

Aviary Design – Glenn, Damen Winch & Trish Johnston

When we designed our new aviary we looked at what many others had done previously and what had worked for us in the past. We came to the conclusion that if we are going to be in this hobby for the long term, then let's try and get it right the first time.

Titan erected the 9m x 6m shed for us and we did the internal fit out. Sounds simple but we had to take a lot of things into consideration. I will discuss these things below.



- (A) **Location:** We positioned the aviary so that I only had to walk about 8m to access the birds. It was therefore very close to the existing water, drainage and power. It is also close to the kennels and the dogs, which is great for security.

- (B) **Natural Sunlight:** As it is important that the birds get natural unfiltered sunlight we positioned the aviary with a northerly aspect. The single large flight is positioned on the northern wall with two windows to let in the sunlight. These windows are permanently open. More importantly a large glass sliding door was purposely fitted on the eastern wall of the aviary so that between daybreak and 9am sunlight floods the aviary floor while the birds are eating. This door is also constantly open.





- (C) **Temperature Control:** Titan insulated the ceiling and installed two whirly birds. We insulated all the walls with earth wool and then lined them with fibro. We wanted a constant air flow through the aviary so the shed has three 1.2m windows on the north, a sliding door and a personal access door on the east and finally a 1m roller door on the west.

The southern wall is where all the breeding cages are located because this is the coolest part of the aviary. Under normal circumstances there is a constant breeze coming from the eastern doors through to the western door. This is still problematic on the hottest Summer days and when there is a north westerly wind blowing. We monitor the temperature with a digital thermometer located in the centre of the aviary. We have determined that the breeding birds start to suffer when the temperature reaches around 33-35 degrees. At 33 degrees we turn on the pedestal fans and at 35 degrees we turn the sprinklers on to cool the roof. If the temperature reaches around 38 degrees we shut all the doors, windows and whirly birds and turn on the portable air conditioner. This is only powerful enough to bring the temperature back to about 31 degrees. We had to use the air conditioner twice last year.

You are most likely wondering why we bother to breed in Summer. The reason is simple, the new ring date is the 1st of January. Birds bred at the beginning of the year will be more mature and most likely have an advantage over those bred later in the year. Winter doesn't present any problems, but we do close the aviary doors at night if it is really cold.



- (D) **Rainy Weather:** We don't have external flights by choice, therefore the birds can't get saturated by sudden thunderstorms when nobody is home. Not surprisingly we have had no incidence of Coccidiosis in our birds to date. The birds do enjoy playing in the mist that comes through the north facing windows during rain with the majority of the bad weather coming from the south east or south west. In really bad weather we just shut the doors and windows.
- (E) **Vermin Control:** No mice, rats, cockroaches, geckos etc. are to be found in our aviary. The walls are lined and sealed with fibro and all doors and windows are securely fitted with 6mm mouse proof wire.
- (F) **Cleaning:** The single flight is 6m long and 2.5m wide. This gives the birds a chance to do what they were born to do – fly. Because the floor is tiled it makes the weekly clean relatively easy. The 24 breeding cages are also cleaned weekly by replacing the newspaper sheets in the tray and removing any poo deposits on the wire. Following two rounds of breeding the nest box is thoroughly cleaned before being returned to the next pair for use.

These ideas worked for us, may not work for you in your situation. Always be open to suggestions.

Glenn & Damen Winch

Editors note: I sincerely thank Glenn, Damen & Trish for the article above and also for all the work they do for the hobby, day in and day out. Not only are they wonderful breeders of some lovely birds, but they are also very nice people to know. Thank you Guys.

