

Ring Sizes and how to ring a bird



This fact sheet explains how to ring your birds and the correct ring size to use.

There are two types of rings which are generally used for ringing birds. These are closed metal rings and split plastic or celluloid rings.

CLOSED RINGS

How to ring your chicks

Closed rings are put on when chicks are in the nest and, as they are marked with the current year, guarantee the age of the bird.

The age at which ringing takes place varies according to the species being rung. For example Budgerigars should be rung between five and ten days old, Canaries between six and eight days, and Zebra Finches between seven and ten days. It is better to put the ring on early and risk having it come off and need to be put back on again, than to leave it until the foot is too big for the ring to slip over and thus risk hurting the chick.

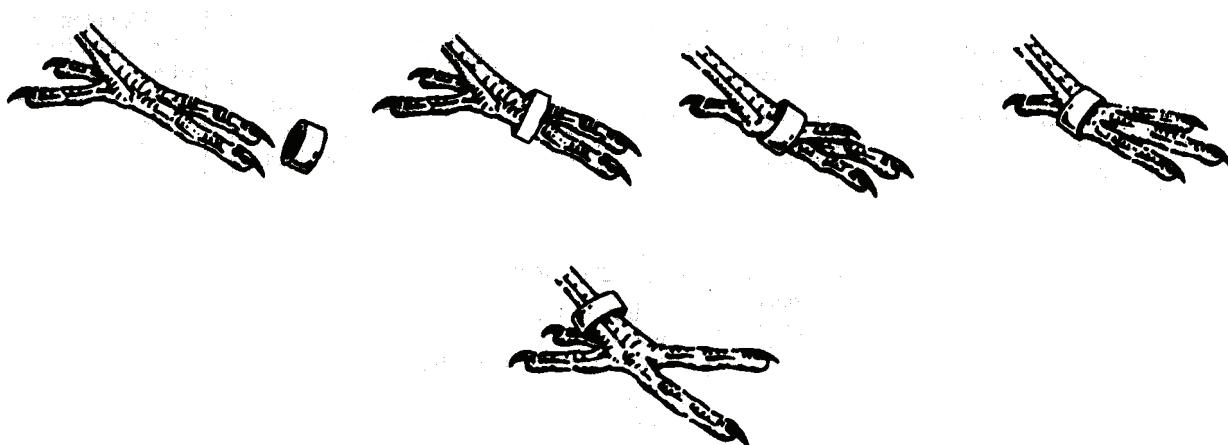
Before attempting to ring a chick wash your hands to ensure that all foreign smells have been removed e.g. soap, aftershave, perfume.

It is important that your hands are kept warm when ringing chicks because they have been taken from beneath a hen in a warm nest box and the shock of being held in freezing cold hands could be fatal. Those who suffer from cold hands should have hot water, a hot radiator or even a hot water bottle available for warming their hands before beginning to carry out the task of ringing chicks.

There are two methods of ringing a chick :

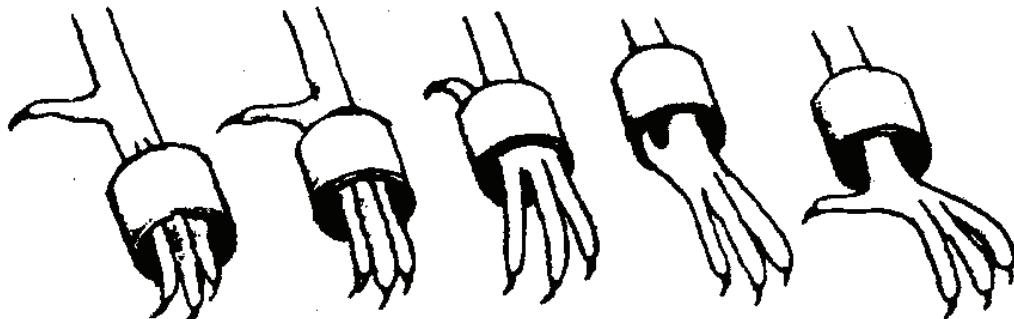
- 1) with two toes facing forward and two facing back
- 2) with three toes facing forward and one facing back

1) The two forward, two back method.



- a) Gather the two front toes together.
- b) Place the ring over the two front toes and gently push the ring over the ball of the foot, towards the hock.
- c) Carefully pull the long rear toe through to clear the ring. You may find it helpful to insert a pointed matchstick or toothpick between the toe and leg to help you ease it from the ring.
- d) Carefully pull the short rear toe through to clear the ring.
- e) The ring is now in position
- f) Check the following day to see if the ring is still in place.

2) The three forward, one back method.



- a) Gather the three long toes together.
- b) Place the ring over the three long toes and gently push the ring over the ball of the foot, towards the hock.
- c) Carefully pull the short toe through to clear the ring. You may find it helpful to insert a pointed matchstick or toothpick between the toe and leg to help you ease it from the ring.
- d) The ring is now in position.
- e) Check the following day to see if the ring is still in place.

Trouble shooting

With some species it may be necessary to try to disguise the ring on the chicks leg to prevent ejection from the nest or rejection by the parents. There are various methods that can be used :

- Once the chick has been rung cover the ring with wet droppings from the parent bird
- Cover the ring with flesh coloured sticky plaster, plastic tubing or brown parcel tape.

Some breeders use a little "Vaseline" on the three forward toes to help keep

them together, and on the ball of the foot to assist the closed ring to slide over it.

Ring Sizes

Size	Species
A	Double-Barred (Bicheno) Finch, Orange-Cheeked, Gold-Breasted and Red-Eared Waxbills.
B	Cordon Bleu, Fire Finch, Lavender Finch.
C	Gouldian Finch and other similar small Foreign Finches, Green Singing Finch, Silverbills, Star Finch, Hecks Grass Finch, Parrot Finches, Cherry Finch, Painted Finch.
D	Zebra Finch, Pictorella, Chestnut-Breasted Finch, Yellow-Rumped Finches.
E	Bengalese Finch, Cut-Throats.
F	Gloster, Fife, Miniature and Irish Fancy Canaries, Nuns, Diamond Firetail (Diamond Sparrow).
G	Border, Red Factor, Lizard and Roller Canaries, Red-Faced Pytilia.
J	Yorkshire, Norwich and Crested Canaries, Pekin Robin, Parisien Frill Canary.
K	Java Sparrow, Diamond Dove, Madagascar Lovebird.
L	Budgerigar, Grass Parakeets including Bourkes, Turquoisines, Splendids, Elegants and Bluewings, Indian Shama, Chinese Painted Quail.
M	Lovebirds (except Madagascar), Stanley Rosella, Lineolated Parakeet, Kakarikis, Manycolours, Yellow-fronted and Red-fronted New Zealand Parakeets.
N	Mealies, Pileated, Redrumps, Cockatiel (Normal Grey).
P	Cockatiels (Colour Mutation), Gold-Mantled Rosellas, Port Lincolns, Barrabands, Princess-of-Wales, Barnards, Cloncurries, Pennants.
R	Rock Pebblers, Crimson Wings, Plumheads, Quail (Japanese & Coturnix), Dove, Tippler/Tumbler Pigeons.
S	Indian Ringnecks, Homing Pigeons.
T	Roseate Cockatoo, Alexandrine Parakeet, Golden Conure.
U	Citron-Crested Cockatoo, Goffin's Cockatoo, Lesser Sulphur Crested Cockatoo.
V	African Grey Parrot, Eclectus Parrot, Medium Sulphur Crested Cockatoo.
W	Blue & Gold Macaw, Umbrella Cockatoo, Greater Sulphur Crested Cockatoo.
X	Green-Winged Macaw

The above sizes are given in good faith and are based on the best information currently available.

SPLIT RINGS

Split rings can be fitted to any bird at any age, and are purely used as a means of easy identification of birds especially by breeders. For example fanciers often ring all the young from each particular pair of birds with same colour spilt rings. This enables the breeder to see at a glance which pair produced which youngsters without having to catch up individuals to check their ring numbers. Breeders who have birds which are adults, and have not been close rung, may find it an advantage to ring their stock with numbered spilt rings, so that each individual bird can be identified in breeding records. A special tool to enable split rings to be fitted to birds is usually supplied with each order of split rings.

Split rings can be purchased either in a coloured plastic form or as aluminium rings. Both forms can carry a personal identification number, stock number or year identifier (Speak to the manufacturer when ordering the rings). Aluminium split rings should be closed with the correct size of ringing pliers (available from all good ring manufacturers) – this will ensure that the ring remains round and does not create an oval shaped ring thus hurting the bird's leg. Many single or bi-colours are available in the plastic form.

Some larger parrots are rung using a continental style split ring made from stainless steel. This type of ring is hinged in the middle and once joined together a small bolt is secured through pre-drilled hole. The bolt is usually tightened using a small "allen-key" and then snaps off once the correct tension is placed on the bolt. This ensures that the ring cannot be easily removed – and in effect acts just the same as a closed ring.

Stainless steel split rings are also available – some vets even use a small stainless steel ring when surgical sexing the bird(s) (Right leg – cock bird, Left leg – Hen Bird) – once again this is applied using the correct ringing pliers.

Care should be taken at all stages to ensure that the correct size of ring is applied to the birds leg – different sizes are listed by the ring manufacturers and the species of bird should always be quoted when purchasing the rings. Just because the ring is split – it should still be comfortable of the bird's leg. If this is not the case, leg sores or other problems may occur – some birds have even been known to lose a leg if the band is not correct for the species.

If the split ring is too large, there is also a risk that the over size ring may be caught in shrubs or perches and may cause the bird to die through stress (Foreign birds and finches especially).

Split ringing is only a means to quickly identify your bird – it is not a proper substitute for a closed ring. If you miss closed ringing your current year birds (especially Budgerigars, Australian Finches, Zebra Finches and Bengalese), split rings are not accepted as an excuse. Current year owner bred birds must be shown with the correct size and society ring (year colour coded).

The golden rule of split ringing is "if you don't know the size – ASK!!"

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