AIR SAC MITES

Canaries and Lady Gould's Finches are very susceptible to air sac mites. Other birds are sometimes affected also. If your bird is not lively or has difficulty breathing hold it next to your ear. If it sounds like it has asthma, it most likely has air sac mites.

There are a few home remedies you might use to treat your bird. First, you can use a Shell Pest Strip. Hang it in the bird room or in the aviary (placed inside an empty cage so the birds will not peck at it — it is deadly poison if eaten). If the air sac mite infestation is extremely bad you can put the bird in a cage and place a Pest Strip on top of the cage. Make sure the bird can't peck the strip and watch for signs that the fumes are too strong for the bird.

A second remedy involves using a good Pyrethrin based non-toxic aerosol spray. Place the infected bird in a cage, then cover the cage. Spray into the cage — not directly on the bird — so the cage is filled with the fogged pyrethrin. Let the bird breath this for three or four minutes. Use this treatment twice a day for ten days, then twice a week for three weeks. (Only a few seconds spray two or three times during the four minute session is sufficient.)

The third recommended treatment requires a puffer type dispenser. Use the same covered cage method but instead of aerosol spray use Malathion powder. Puff it into the covered cage and let the bird breath it for three or four minutes. Use this treatment just once every three weeks.

During any of these treatments give your bird a little extra care. Put a good antibiotic in the water, at night put the covered cage (with the front uncovered) on a heating pad set on medium and keep the floor covered with seed. Remember that any treatment involves a certain risk and be careful. Proper use of these remedies should restore your bird to good health.