

Breeding the Celebes Hanging Parrot

(*Loriculus stigmatus*)

by Larry R. and Kathy L. Weish
Hebron, Illinois

On September 17, 1990, we received four pairs of Celebes Hanging Parrots from our friend David Coenraad, then owner of Three Star Enterprises of Pico Rivera, California. On February 5, 1991, and on September 21, 1991, we were able to acquire one more Celebes hen and two more cocks from David. All the birds were very immature, only showing the slightest hint of red on the heads of the males.

These five pairs and the one extra cock were set up in a flight five feet long, three feet deep by five feet high. We left them in this flight to mature and build up to top breeding shape. The birds lived in this flight longer than we had planned. We were building a new aviary and didn't want to set them up to breed until they could be moved into the new aviary.

During their stay in the flight, we fed them a diet that Kathy and I had devised according to everything we found written on the genus *Loriculus*.

The flight was fed a dry nectar that

consisted of sugars, vitamins, minerals, protein and amino acids. This was fed in a ten ounce size stainless steel cup hung on the side of the flight. A ten ounce size stainless steel cup was filled with clean fresh tap water and hung next to the one with the dry nectar. This allows the birds to get their tongue wet and stick it in the dry nectar, and it sticks to the tongue. In this manner they can make nectar for themselves. Always make liquid nectar and have it available at all times until they start eating the dry real well, then start cutting back on the liquid until you don't need it any more.

We also fed them fresh fruit, vegetables and pasta in a separate cup. One of their favorite fruits is grapes, which they will hold in one claw and eat the inside until it's gone. They also love corn on the cob or cut off.

Keep some spray millet in the cage at all times. They seem to like eating it. Celebes Hanging Parrots will usually eat small mealworms and ant eggs if



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Photo by L.R. Weisz



Picture showing the three feed cups. The cup mounting rings were made from scrap. They swing out for cleaning and servicing.

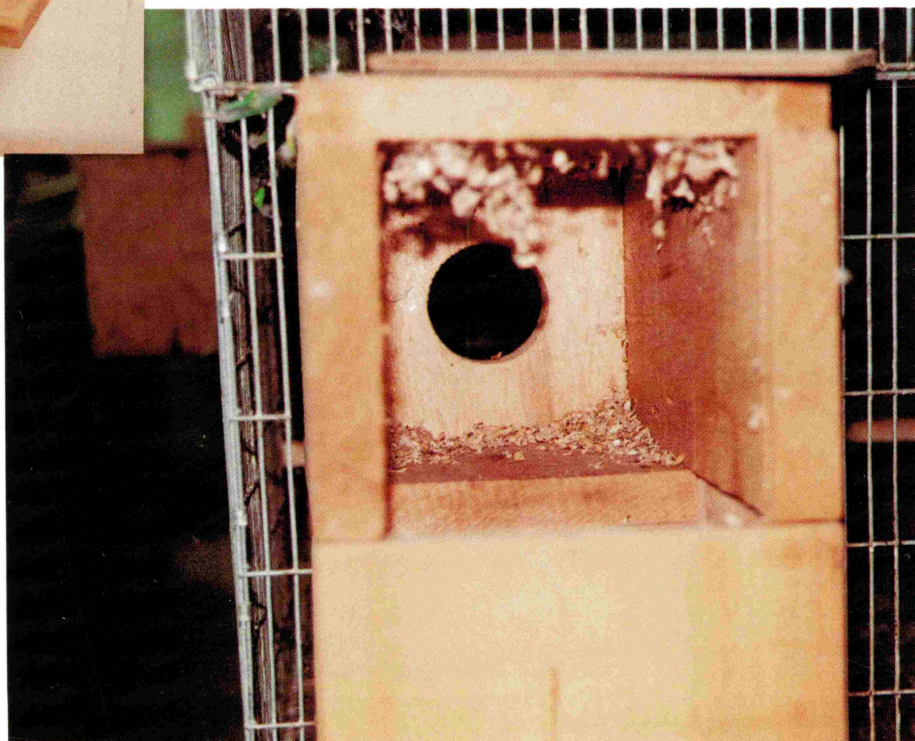


Photo shows the depth of the flights. Note typical hanging position of the hen on the left. The fledged baby is third from the right. Notice the horn colored beak.



A photograph of our reversed boot nest box. The nest area is very dark and gives a sense of security, one of the reasons for our success.

A view looking from the inspection hole. What you see is the horizontal tube leading to the vertical nest site cavity.



you offer them. One thing that we found, they must not be fed parakeet seed. Instead, use finch and other soft seeds. Never keep Hanging Parrots on seed only diets. In the wild they eat bugs, unripe seed in milk stage, fruits, vegetables and flower buds both closed and open.

In late August 1991, we started to move all the birds into our new aviary and set them up to breed. The new aviary has fluorescent full spectrum model T-10 Vita-Lites. The Vita-Lites

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are hooked to a lighting computer. The lighting computer turns on two fifty watt incandescent lights slowly to simulate the rising sun. It then turns on the fluorescent lights and turns off the incandescent lights. At night the lighting computer reverses the operation to simulate sunset. At the time the Celebes Hanging Parrots went to nest, the lights were on from 5:30 in the morning until 10:30 at night.

The new aviary also has a stereo system that plays thunderstorms, a babbling brook, ocean waves and frog tapes. The tapes add to the pleasantness of the environment in the building. There are also two babbling brook water fountains running all the time to add more pleasant sounds and for humidity. We have large humidifiers running all the time to raise the level of humidity in the breeding building.

We decided to set the hanging parrots up in groups of three pairs to a cage. The cages are six feet long, 24 inches high and 24 inches wide. Each cage has a feed cup holder at each end that accommodates three stainless steel ten ounce cups. These we fill with dry nectar, plain tap water and fruit with vegetable mix. The finch seed is in a stainless steel cup set on the floor in the middle of the cage to keep stray seed in. Perches are mounted at each end of the cage for breeding and courting.

Courting is very interesting to watch. The male will let his wings droop low so that his red back shows and he also makes his tail fan out. He then will puff out his red throat patch while running along the perch and sings to the hen in hopes of attracting his future mate. He will try to feed the hen a couple of times before attempting to mate with her.

Each cage has three nest boxes spread out to allow some territory for each pair. We fill all nest boxes with peat moss and clean pine shavings. The birds really seem to love this mixture. They chew the mixture into a fine powder and form a small depression in it, the perfect place to lay their little eggs. The box design is somewhat different. One cage uses commercial nest boxes called number three that are side opening budgie boxes. The three boxes measure eight inches high x eight inches long x eight inches wide. The reverse boots are 18 inches high, 15 inches long with an

entrance tube seven inches long and the nest chamber is ten inches down and six inches square. At present, we have about six pairs of different hanging parrots nesting and they seem to prefer the reverse boot, but will nest in the number three commercial boxes. The first pair to nest chose a number three nest box. That is probably the easiest one to work with for most people. These boxes are readily available in most pet shops and from suppliers.

Our first Celebes baby was hatched on October 31, 1992. By November 10, 1992, the eyes had opened and baby was doing well. On November 20, we noticed pin feathers starting to show on wing tips. Since the parents were feeding the baby well and we planned on using all the babies for breeding, we felt the parents should care for all babies. On December 12, 1992, the baby was sitting in the door of the nest box looking out. December 13 was the big day. We saw that the baby was hanging from the top cage wire. Young Celebes Hanging Parrots are very active birds and we often see the baby going in and out of empty nest boxes.

At the time we wrote this article, two more Celebes hens were incubating eggs, one on four eggs and one on three eggs. We wish all Celebes Hanging Parrot breeders would have full nests in 1993 and thus help us establish these birds in aviculture. It is estimated that fewer than two hundred Celebes Hanging Parrots exist in captivity in the United States.

Since there are not many of these birds in captivity, the few that are should be bred to keep this species from disappearing. We would like to start a consortium for Celebes Hanging Parrots. Persons holding Celebes Parrots and interested in this project should contact us at About Birds, P. O. Box 387, Hebron, IL 60034-0387, phone (815)648-4078. The future of this species in captivity depends on keeping as large a genetic diversity as possible. We are interested in obtaining odd hens or cocks that people are holding and not planning to breed. We need their genetics to obtain more unrelated pairs for breeding.

Editor's Note: Any persons knowing of a successful breeding of the Celebes Hanging Parrot prior to the dates stated in this article, please notify Dale R. Thompson, Chairman, Avy Awards Committee, through the AFA Home Office in Phoenix, Arizona. ●