BirdData

v. 1.00ß
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Please note that this is a Beta version. Please report bugs to the above address and keep copies of any valuable data entered in this program.

I. Description

BirdData is a Windows program designed to help bird breeders maintain records on their babies. It is particularly useful to compare the growth weights of individuals with those of other birds of the same species, to determine that the rate of growth is normal. Weight data can be maintained for the first 120 days of age. Besides weight information, the database includes band numbers and hatchdates, age at banding, and a free-form 160-character comment field.

II. Requirements

BirdData requires Microsoft Windows 3.0 or higher, and requires that two run-time libraries be present: Vbtools.vbx and Vbrun100.dll. Vbtools.vbx is should be included with the BirdData distribution package, and Vbrun100.dll is available from many BBS systems, probably including the one where this program was obtained. Vbrun100.dll is a Microsoft product, freely distributed, and required to run any program written under Microsoft Visual Basic. Vbtools.vbx is a freely distributed runtime library from Microhelp Inc, and is required for programs written with their Vbtools package.

III. Installation

BirdData.exe and its two data files Bdptr.dat and BirdData.dat should be installed to any suitable directory on your hard drive. The program will expect to find them in the same directory from which it is run. The libraries Vbtools.vbx and Vbrun100.dll should be installed in a directory that is in your Path, typically in your Windows directory.

BirdData may be run using any of the normal Windows methods, such as installing the program in a Program Manager Group, starting from the File Manager, or the "File" "Run" menu.

IV. Menus

1. File Menu. At this point, no actual file commands exist, and the program automatically loads the default data file, BirdData.Dat. If there is demand for separate files of data, for instance for different bird types, I will consider implementing file loading capabiblities. Let me know. There is an eXit command, which is the same as double-clicking on the control box, and an About command, which shows the startup screen info.

2. Data Menu. The Data Menu contains the commands for working with the raw database.

A. Weigh Birds. This menu option is used to enter normal daily weight info (in grams). The program will look throught the data base and provide a list of all birds 120 days old or less. To input the weight data for a bird on the list, click on the bird name. A button marked "Weigh" will appear. Clicking this button will bring up a dialog box for entering the weight info. If a weight for this day exists, it will appear as a default, otherwise the default is zero. Note that if you want to input weight data for any day other than today you will need to use the Edit Entry option.

B. Add Bird. Select this option to add a bird to the list. A dialog box will pop up, into which you may type a description, hatchdate (today's date is the default), band number, age at banding, and comment. The description is limited to 20 characters, the band number to 13 characters, and the comment field is 160 characters in length. All of these fields may be edited later. I would suggest that you adopt a uniform description idea for each species of bird listed, to make it easier to select them for graphing. On babies born to my own birds, I use a 2-letter beginning that identifies the pair. When the babies are purchased from another breeder for rearing here, I use a 2-letter beginning that identifies the breeder. The sample file, for example, has babies from two of my pairs of African Greys: GS babies are from Gandalf and Sterling, and CW babies are from Casper and Wendy.

C. Edit Entry. This option allows you to edit any of the information previously entered for a bird, including weight data. A full list of all birds will show, and clicking on a bird will bring up an "Edit" Button. Clicking this button will bring up the same dialog box used for Add Bird, but with the boxes filled in with the current information. Change or add anything. There is a checkbox available to edit weight. Checking that box and clicking OK will bring up the weight chart for the bird. Clicking a particular age will bring up another "Edit" Button, allowing you to change the weight value for that age. You may continue to select ages and enter weights. Click "Done" when all editing is completed.

D. Delete Bird. This operates the same as "Edit Entry", except that clicking on a

bird listing brings up a "Delete" Button. Clicking that button brings up a dialog box to confirm the deletion. You may delete birds in the sample file individually, but a method to easily clear the file is shown in "About The Sample File" at the end of this document.

3. Graph Menu.

A. Birds of a Type. This selection will choose for graphing purposes all birds whose descriptions begin with a letter sequence chosen in the dialog box which pops up. For example, typing "GS" will graph all of Gandalf and Sterling's babies but not Casper and Wendy's. This is not case sensitive, so "gs" will work just as well. The "?" wildcard is allowed, so typing "???Af" will graph GS and CW african greys together. On the right is a list of all of the birds graphed. First in the listing is the hatch date, followed by description, band number, and the comment field. Use the scroll arrows at the bottom to see the rest of the data. The NEAT part: click on any bird, and the color of that birds chart line will change to highlight it. Click on another bird and the first will revert to the original color, with the new bird's chart line highlighted.

Limitation: No more than 100 birds may be graphed at one time. If a selection is made that would result in more than 100 birds, only the first 100 found will be graphed.

B. Selected Birds. This selection brings up a list of all birds. Any number of individual birds may be selected by clicking on them (if more than 100 are selected, only the first 100 will be graphed). Selecting "Done" will cause the graph to be produced as above.

The graphs are auto-scaling, with the largest bird determining the scale of the chart in grams.

4. Color Menu. Because people do not alway see color the same way, and because different colors might work better on different monitors, I have provided the ability to change the graph colors. The defaults are Lt Grey for the background, Dk Blue for the main body of birds, and Cyan for an individually highlighted bird.

A. Custom Colors. This brings up a dialog box to select colors.   Select a feature (background, group birds, individual birds) and then a color. There is a sample box to give you an idea what it will look like. Colors selected will be saved and used for future sessions until you change them.

B. Default Colors. Returns the colors to the defaults listed above.

Have fun and let me know what you think of this program.
Don Bradner

About The Sample File.
The sample data file included contains the data from 70 babies from 2 of my African Grey pairs. This is the actual data, as recorded via earliet Dos versions of this program. If you look at the raw data, it will look like the earliest birds were weighed everyday and later birds were more haphazard. The truth is that all of them are haphazard, but early versions of the program interpolated the missing days and filled them in. I decided that I didn't get as good a picture of reality that way. Also the comment fields have been stripped out. I use them for recording the buyers of my babies, so I didn't feel that it would be appropriate to distribute the info.

If you would like to clear all of my data to start fresh with your own, do the following: Delete the BirdData.dat file; DO NOT DELETE THE BDPTR.DAT FILE, if you do, the program will not run. Use a text editor such as Windows Notebook to open the Bdptr.dat file. You will see that there are four numbers. If you have not done any adding or deleting of birds, the first number will be 71, a pointer that is one higher than the number of birds. Edit it to read "1". The other 3 long numbers are the color values for your graphs.