

## **Soft Food, S76 & Rapid Molt for Gouldian Breeding Success**

Preparations for a good breeding season must start during the molt period to ensure the molt is completed as quickly as possible, because there is a strong relationship between the completion of a rapid molt, good health and a successful breeding season.

When receiving the best care, the molt of Gouldian Finches will be completed before December in the Southern Hemisphere and June in the Northern Hemisphere. The accompanying Molt and Breeding Programmes will give your birds the opportunity to enjoy a rapid molt and two highly successful breeding rounds before June in the Southern Hemisphere and before December in the Northern Hemisphere.

This breeding routine follows that of the wild bird and provides captive Gouldian Finches with their best opportunity to remain strong and healthy for many future breeding seasons as it prevents unnecessary stress.

The following information explains the importance of these proven Programmes for breeding success. In fact, when housed correctly, the use of these Programmes makes breeding Gouldian Finches – including strong families of Blue colored mutations – very easy.

Poor nutrition, air-sac mite infections and cold weather are the common cause of a slow molt that will lessen breeding success. Control of these issues will help improve breeding outcomes and reduce the likelihood of health problems in your birds.

The softfood recipe outlined here has been used with outstanding success by Alan Simpson, whom I consider is the best breeder of Blue series Gouldians in Australia. The nutritional requirements of your birds during the molt and breeding are assured by the use of this soft food mix as part of the Molt and Breeding Programmes.

Air-sac mite infections are inherent to wild Gouldian Finch populations and it should be assumed that air-sac mites are present in all captive Gouldians. Infection exists in a dormant state when ideal conditions create good health. Any stressful episode will activate infection. In captivity, stressful conditions occur during the molt, breeding and in juvenile birds.

Cold spells at the start of the molt may delay the molt and create a compressed molt. During a compressed molt, multiple flight feathers grow simultaneously. S76 treatments administered for 2 consecutive days each three weeks must be given during a compressed molt because Gouldian Finches become vulnerable to air-sac mite infections at this time even when they receive good nutrition.

Air-sac mite treatments must be given regularly during the molt and breeding seasons in order to prevent heavy infestations during these naturally stressful periods. Gouldians are particularly vulnerable to infection at the end of the molt and at the beginning of breeding when their immunity is at its lowest ebb. Poor breeding results are likely when treatments are not regularly administered as Gouldians infected with air-sac mites succumb to Chlamydia (Ornithosis) and Streptococcus infections.