

and Lemon-breasted Canary, which are confined mainly to southern Mozambique, with just a slight overlap into adjacent territories.

As so few birds are illustrated and there are no descriptions of them, this book cannot really be used as a field guide or for other identification purposes, except in conjunction with Ian Sinclair's *Field Guide to the Birds of Southern Africa*, Roberts' *Birds of South Africa* or one of the other South African guides. It is obviously a very well researched, scholarly work, which so long as you do not want to use it for identification purposes, will provide you with most if not all of the other information that you are likely to want to know about the birds and ornithological history of southern Mozambique.

It is available from Natural History Book Service Ltd., 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel:01803-865913 (International: +44-1803-865913)/Fax:01803-865280 (International:+44-1803-865280/E-mail: nhbs@nhbs.co.uk.

Malcolm Ellis

Avian Husbandry Notes for the Pictorella Mannikin

Heteromunia pectoralis by David Pace.

Published by the Conservation Committee of the
Aviculture Federation of Australia.

This 44-page booklet (illustrated with black and white drawings) published in March 1997 is the second in a series of husbandry manuals (the first being on the Luzon Bleeding-Heart Pigeon *Gallicolumba l. luzonica*)

In the Introduction (pp 3-4), the author mentions that the manual has been developed in an attempt to provide the avicultural community with some guidelines to the keeping and successful breeding of the Pictorella Mannikin. It is also mentioned that 'the information contained is primary based upon literature published in popular avicultural texts and journals dating back to the 1950's.' This is not strictly true as three of the publications quoted from are in fact either ornithological reference books and/or general Australian (wild) bird books.

The author also mentions that certain information between different aviculturists is often conflicting, thus illustrating the point that there should never be only one way of achieving success in the breeding of birds, and because of this information contained in the manual should not be deemed as definitive.

As will be seen from the title of the booklet, the scientific name given to the Pictorella Mannikin differs from the one usually associated with this species in that '*Heteromunia*' is used rather than '*Lonchura*'. The former

is as per Sibley & Monroe (1990), *Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World* and Rowland (1996), in *Finches, Bowerbirds and Other Passerines of Australia*. However, the use of scientific names is not consistent with either publication as the Diamond Firetail is given the scientific name *Emblema guttata*, whereas Rowland suggests *Stagonopleura guttatum*.

Pages 7-11 of the booklet give details of the Pictorella in the wild. It appears that as with the Gouldian Finch (Rowland suggests *Erythrura* rather than the more often used *Chloebeia gouldiae*), the Pictorella is susceptible to air-sac mite infestations and it is estimated that 62% of the wild population is affected.

Pages 12-38 deal with captive husbandry, including health requirements, behaviour, diet, and breeding. Unfortunately, only references to captive care under Australian conditions are discussed. Indeed the author does not refer to writings outside of Australia at all. This, to my mind, limits the usefulness of the booklet to enthusiasts worldwide, as few (especially in the UK and Europe as a whole) are able to emulate the conditions used by Australian aviculturists.

A problem which can often occur when an author collates material from different sources, is that incorrect information can be continually passed on. The author (pp 8 and 21) states that the Pictorella is the only Australian finch which does not allopreen. This observation, which is incorrect, was taken from the *Finch Breeders Handbook*, Volume 1, The Australians, published in 1987 by the Queensland Finch Society. Both the Painted Firetail *Emblema pictum* and the Gouldian Finch are also non-contact birds.

The author mentions that he aims to supplement and revise the booklet in the future, perhaps he will rectify the above incorrect information and, what is more important to enthusiasts outside of Australia, also give details of captive-breeding procedure elsewhere in the world.

Anthony J. Mobbs

The booklet is available from the Conservation Committee of the Avicultural Federation of Australia, 37 Merrill Street, Mulgrave, Victoria 3170, Australia. Tel:(03) 9547.2415/Fax:(03) 9546.0877/ e-mail:martim@ozemail.com.au. It costs A\$11.00 in Australia and A\$13.00 by airmail abroad. Payment by overseas purchasers should be by bank draft or money order, or by Visa or Mastercard, making sure to include your card number, expiry date, name and signature.



Pace, David. 1997. "Avian Husbandry Notes For The Pictorella Mannikin Heteromunia Pectoralis." *The Avicultural magazine* 103(1), 41-42.

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