breeding the
Java Mannikin
(Lonchura leucogastroïdes)
by Carol Anne Calvin, New Jersey

Our Java Mannikins, also known as Java Munias or Black-rumped Munias, are wild-caught birds, obtained out of quarantine, age unknown. Since they are not sexually dimorphic, all six were housed together in a community flight for two to three months in our birdroom, first in a flight four feet long by three feet high by two feet wide and then in an 18 inch cube cage. Each bird was individually color-banded to identify individuals.

The actual mating and egg laying took place in the 18 inch cage, which was meant to be only a temporary home until transferal to a larger flight. The one clutch of three eggs, only one of which was fertile, was laid in a small, closed wicker basket lined with dried grasses. The cock’s courtship display was typical mannikin — hopping up and down on the perch, feathers fluffed up, making inaudible vocalizations.

The birds bred in mid-summer, but the outside climate is irrelevant, as our 12 foot by 24 foot indoor basement birdroom provides constant tropical conditions.

The birds enjoy a constant temperature of 78°F, humidity of 70 to 80 percent, Vita-lites 16 hours per day, and a variety of tropical plants — banana trees, palms and weeping figs. This environment is shared by a multitude of other rare tropical finches, some free-flying, others similarly caged.

The fertile Java Mannikin egg was fostered under Society Finches, the two clear eggs being discarded. The Society pair successfully incubated, hatched, and raised the youngster to independence, along with three Society chicks of their own. Hatched on August 10, 1990, the young Java Mannikin fledged at about three weeks and was fed for about another ten days, being weaned on or about September 10, 1990 — the same schedule as the Society chicks with which the youngster was raised.

Editor’s Note: If any person knows of a successful breeding of the Java Mannikin prior to the above article, please inform Dale R. Thompson, Chairman AFA Awards Committee, through the AFA Home Office in Phoenix, Arizona. •
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