

Super 8 Artist

Introduction to Duane Raver

Duane Raver was born and raised in central Iowa where he soon learned to fish and hunt and enjoy the world of nature. It was evident at an early age Duane had the gift of artistic talent and soon began to draw and paint fish, waterfowl, and upland game.

When it came time to make a decision about college, Duane made the choice of fish and wildlife biology with an emphasis on fishery management. Artwork was always a strong hobby during college, again with fish he caught as subjects. Duane graduated from Iowa State University in 1949 and worked as an assistant fishery biologist with the then Iowa Conservation Commission. In January of 1950, he received a call from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and was offered a position as a fishery biologist, surveying dozens of North Carolina lakes and reservoirs. When the Federal Aid to Fisheries program (DJ) was launched, Duane became the Fish Division's first Federal Aid Coordinator. In 1960, after doing much of the artwork and some of the writing for the Commission's magazine, "Wildlife in North Carolina", while in the Fish Division, Duane transferred to the Education Division. He continued to do many of the magazine's covers and other illustrations as well as other features. He progressed from Managing Editor to the magazine's Editor and

layout and design duties. During nights and weekends, Duane did many illustrations for several Southeastern states publications, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and educational and commercial books and magazines. His specialty of fish illustrations soon gained national attention.

Duane retired from the N.C. Wildlife Commission in 1979 to devote full time as a freelance wildlife illustrator. In 1984, he teamed with fisheries scientist Dr. Charles S. Manooch to produce the book *Fisherman's Guide – Fishes of the Southeastern United States*, which was reprinted four times, most recently in 2007. The one hundred and fifty full color fish paintings in the book have formed the basis for many fish identification posters and publications nation wide.

During his career, Duane was named Wildlife Artist of the Year four times by the N.C. Wildlife Federation and, in 2003, was inducted into the Federation's Hall of Fame. He has won numerous art awards and recognition by various sporting and conservation organizations for artwork contributions. In 2009, Duane was awarded The Order of the Longleaf Pine by the State of North Carolina.

Now 85, he still does wildlife artwork on a daily basis in his studio in his daughter's taxidermy shop near Clayton, N.C.



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By Concetta Ferragamo

Do AFA members and AFA officers support avian rescues, shelters, sanctuaries and the like? Of course they do!

AFA to the rescues, to the shelters, to the sanctuary, to the homes of the pet owner, to the facility of a breeder, to the shop of an associated manufacturer, or to the avian veterinarians, yes, if it is bird related, then the AFA is present and wants to be involved. AFA is a group of members; and AFA cares, and that is as dedicated as it gets.

Did you know that many of the members of the AFA Board of Directors are strongly affiliated with bird rescue or sanctuary organizations? The AFA legislative Vice President, attorney Genny Wall, supports a large private rescue. The AFA First Vice President, Jamie Whittaker, and the AFA South-central Regional Director, Georgia Hayes, are affiliated with NPRPF (The National Parrot Rescue and Preservation Foundation) which is one of the largest bird rescue-related organizations in the United States. The AFA Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, Eddie Maher, works full time as a rescue director in the state of Maryland. The list goes on and on. AFA has a strong presence in the world of rehoming birds.

The AFA is not a “breeders only” organization and never was. It is true the AFA was formed by a group of concerned breeders trying to protect their birds, and the birds of others. But there has always been a large membership base consisting of pet owners. The current AFA CFO and former membership chair, Brent Andrus, was recently asked to assist in researching AFA membership history and the conclusion was that AFA has always been a predominantly pet



owner organization. Rescues and sanctuaries are part of the pet ownership category as well as the family member that maintains pet birds as part of their home.

Surprised? Why? It is more surprising to some that there is a need to point out to people that AFA is involved in rehoming of birds. It does not make sense that the AFA could survive for over thirty-eight years and not be involved in such necessities in the industry. Birds often outlive their keepers. That creates a need for rehoming; and since the AFA is a key organization in the country, it only makes sense that the people involved with the AFA would also assist in rehoming birds.

One part of the AFA’s primary mission is to assist in the education of the public about bird keeping. The need for the proper care of a bird does not end when something happens where a bird must be rehomed, nor does the mission of the AFA and its devotion to that mission. This means that the AFA must work with other organizations that share its vision and goals. These other organizations may include rescues, shelters, breeders, and lifetime sanctuaries.

We have all been subjected to the negative press given to “hoarding” as of late. The

AFA does not support such places, and our members understand that sometimes it simply is not easy to distinguish between someone that hoards, and someone that is taking in birds in an attempt to help them.

In some cases hoarding manifests itself accidentally when a rescue entity becomes overwhelmed through accumulation. It is recommended that people who find they are falling into a hoarding situation reach out for help and recognize that they have lost control. Speak up and ask for help. AFA State coordinators and regional directors are able to offer guidance on what to do and where to seek help if a situation becomes too much to handle. AFA has resources and networking abilities that may not be familiar to everyone. But the AFA is here for you and the birds; asking for assistance is the first step.

Breeding birds has become a hot topic. The animal rights sector and even some animal humane organizations have created “buzz words” designed to incite anger, emotion, and negativity. They have added “breeding” to the list because it fits into their agenda of stopping all animals from being “used” as pets. But not all captive birds want to breed; some captive birds are


not even capable of breeding. The important thing to remember is that, despite the stories from those that support the anti-breeding agenda, it is not possible to force a bird to breed. Unlike mammals that can be forcibly inseminated, birds have a much more complicated reproductive system. Birds do not ovulate regularly and will not produce eggs simply because an owner

wants them to. If you do not have the right humidity, food, temperature, bedding, nest box, lighting and overall ambience, generally, birds will not breed. Imagine how easy it would be to bring a species back from the brink of extinction if we could “force” them to breed. Much credit and high honors are due to the breeders that have the talent, patience, and know-


how to provide the necessary environment and diet, resulting in successful captive breeding. Another important thought to ponder is that breeders can now contribute to wild bird conservation via their knowledge of the species. In fact, many breeders are more knowledgeable of the species they keep and breed than biologists seeking to help them in the wild. Captive breeding is a huge, somewhat untapped, resource for biological data about the birds we all love so much.

Although the term “rescue” is over-used, in general avian rescues are supposed to be the holding facility for birds going from one home to another, or from a relinquished home to a breeder. Rescues do not keep birds, they find the right situation for them, and then rehome them. Taking the term literally, to rescue a bird would be to save it from a type of situation that could potentially become harmful to the bird. This is a broad definition that could range from a family falling on hard economic times (not able to maintain a healthy diet for the bird) to a full blown seizure from an inhumane hoarding situation. To rescue a bird is to remove a bird from harm’s way and then to place that bird in a safe environment. Rescue facilities generally do not keep birds unless they also operate a lifetime sanctuary and/or breeding facility.


Loosely speaking, a sanctuary is a retirement home for birds. A real sanctuary has a business plan whereas the facility is never in danger of being dissolved. This means the facility, and often funding for that facility, are passed from one generation to the next, and the birds that have been taken in, remain there safely under the new management. If this is not the case, most often the facility has been “misnamed” and is actually a rescue facility. People wishing to place a beloved pet into a perpetual sanctuary situation should not be misled. Either the facility has the plan in place to remain open, or it is a temporary rescue facility. There is nothing wrong with such facilities as long as the owner that is placing



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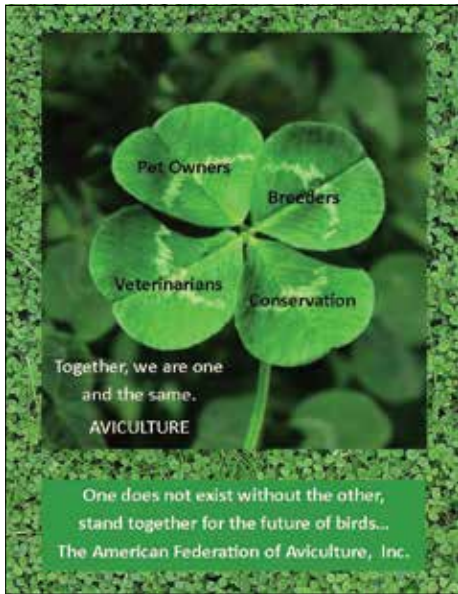
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the bird in the sanctuary is aware that it might not remain there throughout its life. Offering sanctuary or retirement to birds is a heroic act and held with the highest of honors and adoration. The task of operating a human nursing home or operating an avian sanctuary is a heartfelt, endless job. It takes a great deal of skill, love and knowledge to properly run a sanctuary for birds which often deals with avian geriatrics. Avian sanctuaries and retirement centers would still be considered a form of pet ownership due the nurturing way birds are treated and maintained.

The messages of the large animal rights organizations are meant to create conflict within an industry. Sometimes the sad TV commercials and sad songs playing in the background, combined with a little

propaganda make us all question what is right and wrong. Please take another look at aviculture with an open mind. Aviculture can be a positive force and do many good things for birds. This should be the goal of all breeders, pet owners, veterinarians, and people involved with conservation.

1. We need bird breeders or the future of many species, in captivity and in the wild, may be in jeopardy.

2. We need pet owners to provide proper care and to house birds hatched in captivity. Many species are dying out in the wild, and as habitats are reduced the future may not provide a “wild” place for birds to go.

3. We need our veterinarians. Any animal kept in captivity deserves to be healthy.

4. Conservation biology relies on captive breeding programs and advances in veterinary medicine. Thanks to dedicated individuals, captive breeding programs can continue and succeed, and they can further the goals of wild bird conservation too.

Ease your minds and clear your conscience. If you own a bird you are part of us as we are one. Breeders, pet owners, veterinarians and conservation are all a part of aviculture. See the clover. Understand that each segment is a part of aviculture and without one, aviculture will not succeed. We have many common goals and we must stand unified for the future of birds.

Avian DNA Sexing

By Michal Prochazka, MD

There are approximately 10,000 bird species in the world, and it has been estimated that about half of them are sexually monomorphic, meaning that one cannot distinguish a male from a female visually. Although monomorphic males and females of the same species can show behavioral differences, such visual judgment of gender is not reliable, and certainly cannot be used in sexually immature birds.

For several decades, a surgical method has been used for sex determination, involving endoscopic inspection of internal organs performed by a veterinarian on a bird under anesthesia. Clearly the surgical method has limitations, including the size of the birds, their maturity, the need for a vet visit, and potential risks that accompany use of anesthesia and invasive procedures.

The gender in birds is genetically determined: males have two Z sex chromosomes, while females have one Z and one W sex chromosome. During the last few decades, very sensitive techniques were developed for the detection of markers diagnostic for either sex chromosome in most avian species (see figure). Because of the speed, non-invasiveness, and low cost, DNA sexing has become a common

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tool in aviculture.

There are various reasons for why to sex birds. This includes the selection and setup of breeding pairs, which in addition to hobbyists and production farms can be also extremely helpful for rescue and preservation programs of endangered avian species. Furthermore, finding out the sex of a pet bird to choose a proper name and to bond with it can be another reason. Moreover, in various species the gender of the bird can cause behavioral changes especially after reaching sexual maturity, and knowing the animal's sex can help the owner(s) to be prepared for such transition. Importantly, there are also sex-specific health issues which bird owners need to be aware of, most notably egg binding. For example, knowing that your pet bird, who suddenly lost appetite and is sitting on the cage floor all fluffed up, is a male, would exclude a possibility of the life threatening egg binding and help in directing your attention to other possible causes.

As the DNA of the same bird is identical in all cells of its body, one can use any "live" material for the tests. Furthermore, there is practically no difference between a bird's DNA when it is a hatchling compared to when it becomes an adult. Therefore DNA sexing can be reliably performed at any age, in contrast to surgical sexing which necessarily relies on the sexual maturity of birds. Because of the ease of collection, the preferred samples

for DNA sexing are pulled feathers, or a dried drop of blood obtained from a clipped toenail. One can also use the eggshell from a newly hatched chick. In this case, the source of DNA is not the eggshell itself, but rather the membrane stuck to it on the inside, which contains small vessels with blood from the chick.

One question people often ask is, "Which method is more accurate, feathers or blood?". In principle, there should be no difference in the accuracy, and it is mainly just a question of customer's preference what material is easier to collect and submit. When protected from moisture, dried samples can be stored for long periods at room temperature, and used even after several months following collection. Furthermore, the stability of dried DNA makes it safe to ship samples by regular mail, thus making it convenient for the bird owner as well as the laboratory.

In conclusion, DNA sexing of birds is an easy, very accurate and affordable tool in conventional aviculture, as well as in programs designed for the conservation of endangered species. It saves time and expenses for breeders by allowing a more efficient way to set up suitable pairs. Furthermore, there are numerous examples where a DNA-sexed bird attained a higher market value compared to an untested one, and was also easier to sell.

PetDNA has been offering avian DNA sexing since 2004, and averages over 1000

samples annually. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the author by email.



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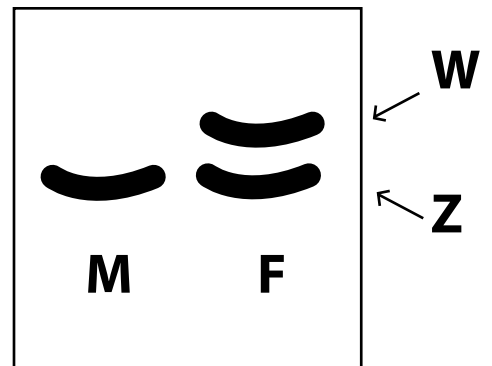


Figure. An image of DNA band patterns produced by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), which selectively amplifies the sex chromosome markers. Using agarose gel electrophoresis, only the Z-chromosome band is detected in the male (M), whereas the bands for the Z and W chromosomes are detected in the female (F). In this example, DNA samples from a Blue and Gold Macaw pair were tested.

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