

How to Breed Indian Ring-necked Parakeets

by Rodney P. Silva, Sonora, CA

How do I breed Indian Ring-necked Parakeets? Or should I say, "What's the best way to breed Ring-necked Parakeets? Maybe the first question should be, "Do I have a male and a female?"

Male Ringnecks are the birds with the black and pinkish-red ring of feathers around the neck. Females may have a lightly colored ring. Young birds will have the same ring as the females. Most males will develop this colored ring of feathers at two to three years of age, but do not be surprised if it takes up to four years. Females are able to produce eggs at about two years of age and should be paired with an older male. The reason for this is that if the female comes into season before the male, and the male has no idea what to do, the female may retaliate by killing the male. With Ring-necks, females definitely rule the roost.

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I find placing juvenile birds where they can watch the older birds breed and court helps ensure the breeding success of the juvenile birds when they reach breeding age.

Cages with adequate flight space are a necessity. I do not believe in breeding Ringnecks in small cages. My best results have been in flight cages 10 to 16 ft. in length, 2 to 4 ft. wide and

6 to 8 ft. tall. Sixteen gauge, $\frac{1}{2}$ x 1 inch wire is used to construct the flights. You can use thinner wire and it will keep your birds in, but you may not keep the wild critters out.

The side walls are wire on the front half and solid sheet metal on the back half to give the birds privacy around their nest box. The half that is open where the birds are exposed to the neighbor birds is double wired to keep them from biting each other's toes. Black plastic drip line, commonly used in the garden, is placed above the far end of the flight cage as a mister system. Misting heads are pushed into the drip line above each cage. They are positioned in such a way that the birds can get in or out of the water and they are not misting the food dishes. When installing a misting system, be sure that you can reach the misting heads as they can become clogged periodically.

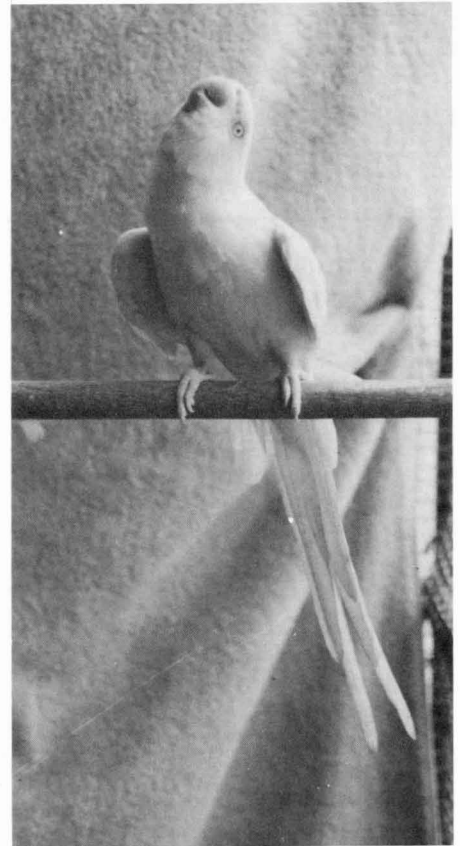
Photos by Janet Nichols



This fabulous courtship dance is often seen in various Psittacula species.



The hen bows with her wings outspread...



Then rears back her head with eyes blazing.

The floors of the flights are concrete or dirt. When you have dirt floors you will always have a problem with mice. You can keep them under control by trapping them and closing all the open holes and you usually will not have too big of a problem. The benefit of a dirt floor is that the birds get to dig in the dirt and can get vitamins and minerals from the ground. They can also eat the grass and seeds that sprout. The down side of this is that the birds can potentially be exposed to a wide variety of fungus and bacteria even if the cage is kept clean.

Suspended cages are great for ease of cleaning and sanitation. You just have to feed a good diet to make up for any lost vitamins and minerals.

I use nest boxes made out of 1/2 inch plywood. The boxes vary in size from 24 to 36 inches tall and 8 to 10 inches square. The nest hole is 3 inches in diameter and is located approximately 4 inches down from the top of the nest box.

The perch on the nest box is a piece of 2 x 4 approximately 8 inches long placed 4 inches below the hole.

Inspection holes are placed about a foot from the bottom of the box. If there are eggs or chicks in the box be sure you double check to make sure you closed the inspection hole or you could have disastrous results in the form of cold eggs, dead chicks or escaped birds.


I place a 3 inch wide wire ladder on the inside of the box which extends from the entrance hole to the bottom of the box. The ladder is made of the same 16 gauge wire that I use on the flight cage walls.

The nest box bedding is plain pine shavings mixed with a sprinkle of Sevin insecticide [5% malathion] dust to help control parasites. Nest boxes are thoroughly cleaned and the nesting material is changed once a year just before breeding season which is generally around the end of February.

Ringnecks will eat just about anything when it comes to food, which makes it easy to provide them with a balanced diet. I feed a dry food mixture consisting of equal parts corn, wheat, oats, parakeet mix, sunflower, safflower, pigeon pellets, and dry dog food. The fruit and vegetable mixture I

feed contains everything under the sun you can think of that is in season. I make sure the birds always have the dry food mix available and I give the fruit and vegetable mix twice per week. One handful of fruit and vegetable mix is given to each pair of birds.

Now a few words on infertility. In the quest to breed the perfect bird, someone bred an African Ringneck to an Alexandrine Ringneck to get a big bird. Then the offspring was bred to an

Indian Ringneck to get some color in the bird. The result of this type of breeding is that some birds do not know how or when to nest. So if you are getting a lot of infertile eggs, try pairing a female bird which nests late in the season with the male you think may be infertile. What could be happening is that the female is trying to go to nest before the male is ready to work. If this is not possible, try putting up your nest boxes two to three weeks later than you normally would. 



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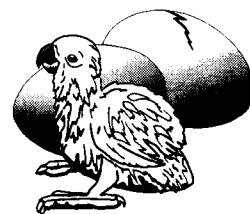
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