



## *The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)*

*(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)*

*PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia*

### **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*)**

**By Glenn Matheson**

My experience with the yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

It all started in 1984 when I purchased a pair of yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

There are two species of Yellow-tails, being the dominant race for *Calyptorhynchus funereus funereus* and the smaller *Calyptorhynchus funereus xanthanotus*. The pair I had acquired were in fact *funereus funereus*. These cockatoos are Australia's largest parrots, in length that is, as although the palm cockatoo is smaller, it is actually an extra 200-220 grams heavier.

The pair were put into their new home that measured 40ft x 18ft and within days, they had settled, even though they were sharing this home with about 20 other inhabitants. These included kings, majors, various lorikeets and some alexandrines.



Photograph: © Glenn Matheson

Next was to find a hollow log large enough for them to breed in. Even though this particular aviary was not the ideal arrangement for breeding such birds, I thought, what the heck, I might be lucky!

With the log now successfully in and the breeding season coming fast, which for yellow-tails is usually from January to May, I started to increase the amount of nuts (peanuts, almonds and walnuts) and began introducing meal worms.

Firstly, the assorted nuts were devoured.

Secondly, the meal worms were eaten only by the lorikeets as the blacks were petrified of them, so much so that if they did pluck up enough courage to get close to the worm, the worm would wriggle and the blacks would hightail it to the other end of the aviary!

Thirdly, they ate their log I had looked so long for, and lastly, the end of their season left without even an inkling of lovemaking!

Another log, another season, and another, and another! In fact, it would be six years before they actually laid!

The clutch consisted of two eggs laid six days apart, which is normal for Yellow-tails.

Yellow-tails can lay their second egg two to eight days after the first, but will only rear one chick. On occasion, a clutch consisting of two chicks has been successfully parent reared but these chicks have all hatched two days apart.

To my delight, their eggs were fertile. Unfortunately, the hen ceased brooding about 20 days into incubation so the clutch was lost and she did not nest again that season.

The following season I decided to pull some of her eggs and incubate them myself. This proved successful as after 30 days of incubation my first yellow tail chick hatched.

The chick was reared and is now part of the establishment. Those of you who have seen my video on breeding Yellow-tailed Blacks will remember "Jackson", and yes, he might be older, but he still gets into all the mischief in the world!!

Like demolishing nest boxes that do not belong to him, eating the water hoses when I am washing the aviary and getting stuck in the Otto bin by having a little sticky! He also loves jumping on the Rainbows and Scalies when they're on the ground! I am sure he just does not realise the size difference, although the lorikeets do!

Since Jackson I have reared a number of other chicks from the pair. They lay between 5 – 12 eggs per season and the intervals between them varied from 2 – 6 days to 3 weeks.

I have not kept any of these birds. All were sold directly after weaning. Mind you, if they were anything like Jackson, I could not afford to keep them, what with all the hoses and brooms I go through.

Well I hope you enjoyed my little experience with Yellow-tails. Just remember - you could have a Jackson waiting in the darkness just ready to pounce!

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