

Preparing Birds for the Zone Selection

1- Select the birds you wish to show at least 7 to 8 weeks prior to your club selection..

a) **Check for lice and mites by.....**

Carefully spread the flights of each of the selected birds & check them for feather mites & lice by holding them up to the sun or a strong light, if they are present you will clearly see them along the barbs of the feathers. If mites and lice are present.. Place the selected birds in wire cage/cages & spray them all with **Coopex Residual Insecticide or Fido**, at the dose rate recommended by the manufacturer on the sachet or container. Or use **Ivermec** ...using the correct dosage...**Ivermec** also treats birds for internal worms.

2. **Show Spraying....**

Leave the cage, preferably in the sunlight, until the birds are completely dry. You may have to keep a close eye on any Red Eyed varieties, because I have found in the past that sometimes if the birds are not accustomed to direct sunlight, it can have an adverse effect on them & they may begin to scratch at their eyes, causing all sorts of future problems for showing.

I believe that there is nothing like plenty of water sprays to get the birds into condition, & for this reason I spray my birds at least once a day, sometimes twice if I feel they need it. Leaving them in the sun helps them to dry out in a short time, but always be cautious of the affect the sun may have (*Don't forget about the birds and leave them too long in the sun*)

If a particular bird is extremely dirty, or has stained feathers, it may be necessary to wash them with a mild shampoo, such as Pears Baby Shampoo, and then continue to spray with fresh cold water every day along with the others. I quite often use the tooth brush on the birds without using water. This is mainly on the head & neck area, always brushing with the grain of the feathers. Any new head & mask feathers can be coaxed to open at this time with the use of a tooth brush, personally I like to keep 3 different brushes available at all times. The first one is used on the vent area only, the other 2 are used where ever they are needed on the rest of the bird. One of them is a medium & the other one is a soft tooth brush. The soft one is usually the main one used towards the end of the preparation period.

I continue to spray my birds right up until the day before the show; I have been told that this doesn't allow the bird's time to get the sheen on their feathers that they require for showing, but the last 2/3 days, the sprays they get are more of a mist instead of a spray.

3. **Show Preparation....**

I have on 2 separate occasions, pulled tail feathers in preparation for shows & both times the birds have not grown a tail again, so for me, I no longer do this. Some people cut the main 2 feathers with scissors, causing the bird to drop them of their own accord, once again this is something for you to make up your own mind about. Any broken or damaged flight feathers must be seen to at the same time.

Care must be taken at this stage to avoid the confined birds from becoming overweight due to the lack of exercise. Plenty of millet sprays can help, as the birds spend a certain amount of time fossicking around the floor of the cage instead of just standing at the seed bowl.

The final job as far as preparation goes is to put a small amount of Baby Oil on the beak, cere & feet,(if you hold the bird close to your chest they will usually grab your shirt with their feet ,which makes this operation really simple) this is done with a cotton bud, & only a very small amount of oil is needed, take care not to put too much on the cotton bud. Be careful not to get oil on the bird's feathers. The birds tail is then dipped into a container of boiling water, for approx, 5 seconds, wipe the excess water off with a clean white towel in the direction of the feathers,:- towards the tip of the tail.

Before placing the bird in the cage, check that your show cage is in good condition & clean. Put approximately 3 to 5 clean millet sprays/millet heads (depending on the size of the sprays and type) in the show cage, I have at times seen excellent birds benched in disgusting cages & this certainly doesn't create a good impression on the Judge the first time he looks at the cage.

If you follow these few simple steps during your preparation period you will make life much easier for your team carers during the final days prior to the National being held, at the same time as giving your bird every chance of a Logie.

Thanks to Ian Hanington for his assistance with the assembly of these preparation tips

- 1. Please check for lice and mites**
- 2. Please have your birds wormed prior to pre-selection.**
- 3. Please advise show manager/preparers of any special dietary requirements you may have your birds on...eg vitamins grits soft foods etc...It is very important that the preparers know these things.**
- 4. Please advice if a certain bird has problems to do with caging in certain cage types or should be caged by itself etc...moody hen say for example. Or over bossy cock....**
- 5. PLEASE ADVISE SHOW MANAGER ...DAVE GANZER DAY OF ZONE-SELECTION IF YOUR BIRD IS SELECTED FOR SQBBA STATE TEAM.....**

**Neale R Love
SQBBA**

“REPEAT FOR THE SQBBA ZONE SELECTION THE FLOOR COVERING OF YOUR SHOW CAGES IS MILLET SPRAYS OR MILLET HEADS.”