



## **FROM MATT'S PERCH**

**By Matthew Russell**

As we lose more and more species to poor avicultural practices, you hear more and more that species are getting harder to breed because they are becoming too inbred. For a long time I believed this to be so, but this year I changed the way I do things. I thought I would research how and why things breed and at what time of the year and what would be going on in their wild environment, and then try and replicate this in the aviary. I gave it a go with three species: Java Finches, Cutthroat Finches and Californian Quail. Here is a brief rundown on how I got the birds to breed.

### **Javas and Cutthroats**

As both are box nesters I treated them the same. I looked at how they nest in the wild and discovered that they are colony nesters. In the wild Cutthroats will take over disused sites in large communal weaver nests and breed along side the weavers. Therefore, I built a imitation weaver nest. What I did was divide a large parrot nesting box in to 20 small compartments with a hole to the outside of each chamber, much the same as a stack of nest boxes. This has worked immensely well. I so far have increased my Javas by 300% and the Cutthroats by about 75%, but as I write more are coming out each day.

### **Californian Quail**

I discovered that these quail nest when the tall grass starts to fall and lay on the ground. So when I saw they were starting to lay, I covered half the aviary floor in about 200mm of green grass, and as it got trampled I would go in about twice a week and turn it over until I saw that the female was building and laying. Then I would turn the grass around her over to create a visual barrier for her. This worked well with a 350% increase in my flock.

When talking to some of the older members I have often been told that things have changed in the bird-world. People have become more circumspect and you often don't know of other breeders in your neighborhood. Also, other bird people don't just drop in for a chat any more. I put to you that the birds are not getting harder to breed but the skills to breed certain birds are being lost through lack of communication between breeders.

**My challenge to you is:** this week please send in (by e-mail direct to me, or by post to the Society's North Adelaide Post Box) some of the ways in which you have achieved good breeding results with particular species. Please remain anonymous if you wish. We can then share this information through the magazine and try and recover some numbers next breeding season.

You can e-mail me at: [tara\\_matt@hotmail.com](mailto:tara_matt@hotmail.com).

Cheers & Happy New Year,

*Matt*