

Breeding of Twa-Twa In Captivity

By R. S. W. Deane

(EDITOR'S NOTE. The Large-billed Seed-finch or Twa-Twa, *Oryzoborus crassirostris*, is now one of the rarest birds in Trinidad, being widely, though illegally, sought for a cage-bird. Many are also now imported as cage-birds from South America. Mr. Deane, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Cage-bird Association, has followed up his previous successes in breeding birds in captivity by breeding a pair of Twa-Twa. It is believed that this is the first time the species has been bred in captivity. Since this article was written, the pair have reared several more clutches.)

DATE (1964)

- | | | |
|----------------|--|---------------|
| 22nd July | — First egg laid | |
| | | 1st. Clutch |
| 23rd July | — Second egg laid | |
| 4th August | — Both eggs hatched out. One taking 13 days and the second 12 days. | |
| 13th August | — Put on closed rings using old T. & T.C.B.A. rings for 1958, colour Blue. Size 3, Canary, Nos. 551 & 552. | |
| 16th August | — Young left the nest, but could not fly. | |
| 7th September | — Young observed eating seed. | |
| 9th September | — Observed cock Twa-Twa mating the hen. | |
| 12th September | — First egg laid | |
| | | 2nd Clutch |
| 13th September | — Second egg laid | |
| 24th September | — First young hatched | 2nd Clutch |
| 25th September | — Second young hatched | 12 days each. |
| 3rd October | — Put on closed rings, T. & T.C.B.A. (1958 Blue) Size 3 C. Nos. 553 & 554. | |
| 4th October | — First young left the nest. | |
| 5th October | — Second young left the nest. | |
| 20th October | — Young observed eating seed. | |
| 21st October | — First egg laid | |
| | | 3rd Clutch |
| 22nd October | — Second egg laid | |
| 2nd November | — First young hatched | 3rd Clutch |
| 3rd November | — Second young hatched | 12 days each. |

- 10th November — Put on closed rings. T. & T.C.B.A. (1958 Blue) Size 3. C. Nos. 555 & 556.
- 6th December — Young Twa-Twa observed eating for themselves today, but still being fed by their parents.
- 10th December — Cock Twa-Twa started moulting today so it is unlikely that they will lay again this year. Hen still in good condition. Both birds still feeding the young.

Note :— 52 days between the 1st and 2nd laying and 39 days between the 2nd and 3rd laying. The cock Twa-Twa fed occasionally up to 2 days before the hen lays again, then he took over completely. The young were removed from the parents 2 days before the next set hatched out.

Food :— Approx. 50% live food for the first couple of days. (Used young woodlice from Grey nest). They were also given fresh green razor grass seed, which they relished, and soaked Fincho-or-Canary mixture. The seeds must be soaked for 24 hrs. and the water changed as often as possible, seeds should be dried in a cloth before feeding. There should also be a feed pan with some dry seed, (Canary Mixture) in the feed rack. All seeds were sprinkled with Phillips yeast mixture (a brewers yeast extract) and this is probably what helped to bring them into laying condition.

Water Department, Texaco Trinidad Inc., Pointe-a-Pierre.

