

## January - A Slow Time For Roller Breeders?

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What are the Roller Canary fanciers doing today? What are they up to? These are questions I ask myself when I notice their regular activities of the day have changed.

For the purpose of this discussion, let us give a name to one of these breeders, say, Alen.

I have not seen or heard from Alen for few weeks, and I am thinking about what he may be doing, and hope he is well. However, knowing what time of the year it is, I can make good guess.

I am sure he made all the timely adjustments in his bird room routine, getting ready for the immanent breeding season.

After all, the shows are finished, and the entries have been shipped back home.

Alen did well again, and he is pleased that his Rollers sang their best after being in the small show cages so long. In mid-January he put them into a nice-sized flight to strengthen them up with exercise, get some good food, and have some baths.

Two to three weeks later he put them into their individual breeding cages to further condition them, and to allow them some time to establish their territory. His hens are in their flight, and they look great. They are the jewels in his strain.

In getting ready for the breeding season, Alen has followed his usual methods. He has enriched their food by increasing their protein with small amounts of egg food, increased their carbohydrates with canary seed, increased their vitamin E intake with sunflower seed and increased their greens with sprouted rape.

He has stepped up the heat a notch, and has extended the length of the day to 12 hours. In a week or two, he will move this up to 13 hours. Now Alen is sitting back with very little to do, except to sit and wait for breeding season to start. Ah, is this true? No, it is not. Actually, he is very busy in the birdhouse, having lunch there, and being called to dinner.

Let us step inside and see what he is doing.

There, in the middle of the room, he sits with his favorite chair with his feet up, real comfortable. He has a scratch pad on his lap, a pencil behind his ear, and is reading a wizened up old notebook. The corners of the pages are somewhat curled and scruffy-looking; it has been well used. I note that there are screwed up papers on the floor.

As he reads, he looks intense for a moment, and then he curls his cheeks into a slight grin. He strokes his chin and murmurs quietly, "I've got to go though these pedigrees once more; I think I've got it right, but will need to double-check them."

He makes some more notes on the pad, re-reads them, then tears the page off, screws it up and throws it onto the floor. He again murmurs, "I am going to have to go back to my breeding charts, as there are a lot of lines I must consider, all of them look pretty good, but which ones?"

Alen is totally engrossed in making up his breeding plans for the upcoming season. He has done well again at the Song Contest in the past with Best Bird and Tour Specials. He knows he will do well again next year because he has established a very nice strain. Alen is a Master Breeder.