderful song consisting of a long run-
ning trill. This handfed female would sit on a log close by and, stretching in a high upright position, would run off a musical trill right in front of you. Not only did it do it around people as she loved the attention, but one could hear her song from several hundred feet away in the very early mornings. Due to this great attention-getting behavior, this female was named “Barbie Doll.” She was so imprinted to human that I did not know if she would ever reproduce or would ever lay eggs. And if she did would they be fertile?

I really enjoyed this bird and could easily understand Jim Gunderson’s great affection for her. He had hand reared the bird and wanted it to always have the freedom of a large flight.

The pair was originally housed in a 10-foot flight until it could be housed in a very large walk-through flight cage that was just being finished in my back yard. This flight cage measured 30 feet in width by 56 feet in length. It had a domed roof that attained the height of 24 feet. The sides were made of paneled 1" X 1/2" wire that went up for approximately 10 feet. Then an aluminum alloy tubular structure made for shade houses was used to dome over the top. Nylon netting was stretched and secured at the top and this created an incredible environment for softbills.

This flight cage had a shallow (14 foot diameter) pool placed in it with a man-made stream flowing into it. The flight was well planted using two fruitless Mulberry trees as the main shade in the non-winter month. The Mulberry trees were heavily pruned to shape them into an umbrella, as they would normally grow straight up in the air and punch holes through the roof. The flight was planted with a number of hardy plants as the winter-time temperatures could drop below freezing at night. Cape Honeysuckle and several types of Jasmine vines covered several of the sides. I personally am not afraid of placing labeled toxic plants within a softbill aviary as the inhabitants do not partake of them. While in the Los Angeles Zoo’s enormous flight cage that had a large number of softbills (and even parrot-types), we counted over 27 toxic plants including the very toxic Elephant Ear.
Calcium
the Misunderstood Mineral

By Thomas P. Ryan, D.V.M.
Binghamton, NY
(Oct/Nov 1985)

Another compound found in our bird's diet, calcium is still to this day a misunderstood mineral to many. Either we give too little or too much. This early article gives a very clear concept of calcium.

Calcium and phosphorus are two important minerals in the diet of birds. Calcium- and phosphorus-related problems are not uncommon in pet birds. The deficiency most frequently seen in pet birds fed an all-seed diet is of calcium. Calcium is required in greater quantities than any other mineral and its metabolism is closely intertwined with that of phosphorus and vitamin D.

Calcium is important for the following:
1. The major component of bone and egg shell;
2. Necessary for nerve impulses.
3. Heart rate and blood clotting.
5. Metabolic processes.

Phosphorus is found in bone, egg shell, muscles and is important in the metabolism of fats and carbohydrates. Low calcium can be a result of several things including the following:
1. High phosphorus and magnesium in the diet.
2. Large amounts of fat (such as seen in high oil seeds).
3. Not enough calcium in the diet.
4. High intestinal alkalinity.
5. Calcium complexing with oxalates or phytates in the diet.

It is important to remember that the calcium-to-phosphorus ratio of seeds most commonly included in bird feed range from 1:6 to 1:37. The correct...