Breeding the Peale's Parrot Finch

(Erythrura pealii)

by Carol Anne Calvin and Stash Buckley Magnolia, New Jersey

Recently we decided to import some Peale's Parrot Finches (Erythrura pealii), a bird of undeniable beauty and allure. We felt that with the uncertainty of the quarantine laws and the tightening of restrictions on the airlines, it was now or never.

We made an arrangement with a good friend, Sigie Meyer, of SE Bird and Supply, to bring in some of these birds, domestically bred in Europe. You can imagine our joy and exhilaration when the day came when the birds finally arrived in the United States and quarantine had begun.

The days passed without incident and we got a call from Sigie saying the birds were ready to be shipped. We fully expected that there would be a minimum of hens, and some of the birds would be quite old. You can imagine our surprise when it turned out that we had an equal number of cocks and hens, all appearing to be under two years of age.

These birds were set up in two holding cages for several weeks to allow the birds to acclimate. They settled down quickly, and we decided to pair them up and place them in breeding cages approximately 3 feet long by 2 feet high by 2 feet wide in our basement "tropical" birdroom, with a minimum temperature of 78°F and 70 to 80 percent humidity. They started nesting almost immediately, using hay and burlap strands as nesting materials, stuffing them into large, closed wicker baskets.

We have noted an interesting habit with the Peale's Parrot Finch. This is the only parrot finch species in which the birds feed each other. This seems to work both ways — the cock feeding the hen and the hen feeding the cock. Also, the cock Peale's Parrot Finch mating dance is almost identical to that of the cock Red-headed Parrot Finch — little more than a bobbing up
NUTRITION

L/M's answer to a balanced diet...Perfect™ pelleted bird foods.

Perfect™ is balanced in proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals and is fruit flavored in attractive colors and shapes. Perfect™ is fortified with Vita-Lac™ and Enviro-ade™. Vita-Lac™ is L/M’s blend of Lactobacillus acidophilus and yeast culture which aids in maintaining normal intestinal conditions. Enviro-ade™ is an environmentally friendly ingredient that helps reduce animal waste odors.

100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

L/M Animal Farms
Pleasant Plain, Ohio 45162
(513) 877-2131  1-800-332-5623

Maintenance and Breeder diets are packaged in 2 lb. and 20 lb. sizes.
**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE**

Dedicated to conservation of bird wildlife through encouragement of captive breeding programs, scientific research, and education of the general public.

**1993 OFFICERS**

LAURELLA DESBOROUGH, President (510) 372-5674
CHUCK SAFFELL, 1st Vice President (813) 722-0997
GARY CLIFTON, 2nd Vice President (602) 830-4920
DAVID SMITH, Chief Financial Officer (702) 482-3986
DIANA SKALSKY, Executive Secretary (407) 892-0643

**LEGAL COUNSEL VICE PRESIDENT • LEGISLATIVE**

AFA office, P.O. Box 56218, Phoenix, AZ 85079-6218 / (602) 484-0931 / FAX (602) 484-0109

**MEMBER NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

American Cockatiel Society, Inc. • Avicultural Society of America
Gold Triangle Parrot Club, Canada • International Aviculturist Society
Society of Parrot Breeders and Exhibitors • World Parrot Trust

---

### Northeastern Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **MARYLAND**
  - **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**
  - **VERMONT**
  - **RHODE ISLAND**

### Mid-Atlantic Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Pennsylvania**
  - **New York**
  - **New Jersey**

### Southeastern Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Southeastern Region**

### Southern Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Pittsburgh**
  - **Kentucky**
  - **Mississippi**
  - **North Carolina**
  - **Puerto Rico**

### Middle Atlantic Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Ohio**
  - **Ohio**
  - **Pennsylvania**

### Midwest Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Michigan**
  - **Indiana**
  - **North Dakota**

### Midwest Central Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Illinois**
  - **Indiana**
  - **Iowa**

### North Central Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Iowa**
  - **Minnesota**
  - **Missouri**

### Western Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Wisconsin**
  - **Missouri**
  - **Kansas**

### Western Central Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **South Dakota**
  - **Nebraska**
  - **Colorado**

### Northwestern Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Washington**
  - **Oregon**
  - **Alaska**

### Pacific Region

- **State coordinator:**
  - **Washington**
  - **California**
  - **Hawaii**

---

**MEMBER CLUBS**

- **Pennsylvania**
  - State coordinator: Debra Foot (814) 987-2866
  - Anthracite Bird Club
  - Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society

- **Virginia**
  - State coordinator: Dawn Kopf (703) 594-3841
  - Blue Ridge Caged Bird Society

- **West Virginia**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Tri-State Bird Club & Foundation

- **Southeastern Region**
  - State coordinator: Rick Jordan, regional vice pres. (305) 258-2373
  - Southern Exotics Bird Club
  - Greater Florida Bird Breeders Association

- **Florida (North)**
  - State coordinator: Mary Gip (407) 892-1837
  - American Cockatiel Club
  - Central Florida Bird Breeders Association

- **Florida (South)**
  - State coordinator: Kathleen Harring (305) 259-2377
  - Central Florida Cage Bird Club

- **Mid-Atlantic Region**
  - State coordinator: Bob Smith (517) 764-5170
  - Greater Detroit Bird Club

- **Southern Region**
  - State coordinator: Bob Smith (517) 764-5170
  - Aiken Bird Club

- **Mid-Western Region**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Illinois State Exotics Club

- **Southwestern Region**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Southern Exotics Bird Club

- **North Central Region**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Illinois State Exotics Club

- **Western Region**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Western Exotics Bird Club

- **Western Central Region**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Western Exotics Bird Club

- **Northwestern Region**
  - State coordinator: * 
  - Northwestern Exotics Bird Club

---

6 August / September 1993
and down motion. Also worthy of note is the variability of the extent of the beautiful turquoise blue on the throat and chest of the cock.

Although the Peale’s Parrot Finches loved eggfood and mealworms (as well as everything else they were offered), they seemed reluctant to incubate their eggs, so many eggs were fostered to Society Finches. Average clutch size was four, with 50 percent fertility rate.

The first egg to hatch was one successfully incubated by the parents, hatching on November 15, 1991, after approximately 14 days of incubation. Only the one egg hatched in this clutch of four. After approximately two weeks, during which time the pair was supplied with eggfood and mealworms, the cock appeared bored with his chick and feeding chores, and was obviously ready to recycle.

Fearing abandonment, we pulled the chick and put him under a pair of Societies who were raising a Spectacled Mannikin of about the same age. Unfortunately, they did not accept him. So, reluctantly, we pulled the baby Peale’s Parrot Finch, clipped a young Society’s wings for company, and placed both in our Animal Intensive Care Unit for hand-feeding.

The baby Peale’s was fed approximately every hour and a half from 6:30 a.m. until 11:30 p.m. with Roudybush Handfeeding Formula No. 3.

The baby’s was self-feeding by mid-December, being weaned by the use of spray millet and canary/finch mix scattered on the incubator floor. The young Society was instrumental in teaching the Peale’s to eat seed. Subsequent clutches were fostered to Societies with few problems, but, surprisingly enough, although baby Peale’s have blue faces, this first chick was the only one we’ve encountered so far with red feathers above the beak. Apparently there is great variation in plumage coloration in juvenile Peale’s.

Although these birds have come in before (we had four birds brought in previously by Sigie Meyer — only one of which we believed to have been a hen), successful breeding seems to have eluded this country. We would hope to hear of other serious breeders bringing in these birds to ensure a large enough gene pool to establish a viable population of this beautiful and personable finch.