

Buck-Wheat Byles

VOLUME 6, ISSUE I

WWW.GUINEAFOWLINTERNATIONAL.ORG

DECEMBER 2013



Teddy is in good hands, growing up to be a handsome Guinea



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2013 GFIA MEMBERSHIP

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FORM

Teddy or The Story of Our First Nest by Bennie

This is a real story, so there are some nice and some not so nice parts of it.

This was our first full year with the Guineas, and hence it was our first experience with laying hens and nests. Our first nest was started by several Pearl Gray hens in the corner of our coop, since the flock was confined for most of the day, and the hens had to make do with the available nesting options. They picked one of the dirtiest spots we have: right under the roosting bars.

As the nest grew, with several hens depositing eggs, we started wondering how this was going to work out: Do they get along? How many eggs will there be before they start brooding? Will the others leave them alone? Can the keets run around the coop with the other adults in the mix? Will the other hens stop adding eggs when the first hen goes broody? Well, for starters,

they did not get along all that well. Amerigo is one of our very aggressive hens, and she seemed to have it in her mind that no one else should be on her nest, pulling wattles and attacking poor Marilyn who bravely sat on the nest and took the abuse. Amerigo did not particularly want to take care of the eggs either, though, so something had to be done. In the end Marilyn got tired of the whole thing and Kayleigh, our only Buff Dundotte hen, proved most steadfast and up to the job.



Kayleigh and Amerigo

(Continued on page 2)

GFIA Membership Renewals

GFIA memberships expire at the end of each calendar year. If you joined anytime after September 1, 2013; your membership is still valid for 2014.

Benefits include a Welcome Packet, educational materials, newsletters, and an annual educational conference. In addition you'll be supporting our work to expand the information available about our favorite fowl.

Go to our website for more infowww.guineafowlinternational.org

Rates:

Single membership: \$ 20.00 Family membership: \$ 28.00 Junior membership: \$ 5.00 (age 15 & under)

Send payments to:

GFIA 2812 FM 987 Kaufman, TX 75142

You can also join online using Paypal.

(mail-in form on page 7)

Teddy or The Story of Our First Nest (continued)

She, too, got attacked by Amerigo, though, and since we did not want to lose the nest to a non-committed troublemaker, we quickly built something to protect the next volunteer-momma and her nest from beaks on the ground and poop from above. The wire enclosure, water and food were quickly added at night, when hens are not so alert, and Kayleigh tolerated the disturbance and stayed on the eggs.



Kayleigh on the nest in the enclosure

By this time there were over 60 eggs in the nest. The Guinea Fowl International Association (GFIA) forum members warned us that too many eggs can lead to disaster since the hen will not be able to cover them all, and if each egg gets cold at one time or another when the hen turns them, then most of the developing keets may die. Kayleigh did have a hard time to cover all those eggs. We tried to push some hay in front of the nest to bank it a little, so the eggs would not roll out so much when she turned them. At that point it would have been very hard to remove eggs without destroying the nest and disturbing the hen quite a bit.

We were also not sure which eggs to take and not really ready to incubate them. So in the end we left her alone with her ton of eggs, hoping for the best.

The best did not happen. But when Teddy was born, we were delighted indeed: our first own keet!

Delight quickly gave way to worry: Teddy was ambling around the hay in the enclosure, apparently looking for the nest and his warm momma. We did not want to touch the keet, but after a while we thought he may get too cold and die, so Teddy was gently pushed towards the nest with a stick. When our

efforts finally seemed successful and the little baby reached the edge of the nest, something awful happened: Kayleigh pecked at him. She was not going to have any of this and looked at this little newborn keet



Curious flock

like vermin trying to contaminate her perfect nest. After several attempts and obvious rejection, we removed Teddy and put him under a heat lamp at 95 degrees Fahrenheit with warm water and baby food. He was so lonely. We thought we would take a few more keets from the nest soon to keep Teddy company and leave the others with the hen, or even try to sneak Teddy back in once the nest was full of little keets.

That did not happen. After two or three more days without keets, Kayleigh got up and wanted out of the enclosure. We let her out and found one dead keet in the nest. So sad. Teddy's only sibling. The other eggs were clear or rotten when we checked them by candling, mostly clear. It seems that breeders all across the country had had unfertilized eggs this spring, and we were no exception.

We had no time to worry about that now. After cleaning up the nesting area, the focus for the near future would be on finding companions for brave, little Teddy. We called local breeders, remote hatcheries, remote breeders, put an ad on Craigslist. The answer we got a lot was: Yes, in four weeks or later this summer there will be some for sale. We were ready to drive 6 hours one-way to get some keets for Teddy when a local breeder returned our call. Yes, we could pick them up this evening, and they were about Teddy's age. Jackpot!

Teddy or The Story of Our First Nest (continued)



Teddy and his buddies

Though he was a bit smaller and his buddies already had some feathers, they worked out well together. Teddy had been hiding behind the feeder and only came out to eat when I came to the bathroom and tapped on the food with my finger. Now he competed with the other keets to gobble down as much as possible all the time. Soon he had his own feathers.

Teddy turned out to be a fine Guinea. He is the happy ending of this story. He is very full of himself and may well lead our flock one day. In the picture below he still had his baby down on his head and some brown baby feathers, and he seems to be yielding to the adults as they peck at each other through the fence of the nursery:



Today, he does not stand down that easily and gets into trouble with the adults a lot. I guess it is part of flock dynamics. We are proud of our little survivor having developed into such a handsome guy. He is also our tamest Guinea now and is teaching others to be less scared of us. I think he still remembers our care during his first days of life.



Teddy and his "high school sweetheart" weeding our driveway. We'll see what next spring brings, ha ha!



Teddy eying some hand-fed spinach from the nursery lookout perch



A Buck a Week by Buckwheatkeet

Once upon a time there were five sweet keets that were very spoiled. At first they were shy and did not say much, but soon they began to chatter amongst themselves. One day they found their voices. Buck and Tock, being male, could only say "chi-chi-chi-chichi-chi-chi;" but Tick, Tim, and Gunnie, being female, were multi-lingual. They were very proud of this and liked to show off their talents. At first they only said "buck-wheat-buck-wheat," but soon they added "come back-come back!" and "go 'way-go 'way!" One day, they decided to offer their services of tick and insect control and decided a very cheap price along with free room and board would be fair, so they went from yard to yard yelling "a buck a week!-a buck a week!" I thought wow! thats a great deal, and so I adopted them. They are very happy here. They do eat bugs and ticks, but I also buy mash, cracked corn, scratch, treats, millet, and lots of dried mealworms. (They go through a 7 oz. bag of mealworms in 2 days.) I love these birds, but I no longer think a buck a week is such a great deal!

The real story of the buck-wheat keets

My husband attracts ticks like no one else I know. He goes out in the summer for an hour and comes back with at least two! One day we were at a local Amish/farmers market and came across people selling 6 wk old guinea keets. We'd never seen a guinea. The only thing we knew about guineas was that they were fabulous for tick control. We were told by four different people at the market that guineas are sooo easy to care for. They said they were hardy birds. They told us that they did not need much shelter and you just show them their house and let them go and they would stay around. And we believed them! We didn't know any better. So we bought two. On the way home, my husband named them Tick and Tack. We brought them home and showed them their new home (an old chicken coop on the property). We put

in some straw and some water and we let them out. They walked around and made themselves at home and stripped bugs from the grass blades. They were so happy and so were we! Later that evening it rained. It was dark and we went out to check on them. They were not in the coop even though we left the door open. (No one told us to lock them in the coop for 6 wks - they said just let them go!) We found them perched on hubby's truck. O.K. good. We went to bed feeling good and got up at 6am to check on our new babies. They were gone! We searched all day in the rain. We went to all the houses in the area. We put up lost posters. We researched the Internet and found out about the 6 week rule! We felt awful. At 6pm a car drove up. A distant neighbor with guineas had found a soaking wet Tick trying to get in the pen with their adult guineas and brought her home! We never saw Tack again. We can only hope that someone found him and kept him. We can't bear the thought that a predator got him. Tick was lonely. She stayed in a crate in our garage until the following Saturday when we returned to the market to confront the seller and to get Tick a friend. They were "so sorry." They admitted that they should have told us to lock them up until they were used to the place. They gave us another keet.... and we bought two more (Tock, Buck, and Tim). Tick was so happy to have friends. The next week we went back and got one more (Gunsmoke, "Gunnie" for short). This time we kept them penned for 10 wks (just to be sure) before we even thought about letting them out, and they did fine. They are spoiled pets. They love dried mealworms even more than white millet. They eat from our hands. Now, any time I have a question or an issue, I go to the Guinea Fowl International website and I find the answers I need. And it's good to know that I am not the only one with spoiled rotten guineas. (Even though they are over a year old we still call them "The Keets." They will always be our babies!)







City Girl Goes for Guineas by Janette Blair

My name is Janette Blair, and I love my Guinea Birds. I grew up in the City and did not have the opportunity to have farm animals. I married a fireman/farmer living in the country, and that is when my country life began.

I had never heard of a Guinea or seen one when one of our Tractor Club friends brought me 6 young Guineas. I was so excited until I saw them. They were the most ugly birds I have ever seen. However, they eat every grasshopper and bug around the property, which made my love affair grow quickly since we had so many grasshoppers that year.

My knowledge about these birds was none, so I went on the Internet to find someone that could help me. I contacted one organization, and they were very hateful. I almost gave up thinking all Guinea people were like the birds, ugly. I then found the GFIA and contacted them. I understand they take turns answering questions, and I was fortunate to get Zoe Howland. She was very nice and knowledgeable in helping me with my Guinea problems. She informed me that my problems were just Guinea Bird behavior, and I did not have problems, just Guineas. I had nothing to worry about. They just were not domesticated birds. As we talked, we found out we lived about 30 miles from each other. She was so nice to come over and help me understand Guineas better, and we became very, very good friends. We both love birds and our husbands love antique cars, a match made for friendship.

Zoe soon talked me into showing my birds at the State Fair of Texas. The first year she had the most beautiful Royal Purple male. Yes I did say beautiful, how my feelings changed for these birds. She offered this bird to me, since he was not fitting into her flock. His name was Stew Pot (I believe he would attack the cars coming down her driveway and figured he was destined for the stew pot). I brought this amazing bird to my house and put him in a cage with my other birds. After a few weeks I let him out to free range with my birds during the day. Stew Pot took off for the woods not to be seen till the next day. He did this two days in a row. I was afraid he would take my flock off and teach them not to come in at night. On

the third day he decided to take over the flock since they were so inexperienced. He joined them as the dominant rooster. I was afraid he would keep my flock out, but to my amazement, he was the first one in the cage bringing the rest in with him. He is now my main rooster and my love. The next summer I had keets, which he decided to take under his wings (literally) and raise the babies. No one would pick on these babies because they were Stew Pot's and he would not allow it. Zoe was over visiting when we saw them on the roost under his wings. She could not believe it was her problem rooster doing such a good job. She was pleased he found a good home.

I now have 35 guineas and a new large cage for my birds. My new cage is 35 X 40 (20 X 40 outside habitat enclosed and 15 X 40 inside with fans and heat). To clean my cage I wash with a water hose and into a flushing system outside, which makes my cleaning easy. My wonderful husband, brother and his step son spent the summer building this cage for me.

My birds are fed scratch, crumbles, mealworms, spinach, and free range, but most of all, I do not have bugs. I run my Guineas and chickens together, and they get along fine. This summer they kept my garden bug free letting me enjoy great produce with no chemicals. They would go straight to the garden then to the pasture. So these ugly birds have become part of my life, and I love them. I recommend Guineas to anyone who has property and bugs. I know I will always have guineas.



We are in need of someone in the Eastern part of the US to help organize our 2014 Conference. Ideally, it will be in the March/April time frame. We would

need help specifically selecting a location and arranging for speakers. Historically, we have met at universities, but that is not a requirement. If interested, please contact Zoe Howland at samsmom47@gmail.com as soon as possible.





Guinea Fowl International Association Annual Meeting - March 17, 2013

Poteau, Oklahoma, USA

In Attendance:

Cindy, Carolyn, Fred, Carl, Claude, Pat, Betsy, and Zoe

Meeting Called to Order:

Meeting held at Holiday Inn Express in Poteau, OK. Called to order by President Cindy Gibson.

Elections:

President and Treasurer positions were up for elections at this meeting. Cindy Gibson was elected President by acclamation. Carolyn McDermott was elected Treasurer by acclamation.

Business

Because there are no formal guidelines for GFIA officer positions, Pat and Claude Frazier have agreed to develop some guidelines.

Anatomy Drawings:

In 2012 a project was begun with the University of North Carolina to develop drawings of the anatomy of a guinea fowl. Although similar, guineas are different from chickens internally. The project is progressing. Carolyn, who graciously made arrangements for specimen to be donated, is working with Dr. H. J. Barnes on the project. The first drawings of the organs are done. A major part of it has been paid. There are still some technical questions that will be forwarded to Barbara. 2014 Conference:

The 2014 GFIA conference will be on the East Coast. Terri Thompson will be contacted to determine if she will coordinate the conference. Carl Schaler will do a survey about where the best place would be, what the best time would be and who might come to the conference. Pat and Claude Frazier will assume the responsibility of the conference handbook.

Treasurer's Report:

Balance in the account from March 1, 2012 to February 28, 2013 is \$1,776.54.

Proceeds from the 2012 conference were \$3,206.03.

Expenses were for advertising in Backyard Poultry, Hobby Farms and Chicken magazines.

Most of our proceeds are from membership renewal.

It was determined that we were spending an excessive amount on advertising and that we should advertise in Backyard Poultry two times a year, once pre-conference and once at the end of the year when memberships are about to expire. We should advertise in Hobby Farms just before Christmas so that memberships can be given as Christmas gifts.

Membership:

Many of our memberships have expired. Cindy will write a letter regarding renewal. The letter will have a membership renewal form as part of it. Betsy will email a letter that she used in a group recently as a model for our letter.

Carl agreed to head up a membership committee. Zoe will send Carl a membership list.

Betsy will write "thank you" note to all of the presenters for this conference.

There was discussion about having associate members or vendors that we would link to their website for a fee. Some vendors that we will consider are poultry supplies and feed stores. To develop this idea, we will need to (1) create a list of target vendors, (2) develop a list of benefits for being linked to GFIA and (3) determine an amount for the vendor membership (\$100.00 annually was suggested). Cindy will talk to Ideal Hatchery and Double R to see if they might be interested.

Recognizing New Colors for Shows:

Claude will talk to Pat Malone with APA to determine if it is worth the effort to try to establish new colors for judging guineas in APA sanctioned shows.

Meeting adjourned. Respectfully submitted, Zoe Howland, VP



GFIA MAIL-IN MEMBERSHIP AND/OR BREEDERS LIST FORM

2014 Membership Rates: (all prices in U.S. dollars) Check One: [] Single Membership \$20.00 [] Family Membership \$28.00 [] Junior Membership (Age 15 & under) \$5.00 [] Breeders List Only	Make checks payable to GFIA and mail with this form to: Guinea Fowl International Association 2812 FM 987 Kaufman, TX 75142 USA
(No membership)No charge	
Full Name	Work Phone Number
Street Address	Home Phone Number
	Cell Phone Number
City	
State/Province	
Zip/Postal Code Country _	
E-mail Address**It is important that we have a working E-mail address. Please	
"It is important that we have a working E-mail address. Please	e double-cneck that it has been entered correctly.
What are your areas of interest? Would you consider writing	an article for our newsletter/website? How about serving on a committee?
How would you like your name to appear in our Membership (Check one if applying for membership) [] Name, full address, home phone, cell phone, e-mail, we [] Name, city, state/province, country, e-mail, website, and [] First initial, last name, and country only (Example: J. Sm	d (if submitted) types of guineas
Would you like to be included on the online GFIA Breeders L [] Yes [] No	ist? (No charge for members or nonmembers)
If Yes, how would you like your name to appear on the Breed If you leave this space blank, only your first name will be disp	
Breeders List Message: (This text will be posted under your name on the Breeders List	ist. If you need more space for your message, please add a separate page.)
Check colours that apply to you: (Required for Breeders List [] Pearl	