

T h e Pheasant Pen

WASHINGTON ORNAMENTAL & GAME BIRD BREEDERS



Larry Clark
15016 269th Ave SE
Issaquah, Wa 98027

www.wogbb.com

May 2013

Washington Ornamental and Game Bird Breeders

Our mission and goals

1. To promote the welfare and encourage the breeding of pheasants, waterfowl, and other species of fowl, quail, partridge, and related birds to the generally accepted representative standards and pure of the wild species.
2. To share breeding and propagation methods.
3. To introduce new species of birds into private and public aviaries; to improve present captive breeding stock and to catalog present captive bird species and aviculture in the Pacific Northwest.
4. To interest more individuals and groups in aviculture.
5. To promote programs and other goals as may be deemed to be in the best interest of Pacific Northwest Aviculture.

Web site: www.wogbb.com

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• Westley Batterson	• Edna Goldstone
• JoAnne Elbert	• Phil and Bobby Krueger
• Jim Harvey	• Bruce Morgan
• Joe & Marge Longo	

WOGBB President's message

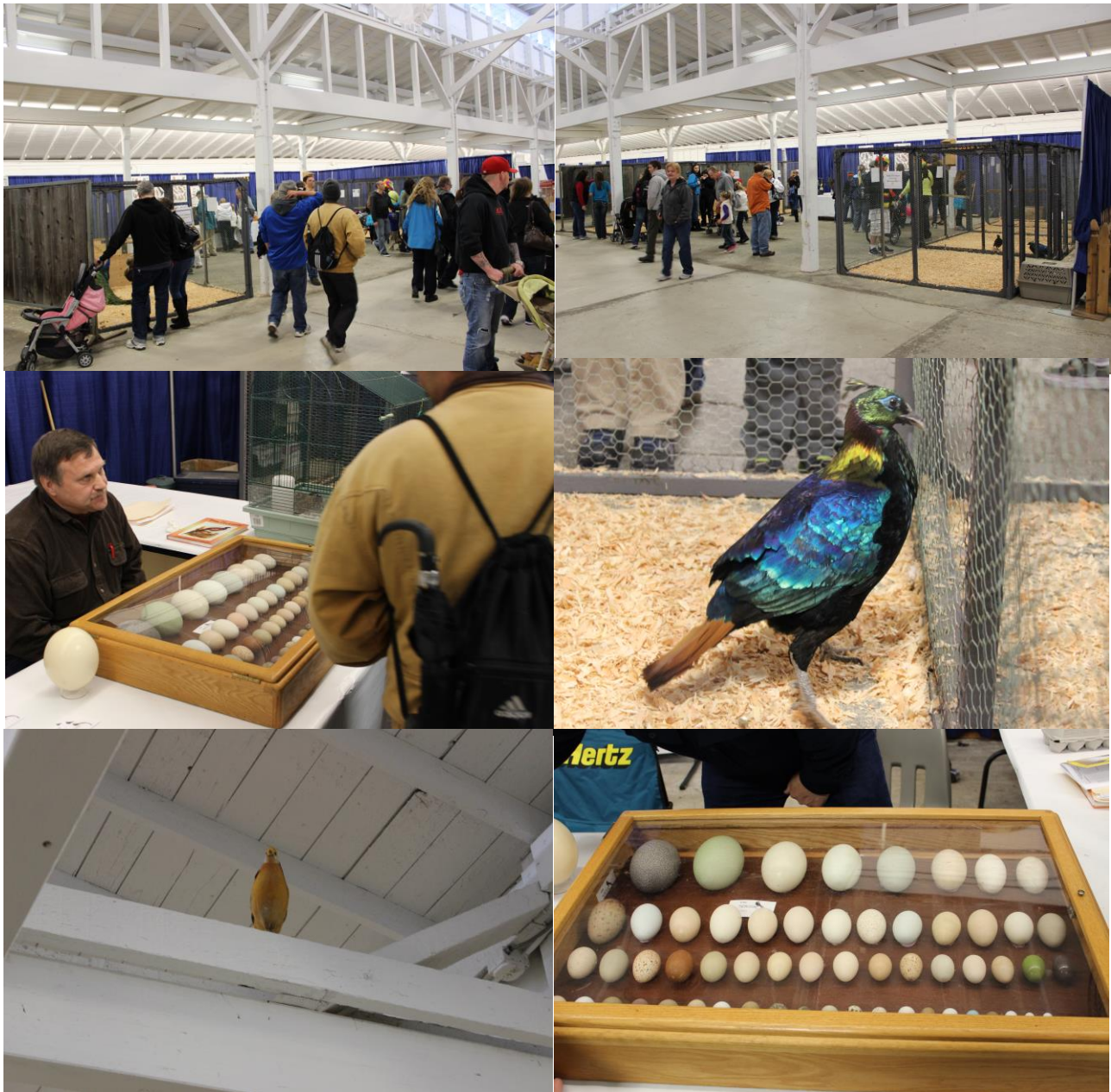
We had a great time at the Puyallup Spring Fair again this year. The weather started out a little cold but warmed up by Sunday. We entertained many visitors from very young to the old. We heard lots of oohs and ahh's – it still astonishes me how little people know about Pheasants but this is why we do this every year. We were asked the usual questions from where Pheasants come from to what size the egg is for a llama. (Yes, this is not a misprint) Craig Holmes egg display was another hit and thanks to Craig for his hard work at setting up the pens.

We had one small incident, I let my Yellow Golden out for a few hours of freedom, (See picture) but after 3 hours out he came down close enough for me to net him to the applause of the fair visitors in the barn at the time.

This month meeting will be a Valley Nursery in Poulsbo; I hope to see a good turn out from our members on the west side of Puget Sound.

President
Larry Clark

Pictures from the Fair:



Treasurer's Report

Checking

Balance	4/1/13	\$2896.59
Deposits for dues		\$ 25.00
Transfer to savings		\$<150.00>
Checks Written (1)		\$ 0.00
Balance	4/30/13	\$2771.59

Savings

Balance	4/1/13	\$1300.35
Transfer from Checking		\$ 150.00
Interest		\$.07
Balance	4/30/13	\$1450.42

WOGBB Meeting minutes

No Minutes for April

CLASSIFIED

For sale or Trade

Day Old Chick Shipping Boxes
100 chick boxes, \$3.00 each, I have 13 Boxes

Pheasant, Chukar, Quail foam egg holder
30 Eggs with Holes
\$1.00 for shipping

Foam and Clear Plastic Egg Cartons for Quail & Button Quail
\$1.00 each for shipping

Jim Morelli
509-476-2831

May Meeting

Sunday, May 19th 2:00 pm

Pot luck lunch

Valley Nursery Inc.

20882 Bond Rd. NE.

Poulsbo, WA. 98370

PHONE: (360) 779-3806

Just NE of the intersection of Highway 305 and Bond Rd NE

Directions:

From Tacoma take WA-16 North approx. 26 mi

Continue on thru Bremerton onto WA-3 North 17 mi

Take Washington 305 exit toward Poulsbo/Bainbridge Island 0.4 mi

Turn right onto wa-305 South 0.6 mi

Take the 2nd left onto Bond Rd NE - Valley Nursery on Right

CLASSIFIED (Cont)

For Sale, Trade or a New Members Dues

2012 Sliver Pheasants, 3 Males

2012 Yellow (Gigi) Pheasants, 3 Males & 4 Females

Larry Clark

425-392-2425

Care of feathers

By Chris Maynard

We raise birds with some of the most colorful and marvelously patterned feathers in the world. Most breeders first start with birds in part because they enjoy the beauty that feathers bestow on their birds. Feathers also impress our friends and remind us of our appreciation of the birds we raise.

Birds lose a lot of pretty feathers every year. Picking up each one to save is close to impossible. Cages are cleaned and the dirty feathers tossed. Saving feathers is a lot of work but begins with keeping the birds' plumage healthy. Then, knowing how to take care of feathers once they are molted provides plumes in good shape to enjoy, use as crafts, give away, and sell. A breeder who understands how feathers grow and molt can use that knowledge to care for feathers attached and unattached to their birds.

Feather Biology

Feathers wear out over time so birds replace them pretty much yearly. Body warmth and flight require that not all feathers are lost at once, but shed systematically over several months. For instance, bird wings only lose a matched pair of feathers at a time from each wing from the inside out so the bird can keep a balanced flight. Then, when those feathers are about half grown, the next pair is shed. Most birds lose their flight feathers first, followed by body, and then tail feathers. Waterfowl, an exception, usually shed all their flight feathers at once so they cannot fly for about a month.

In the wild, males need their feathers in top shape during breeding season to successfully attract discriminating females. In cages, it's a little different as not much choice is usually involved in mate selection. Nevertheless, in the winter just before breeding times both the captive female and males feathers are close to the peak of beauty and perfection.

After breeding, the male begins to lose feathers in the molt. After laying, the female begins to lose hers too, about a month behind the male. Then the birds begin the intensive process of replacing their plumage. Growing new feathers after molting demands a lot body reserve owing to the fact that feathers are 4-12% of a bird's body weight.

Each feather is a fantastic marvel of natural engineering that begins during its formation in the skin. A feather starts as a little nubbin or follicle under the bird's skin and is supplied with nourishment by one artery and one vein. It emerges as a pin feather covered by a sheath which protects the folded and curled feather as it grows. This is the time when colors and patterns are created beginning at the tip and filling in down the shaft as the feather grows. A growing feather is a package of complex foldings into a thin growing cylinder. The process ends with a fully formed feather complete with patterns and colors.

Growing feathers need protection and good nutrition. They are full of blood and tender. Poor nutrition, stress, disease, and chemical exposure damage growing feathers. Commercial fowl growers and ornithologist examine plumage and individual feathers to find out the health histories of birds. One common sign of stress in captive birds is a line across the middle of the tail feather, often noticed in parrots and pheasants.

After the plume fully develops, the blood supply shuts off and the structure is complete and fully functional but dead. Only one feather grows in each follicle. If a feather gets plucked, and the follicle

is empty, it regrows. Otherwise, a bird is stuck with all its feathers, even broken ones, until the bird molts the following year. When it does molt, the length and quality of daylight is mostly what determines the exact time the feathers drop.

Care of birds for healthy feathers

Since the most defining feature of a bird is its feathers, caring for the feathers is caring for the bird.

- ☐ Nutrition. Feathers are made of keratins which are very strong stranded proteins. A bird off its feed for even a day can get stress bars across its developing feathers. Previously unseen nutritional problems may appear during this time. So pay special attention and provide a balanced, protein-rich feed during feather growth.
- ☐ Mites and lice chew holes in mature feather vanes and make a mess of the downier parts closer to the bird's body. An occasional dusting of flea powder on the birds helps keep these creatures under control on the birds. Also, treating the ground in the cages with something like diatomaceous earth ensures better control of these creatures.
- ☐ Stress harms feathers the most during the feather growth period. These practices keep feathers in good shape throughout the year:
 - o Give birds adequate space.
 - o Remove incompatible birds
 - o Provide privacy and escape cover
 - o Reduce extreme temperatures
 - o Keep at least part of the cages dry
 - o Avoid handling the birds as much as possible, especially during feather regrowth.
- ☐ Disease latent in a bird often appears for the first time during feather growth when its body experiences extra demands. Treat the disease and get further diagnosis if needed.

Mostly, birds take care of their own feathers through preening. This is nice of them for if we had to do it, we would spend hours every day per bird and not do as good a job. But once a bird sheds its feathers during the molt, they forget them.

Collection and care of dropped feathers

Most breeders love feathers but only make time to pick up a few choice ones each year. Wouldn't it be great if someone were to invent a handheld machine than vacuums feathers from the cages, cleans and dries them, then sorts them into neat little packages? Until then, if we decide to collect dropped feathers, take the following steps and you will find yourself with a nice bunch of quality feathers with a little investment of time.

- ☐ Keep cages dry, or rather, not muddy.
- ☐ Gather feathers regularly; don't let birds trampled on them. If left on the ground, feathers are eventually eaten by bugs.
- ☐ Tack an 8-1/2 x 11 envelope to each species' cage door throughout the molt. Place you're picked up feathers there each day as you feed and check on the birds.
- ☐ Freeze the feathers at around 0-10 degrees F. for at least 48 hours to kill parasites. Take them out for a day and remaining parasite eggs will hatch; then put them back in the freezer for another day.
- ☐ Clean the feathers to get rid of dust and dirt. Soak them in warm water to loosen dried dirt. Then add a little soap and gently knead and agitate them. For large amounts of feathers, put them in a loose-weave cotton bag, securely tie off the top, and place them in a washing machine with some soap on gentle cycle. Then just throw the bag in the dryer. Otherwise, spread the feathers on a

towel to dry or use a hair dryer on a low heat setting, holding the shaft so the feather does not blow away.

- Store feathers in a clean dark place. If you take the above steps and seal the feathers in plastic bags or containers, the feathers can last forever. If feathers are stored or displayed without sealing, just place them in the freezer for 48 hours yearly or biyearly. Another option is using chemicals. Moth balls give off a smell but are ok as long as the feathers are in a container where the gasses won't escape. Flea powder like carbaryl, diatomaceous earth, or pyrethrums dusted over the feathers kills small pests and keeps others out. However it makes the feathers rather grey and dusty until washed or blown off.
- Place dead birds immediately in the freezer. Keep feathers in place by first placing the bird headfirst into a nylon stocking. The feathers keep the body from getting freezer burn for a while but for long storage, a closed plastic bag keeps the bird from drying out.

Feathers are the most complex and beautiful covering of any animal. Waterfowl and especially pheasants and peacocks grow the world's most impressive feathers. Having feathers to display, give away, and sell adds to our appreciation of our birds and attracts others to this endeavor called 'bird breeding'.

Editors Note: Chris Maynard has stunning photographs of feathers from all over the world are seen on his website: www.featherfolio.com.

