

Utilizing Mixed Species Aviaries to Enhance Avian Management at Sedgwick County Zoo

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speaker notes in italics





Tropics

~1 acre free flight aviary

250 birds

52 species

Avian Management can be Enhanced with Mixed Species exhibits

- Species Management
- Breeding
- Welfare
- Guest Experience

Species Management

- **Flexibility**

- Exhibit space is generalized. Allows the resident bird population to change without needing major changes to exhibit design. Multiple habitat niches can be created in one space.
- Larger aviaries allow for multiple types of population sizes. Large flocks or multiple pairs can be housed in the same space. As a population's needs change, an institution can adjust their role more easily with a more flexible space.
- i.e. Breeding flocks, single-sexed flocks, breeding pairs, single-sexed pairs
- Flexibility can be further enhanced by utilizing off-exhibit holding and breeding spaces.
- Smaller exhibits within a larger space can highlight or isolate species and groups.

Highlight a conservation project within a larger themed exhibit



Breeding

- **Choosing the Right Species**
- A mixture of nesting styles is important if the space isn't large enough to support multiple species that utilize the same nesting spaces.
- Housing a flock may enhance breeding success for many species. However, identifying parental IDs in a large flock of small passerines can be difficult. What is more important for that program or that population? Genetic vs. demographic?

Welfare

- Increasing Opportunities for Natural Behaviors
 - Territorial behaviors
 - Competition for Resources
 - Flocks
 - Mate choice

Guest Experience

- More species = a more Dynamic exhibit.
- Mixing species can help to fill in empty niches. Upper-, Mid-, and Lower-canopy dwellers. Ground dwellers.
- Always something to see. Always something going on in the exhibit. Guests can have a different experience each time they enter the exhibit, without the bird population actually changing.
- Species diversity. Allows guests to learn about a wider array of taxa.
- “Wow Factor”



Strategies to Care for a Large Avian Population with a Small Keeper staff

Tropics Free-flight Species Check

Daily Counts

- ~~Red-capped Tanager~~
- Crested Wood Partridge •
- Edward's Pheasant •
- Mandarin Duck •
- Ringed Teal •
- NARD •
- Baikal Teal •
- Sunbittern •
- Peruvian Thick-knee •
- Bush Thick-knee •
- Bruce's •

Weekly

- Marble
- Black C
- Nicobar
- Tambour

** = Do Not Breed*

		Nicobar Pigeons		Observ
ID#	Sex	Right Band	Left Band	
11529	M •	Metal 375	Red 1	✓
11530	F •	Green 2	Metal 53	✓
12788	F	Metal SCZ 268	Blue 59/Yellow 15	✓
13078	M	Metal Purple 54	Metal 76	✓
13306	M	Metal 38	Yellow 17	✓
13720	M •	Metal Gold 49	Green 64	✓
13738	F •	White 8	Gold Metal 14	
14106	M	Lt. Blue 12	Metal 62	
	M	Yellow 35	Metal 44	
			Lt. Blue 614	

Streamlining Daily Observations



Habituation to Hand-feeding

- Considerations for Walk-throughs



Habituation to Trapping

- Opportunities to talk to guests about animal care
-



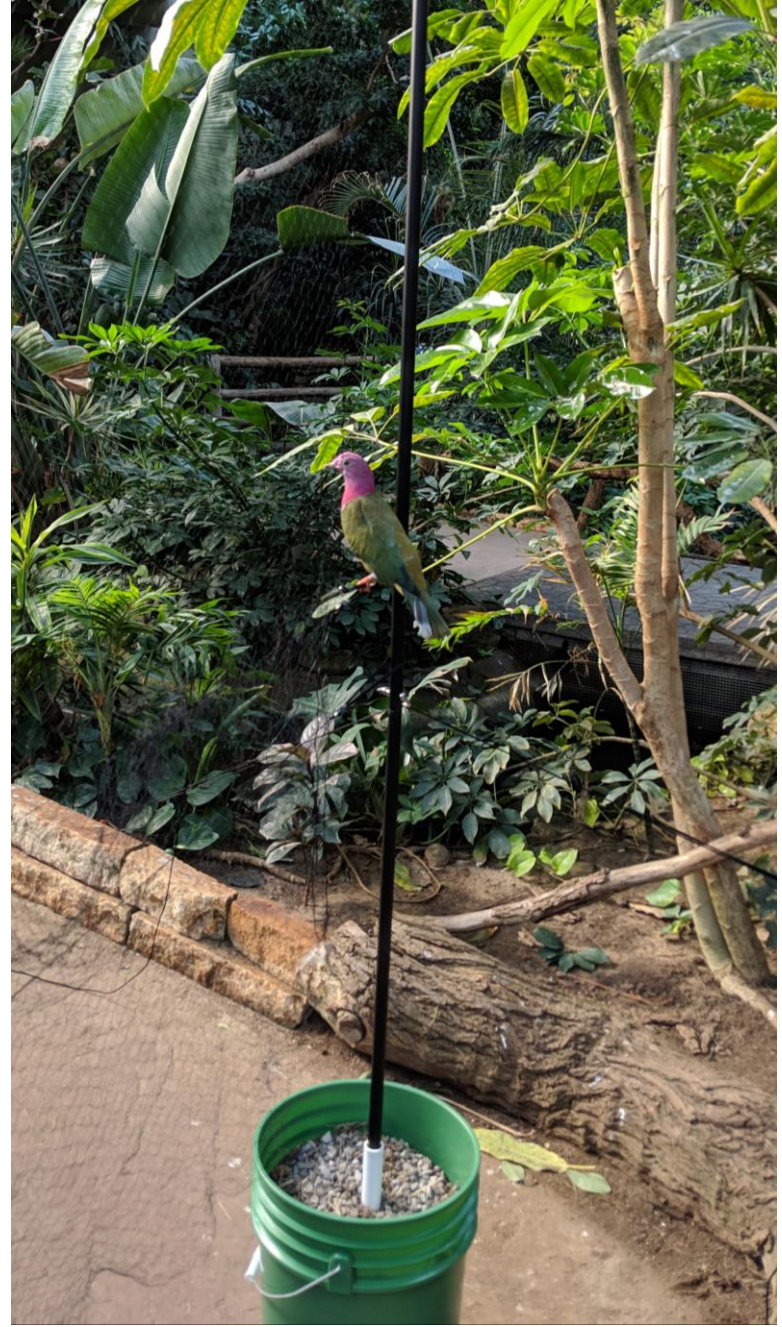
Trapping in non-public areas



Yearly Population Census

- Mist Nets are available in many sizes.
- Does require an open spot, paths are perfect but will limit guest access.
- Does require staff to be skilled in mist netting techniques.
- Census can be accomplished with traps and concentrated observations







Investing in Professional Development and Relationship Building
- Staff Buy-in is crucial to success

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