The breeding and raising of Lovebirds in the less temperate states poses problems different from those found in the south where the climate is mild. The changes in seasons from hot summers to cold winters must be taken into consideration by the aviculturist. The cold of winter requires that the aviaries in the north be enclosed or semi-enclosed and they usually are heated. (To date, little work has been done in attempting to adapt the lovebird to cold winter conditions without heat).

Enclosed or semi-enclosed aviaries limit the amount of space available in which to keep birds so the northern breeder must be content to breed his lovebirds in cages or flights of limited size. The number of birds in the average northern aviary generally is less than the numbers kept in aviaries in the south where there are less restrictions on space. The northern aviculturist’s aviary is usually located in the basement of his home, a converted garage, or out-building, or, less frequently, in an aviary building constructed for this purpose. Most breeders keep their birds indoors the year round.

Birds confined indoors in more restricted space require more attention regarding proper nutrition, the provision of adequate light, ventilation, relative humidity and, to a lesser degree, heat.

First and foremost, birds in confinement are in need of a a well balanced ration (1). The cage bird is totally dependent upon the aviculturist to provide for its proper nutrition. Proper nutrition is essential to insure a long healthy life and complete physiological efficiency. Failure to provide the proper food elements will result in dietary stresses which will be reflected in improper growth and decreased resistance to disease and parasites. Egg hatchability will be poor or weak young will hatch and not survive.

Lovebirds kept indoors may lack adequate light, both in quantity and quality. They do not receive the sunlight which is vital to their growth, reproduction and well being. Ordinary light bulbs and fluorescent tubes do not emit as much a full spectrum of light waves, from ultraviolet through red, as found in natural sunlight. This deficiency in light quality can be corrected, to an extent, by the use of “full spectrum lamps” in the aviary (2). The ones we use in our aviary are the Duro-test Vita-Lites developed by the Duro-test Corp. of North Bergen, N.J. (also marketed under the name of “Duro-Lite”). The quality of light can be compensated for by the use of timers on the aviary circuit.

Our aviary is centrally heated during the cold months, both for the comfort of the birds and for our own comfort. Until the last two years, heating the aviary has been no problem. Last year, however, the threatened natural gas shortage (we heat with gas) caused us some concern and we purchased portable electric heaters to use in an emergency in case our fuel supply was restricted. This year with
the great blizzard taking power lines down causing many homes to be without electricity, we were made painfully aware that without electricity our central gas heating system would not operate and our emergency electric heaters would be useless. Our solution to this is to purchase a portable gasoline electric generator. These light plant generators, which operate in much the same manner as a gasoline lawn mower, come in various sizes and depending upon the wattage, can operate a furnace fan or up to several appliances. One has only to experience a blizzard with its resultant power failure to appreciate the value of having such a generator as a standby in case of an emergency. It could not only save your birds from freezing to death, but could provide you with comfort during a power failure.

What has happened this winter here in Ohio and earlier in Buffalo, N.Y., could happen next winter in your area, so be prepared.

Different preventive measures could include the installation of a wood burning stove in the aviary, or the purchase of Coleman Catalytic heaters or BTU heaters for standby emergency use.

Artificial heat in winter creates another...

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<th>Description</th>
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NOTE: Most appliances indicate wattage on label (if volts and amps, are given, multiply the two to get wattage). It’s best to have power in reserve than not enough.

Breeding cages in tiers, note seed hoppers, chincilla water bottle and attached nest box.

Lovebird breeding cage with nest box attached, showing self-water fount.

Prevue-Hendryx F-088 cage converted to lovebird breeding cage.
er problem, that of low humidity. Low humidity must be considered as a possible cause of lovebird chicks failing to hatch ("dead-in-the-shell") due to excessive dehydration of the egg (6). Relative humidity can be controlled by the use of a humidifier. In areas where there are lots of mineral in the water, a portable humidifier would be more troublefree than one which is a part of the heating system.

Relative humidity can be measured by a humidity meter available at most discount stores or more accurately with a hydrometer and reference to a table of relative humidity. (Marsh Farms offers an inexpensive hydrometer).

Methods of increasing the relative humidity in the nest box itself consist in the supplying of "sappy" nesting material, such as green twigs or honeysuckle vines, and the use of moisture adding devices which are a part of or attached to the nest box.

For the northern lovebird breeder, especially the urban dweller, sources of green twigs, honeysuckle vine or other good nesting materials are not always available. Some use green corn husks, willow branches or peach tree branches. We have been experimenting with the use of shredded newspaper and find it works well for us. (Our relative humidity is---

These are spectral energy distribution charts. They show the average amount of light generated in each color band by the light source being measured. These are the "color ingredients" of each type of light.

The chart at left (C.I.E. D-5500°K) is specified by the International Commission on Illumination as representative of natural outdoor light. Its Color Rendering Index (CRI) is 100.

The other charts represent the three most common fluorescent lamps and Vita-Lite. Their Color Rendering Indexes are shown on the charts.
The expertise which Novak's puts into its imported birds begins way before they arrive here in America. We go directly to our overseas suppliers and individually pick out many of the birds to be shipped.

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