

BirdData

2.0 for Windows

August, 1992

Program and Documentation
Copyright 1992 Don Bradner

BirdData is a User-Supported (Shareware) product. It is freely available through Bulletin Boards and from the author. You have the opportunity to try the program and see if it suits your needs. If you find that this program is useful to you, please send the registration fee of \$25 to:

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User-supported shareware can exist only as long as you, the users, will support it!

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Installation.

Please read the INSTALL.TXT file for installation instructions.

Introduction: What BirdData is.

BirdData is a Windows program for parrot/bird breeders designed to make it easy and fun to keep detailed records. It is very useful to be able to look back at past experience when rearing a new baby, and you can learn a lot about your pairs, your breeding practices, and your hand-rearing techniques by comparing the results over time. BirdData is icon-driven, meaning that most functions are selected by mouse-clicking a visual icon. Baby records can be maintained in up to 10 separate groups. There are additional record groups for pairs and pets/single birds. Provision is made for printing hard-copies of the data.

I have included a large selection of my own data with the program. If any of it is useful to you, please feel free to use it. If it is used in any publication, I would like proper credit. Any that is not useful may be deleted - see "Removing the distributed data."

Hardware and Software requirements.

BirdData requires an IBM compatible 286, 386 or 486. It will not run on an XT. Any standard hardware supported by Windows should work properly. BirdData requires a mouse. BirdData has been tested at screen resolutions of 640x480 and 1024x768. If you find problems with other resolutions, please notify the author. If text does not display particularly well on your screen, see "Changing the screen fonts" under "Toolbox" below.

BirdData was developed under Windows 3.1. There are problems running it with Windows version 3.0. My first suggestion is to upgrade, since Win 3.1 is definitely worth it. If you are not interested in upgrading, this program may be "tweaked" to run under Win 3.0. See the file WIN30INF.TXT in the distribution package. This has not been extensively tested, and is not guaranteed.

If this program was downloaded from a BBS, you will need to have a copy of the runtime library for Visual Basic, VBRUN100.DLL. Check your Windows or Windows\System directory to see if this file is present, as it is required by a number of programs in current distribution. If it is not on your disk, you can obtain it from most BBSs, probably including the one where you found this program. If BirdData was obtained on disk from the author, VBRUN100.DLL is included on the disk and should be copied to your Windows directory.

All other libraries required to run this program are included with it.

How to reach the author with comments.

I am very much interested in hearing what you think about BirdData, whether you register or not. I would like to continue to improve the program, but I need to know what you think would be useful. You may contact me by mail at the address shown for registration, or you may contact me on-line through a variety of channels. First and foremost I am a regular on the Bird Info Network in Arvada Colorado. The number for BIN is (303) 423-9775 at 2400 baud, (303) 422-4958 for 9600 baud and (303) 940-7357 for 14.4K v.32bis or HST. I am also a regular participant on three FidoNet bird-oriented echoes: Parrots, Aviculture, and Exotic_Birds. All of these are carried on BIN, although I usually pick them up via Seahunt BBS in San Francisco at (415) 431-0473 (all speeds) or (415) 431-0227 (HST only). Messages on BIN or through the Fido echoes should be addressed to Don Bradner. I also have a Compuserve account, but I do not frequently access the service, so responses are likely to be slow. Address Compuserve mail to 76130,1007.

The latest version of BirdData can normally be found on BIN, or may be obtained from the author. Registrants will receive a current copy when they register. Otherwise, you may send \$5 with your disk format requirements to the registration address for an un-registered copy. In either case, be sure to include adequate addressing information.

Programming I find enjoyable - writing documentation I Hate. I think that most people with a working knowledge of Windows and birds will have little trouble finding their way around this program, but if you find that you cannot make sense of any portion of the program or documentation please let me know.

Importance of backups.

The record structure used by BirdData is complicated. It is easily corrupted by power-outages occurring during editing sessions, or by crashes of Windows. The only real safeguard you have is to make regular backups. The files which are critical are those with .DAT extensions as well as BIRDDATA.INI.

Acknowledgements.

Many computer-user/bird people have contributed ideas for this program. I would like to thank the users of BIN and the BIN sysop Terry Runé for their help. Special thanks to Stephen Ceideburg for scanning my photo of an Eleonora Cockatoo being weighed for the program logo.

The Program Icons.

There are 22 icons located on the right side of the screen. I hope that many of them properly convey their function, but to help you I have added text prompts. As you move the mouse over any of the icons, you will see text in the lower left status bar that describes the icon function. The lower right status bar is used as a "toggle" to switch between listings in some functions; text there will describe the action to take when appropriate.

The Bird Icons.

Baby Record Categories.

There are 10 categories for baby records. They are identified by bird icons representative of the categories. In the distribution package, the categories are:

- African Greys
- Amazons (represented by a Blue-Front)
- Cockatoos (represented by a Sulfur-Crested)
- Conures (represented by a Nanday)
- Lories (represented by a Yellow-Backed Chattering)
- Macaws (represented by a Blue & Gold)
- Pionus (represented by a White-Cap)
- Poicephalus (represented by a Senegal Parrot)
- Ringnecks
- Eclectus

Each of these icons and category names may be changed by the user to suit your needs. You will find out how in the toolbox section below.

Individual Records.

Click on one of the 10 category icons. The screen will display an index of the birds in that category. The index shows "Description," "Hatch Dt," "Band Num," and "Sold to." The last column is one that I use to identify my babies; it is one of 6 comment fields that you will see in a moment in the individual record. You will be able to change the title of these fields as well as choosing which one is displayed in the index. This is explained further later. The "Sold to" column displays "(Arcata Pet Data)" because I have deleted my "sold to" data as well as other personal info.

Look at the "Undo" button (second from top in right column of tools). Note that it is greyed (inactive).

Now double-click on one of the listed babies. It does not matter what column you double-click on. The screen will display the complete record for the baby bird. Note that the Undo button is lighted. The bottom right status bar tells you that you can click on it to return to the category index. As you can see, the data at the top is the same as shown in the index, with the addition of the bird's current age (calculated to the current system date).

The six comment lines are free-form, 70 characters each. The labels at the beginning, Parents, Breeder, Sold To and three comment fields are all user definable, again you will find the information later below. Below the comment fields are 121 days of weight records. The only editable fields are weight and comment. Comments are free-form, 36 characters per day. I had to limit them to make the record size reasonable.

Try typing something in one of the fields. When you are done, click the Undo button. Anything you have done is restored to its previous condition. When you first access a baby record, a copy is temporarily stored and is used to restore an aborted edit. Please be aware that the Undo function is available only until you switch away to another screen, including back to the index.

Moving and Deleting Babies.

Baby records may be moved between categories or deleted completely. The method used is called "Drag and Drop" and is done with the mouse. Undo is available immediately afterwards, so feel free to experiment. Click on the lower right status bar to return to the index, or else click one of the 10 category buttons. Scroll down to the last bird listed in the category. Place the mouse cursor over the last entry, press and hold down the right mouse button. The cursor will become a pair of scissors. Holding the button down, move the cursor over one of the other category buttons. Notice that the cursor becomes a "ghost" image of the icon below it. When you are over the category you have chosen to move to, release the right mouse button. After a short period of disk activity, the entry will disappear from the index. Notice that the Undo button is lit at this time. You could undo the move, but instead click on the category that you moved to and scroll to the bottom of its index, where you will find the moved baby record. Drag it with the right mouse button back to the category where it belongs.

The reason I had you choose the last listing is that if you had chosen another listing, it would have been moved to the end by the process just used and would have been out of order by hatch date. Now though, I would like you to try moving a record from further up the list and then Undo the move by clicking the Undo button. Note that the record is re-inserted where it came from. If you switch to any other screen, the undo capability is lost.

Deleting a baby completely is accomplished in exactly the same way, except that you Drag the record to the Trashcan icon in the lower right of the tool column. Again, Undo is available until you perform some other operation.

I have not provided any option to sort the baby categories, but you can accomplish a sort by moving records within a category. Example: if you had 10 babies listed in the Conure category, and you wanted the 10th one to come before the 8th and 9th, you could drag the 8th listing to the Conure icon, and then the 8th listing again to the Conure icon. They would each move to the end of the list, moving the 10th up two.

Pair Records.

Pair records are accessed by clicking the interlocked sex-symbol button (you can change this icon later). There is a lot of similarity in the indexing with the baby records. Double-Click on an entry to show the data for that pair. Delete a pair by dragging with the right mouse button to the Trashcan. Undo a deletion by pressing the Undo button before doing anything else. There are no places that a pair record can be moved to.

There should always be one blank line at the bottom of the pair index. Double-Clicking that line will open up a file for a new pair and add a new line to the bottom of the index.

I think that most of the entries in the top of a pair record are self-explanatory. One exception is the listing for number of days of expected incubation at the top right. These numbers are used to calculate the approximate hatch date after you have entered the date on which an egg was laid. I included two separate entries, one for first egg and the other for all other eggs. Many of my pairs do not incubate when the first egg is laid, resulting in a longer incubation period. You can enter numbers into the two boxes directly, or you can press the recalc button to have the program use actual hatch dates to figure the time interval. I normally enter "book" figures to begin with and then use the auto-calculation when I have some data in hand.

At the bottom of the record are two spreadsheets. The top one is a "Journal" or diary. Click the mouse in the date box of a blank line and it will default to the system date, which you can change. Journal entries are 70 characters. Like the pair index, clicking the blank line will add a line. The probable limit is about 4000 lines (untested). No provisions have been made to delete or insert entries; let me know if you find that you need such capability.

The second spreadsheet is a clutch record. Only the first egg of a clutch is shown. Clicking on a listing (or on the blank line to start a new listing) will open up the full clutch record. I debated on the number of eggs to allow per clutch and settled on 10, which satisfies most parrot type birds. If your birds lay more than 10 eggs per clutch, congratulations, and please use two listings for one clutch (do let me know though).

You can enter the date that an egg was laid and the date it hatched, with a 50 character comment. The expected hatch date will show if you click on the recalc button (provided that there is some actual hatch data) or you can use the lower right status bar to exit back to the clutch index and then re-access the clutch - the expected date will show then.

Pet (Single Bird) Records.

Pet or single bird records are accessed by clicking the bird-in-a-cage icon. Actually, I'd like to use something else representative of a pet bird, but couldn't think of anything. It is one of the user-selectable icons (more later), and if you can think of a better representation I would like to hear about it.

Everything about the pet records works like the pair information above, except for the various information on eggs. In the pair records, the user can enter a number or other designation for the pair, while pets are numbered sequentially. I assume that most people do not number their pet birds.

The Tools.

The top eight icons and the bottom two are tools for using the program. They are covered below beginning with the top left tool and proceeding left-to-right and top-to-bottom.

Daily weigh-in.

The scales tool is used for daily weighing of baby birds. Clicking this tool causes BirdData to search all ten of the baby categories for any babies 120 days old or younger. The initial search is done for the system date. A spreadsheet will appear which allows you to enter the weights for each of the birds found as well as any comment (36 characters). These will automatically be added to each baby's records.

If you are entering data for a date other than the system date, enter that date in the box at the top of the form. A check box will appear with the label "rescan." Click that box, and the program will search the baby categories for all babies 120 days or less on that date. Enter the weight/comment data as before.

In this particular spreadsheet, I have found that having to go back to the mouse to select another baby is annoying when I am in the middle of weighing (I weigh and enter the data immediately). I have therefore implemented up-down and left-right arrow movement between the weight and comment fields for this spreadsheet only.

Search.

The magnifying glass tool provides search functions for the baby categories. I am frequently approached by someone who doesn't remember when their baby was hatched and it can be difficult to look up. Here I just enter their last name, select the Sold To entry and All Categories and let the program find the baby. Or I want to know what birds were raised in 1989, or what birds came from a particular breeder. Each of these is easy to find using the appropriate search text and fields to search.

The spreadsheet of search results can be used to access each record by Double-Clicking on the entry, just as you can do in the category indices. Again the lower-right status bar will take you back to the search result index.

Print.

The printer tool will print out currently showing information. When the information is not available to print, the lower left status bar will show "Print (Nothing to print)." Otherwise it will describe what can be printed. Before you click the printer button, make sure that your default printer is on-line, and you may want to select printer fonts as described in the toolbox section below. A font size of 10 or less is recommended.

Generally, printouts of text have a wide left margin to allow you to punch them for a binder.

Clicking the print tool when a graph is displayed will print a view of the whole program window.

Try printing out one of the pair records, which will print all of the journal and clutch information. I find this very useful to documentation.

Undo.

This tool is only active when there is data available to undo. This is the case when you are editing a baby's record, when you move a baby between categories, and when you delete a baby, a pair or a pet. Undo availability ends when you move on to do something else, and the tool will dim.

Graph.

The line graph tool produces a dialog for entering the baby info you wish to graph. This is an important function of BirdData, since it allows you to compare a current baby with similar babies raised before.

In the dialog box, you will be able to choose to graph all of the birds in a category or categories, a single bird, or birds whose description match a search template . I have found it useful to use a qualifier in the description of my babies which allows me to search only for related babies. For example, if all of my African Grey babies simply had descriptions of African Grey, I could not separate related birds. Therefore I use the initials of the parents at the beginning of the description. Hence Gandalf and Sterling's babies are GS African Greys, and Casper and Wendy's babies are CW African Greys. I can graph them by selecting CW as a search string along with the African Grey category.

When you select OK, there will be some period of waiting while the program searches for all of the birds that meet your criteria, figures what the scale of the graph will need to be, and then graphs the birds. The graphing function is limited to 200 birds, so if your criteria would produce more than that you will see only the first 200 found.

Once the graph is displayed, you may click on the lower right status bar to display a spreadsheet of the graphed birds. If there is a single bird that you would like to see highlighted on the graph, click on that listing. The hourglass will appear for a moment while the display is updated in the background. You may then click on the lower right status bar to return to the graph display. The chosen bird will be highlighted against the field.

If you would like to "zoom in" on a part of the graph, click with the left mouse button on the area to enlarge. It will enlarge on a 2-to-1 basis. You may repeat this one time for a total 4-to-1 enlargement. Clicking with the right mouse button on the graph will reduce it back again. The print tool will print the form as it is displayed when printing is selected.

(Blank)

The tool to the right of the graph is blank. It is reserved for future expansion; your suggestions are welcome.

New Baby.

The "Chick in Shell" is the icon for the new baby tool. This tool is used to add a new baby to one of the ten baby categories. Clicking the tool will bring up a dialog so that you can select the category for the baby. You will then get a blank form with the system date as the default hatch date. You can fill in the pertinent items. If the hatch date must be changed because it is not the same as the system date, you will have to Click the category icon and re-select the record in order to get the proper dates to show up in the weight spreadsheet.

The Toolbox.

The Toolbox tool is located to the right of the New Baby tool. Clicking this tool will bring up a set of buttons that allow you to configure BirdData for your system. Each button is discussed here:

Icons.

The Icon button will load a dialog that will allow you to configure the 10 category icons and the pair and pet icons to your own preferences, as well as set the titles of the categories. As distributed, BirdData has categories set up which represent my own needs. Since it is unlikely that other breeders raise the same mix of birds that I do, I expect that you will want to change the icons and titles to reflect the types of birds that you raise. When you click one of the bird icons, the currently selected icon paths appear as well as the category title.

Note that there are two separate icons, one for the button in the up position and one for the down position. You can load the same icon in both selections, but the button will not "depress" when you click it. This does not affect the program operation, but it will affect the "feel" of the program.

Clicking the load buttons will invoke a file dialog to set a new icon. Any valid Windows icon with a .ico file type may be used. All icons used by the program must be in a single directory, which by default is the "ICONS" subdirectory of your BirdData directory. If you wish to kkeep the icons somewhere else, move them all; then edit the BirdData.ini file setting "IconPath" to reflect the new location.

Where do you get icons? I have included icons for a number of common bird types. If you want something not provided, the answer is to draw your own. There are a number of shareware and freeware icon drawing programs on BBSs everywhere; look in the Windows section of your favorite file-oriented BBS. If you want to duplicate the up-and-down button look, use the blankup.ico and blankdn.ico buttons provided as backgrounds for your own icons.

Screen Fonts.

Different monitors will look better with different fonts, and the fonts I have selected for BirdData may not look as good on your computer as they do on mine. This tool allows you to set the fonts for most of the elements of the program. Follow the on-screen directions and try various fonts until you like the look. Also available in this tool are the ability to change the titles for the 6 comment lines in the baby records, and the ability to select which of these lines will show up in the category index.

When you leave this dialog, you will get a message that the program must be ended and restarted for changes to take effect.

Chart Colors.

Like the Screen Fonts, you may find that my choices of colors for the chart function do not look good on your monitor. There are 4 elements that you can change: Background, Primary Line, Highlighted Line, and Border. The Primary Line color refers to the color that is used to chart the full complement of babies selected, while the Highlighted Color refers to the color used for a single bird when it is displayed against the field. The Border color is the color of the field behind the age text at the bottom of the chart and the weight text at the right of the chart.

These changes take effect immediately. If you choose the same color for two elements that should contrast, you will receive a warning message. If you choose black for the border color, you will receive a message that the text will not show.

Printer Setup.

BirdData will only print to the Windows default printer, which is selected via the Windows Control Panel. If you have more than one printer connected, this button allows you to change the default without having to go to the Control Panel. If no default printer is installed when this tool is invoked an error will be generated. In that case go to the Control Panel and install a default printer. You should not have to do this more than once unless some other program removes the default printer. If you have more than one printer and use this button, the printer you select will become the default for all of your Windows program until you reset it.

Printer Font.

This tool allows you to select the font used by your printer when printing out data portions of the program. If the font size selected is not small enough, some of the data lines may be truncated at the right of your pages. Generally, a font size of 10 should work fine.

Again, this will only work on a previously selected default printer. If you are not sure that the default printer has been selected, use the Printer Setup button first.

Reg Form.

This tool prints out a registration form for BirdData, although you can easily use the one at the end of this file.

Pack Files

This tool should only be used with caution. I would recommend backing up your data files before using it. If you delete a lot of birds, the size of the data file for the category does not shrink. This tool will reduce the size of the files so that they take up less disk space. It is unnecessary if you delete only a few birds.

Help.

The question mark at the bottom of the tool stack is for possible development of an on-line help facility. I have not written one, and would rather not, but if you think it would be useful please let me know. At this time, the question mark will bring up program information.

Trashcan.

Clicking the trashcan icon has no effect.

About the distributed bird records.

I have provided a great deal of the data from my own breeding and rearing experiences. This data is useful for initially playing around with the program to test its operation, and may also be of some use to breeders of the same species. I have generally removed "private" information such as the names and addresses of persons

the birds have been sold to. You have permission to use my data in any way that you wish, except that if it is used in a publication I would like credit and a copy of the publication. I have generally left the names of bird breeders in the data. When the name is "Arcata Pet," you may quote it. Where other names appear, permission for use must come from the breeder in question.

Where the data is not useful to you, I expect that you will want to delete it to make room for your own. If you are deleting portions of a category, the only way is to individually Drag and Drop them on the Trashcan. If you want to delete all of a category's contents there is another way.

In the directory where you have placed the BirdData files, there is a file called BIRDDATA.INI. Load this into a text editor like Windows Notepad and look at it. You will see that all of the user-configurable items are entries here. Under the [FILES] section, you will see ten listings for FileLength, and below that the listings for FileName. To delete all of a categories contents, change the listing for that FileLength to 0 (zero). When you have done any edits you desire, save the file and exit your editor.

It would then be a good idea to delete the actual data file, or it will take up unnecessary space until your own data grows to equivalent size. The files are in the same directory and are named BDATFIL0.DAT through BDATFIL9.DAT. Note that the numbering sequence is one lower than in the .ini file. If you have set file one to zero, you would delete bdatfil0.dat. These files will be recreated the first time you access them to put your own baby data in them.

Removing BirdData from your computer.

It is a frequent complaint that Windows programs don't easily uninstall. BirdData is fairly easy to remove if you do not find it useful. All of the files for the program are usually in a single directory; the default name is birddata. Deleting this directory, the ICONS subdirectory, and their contents will do most of the job. A section with one line directing Windows to your files has been added to your WIN.INI file, located in your Windows directory. Edit WIN.INI to remove the section titled [BIRDDATA].

The installation of BirdData also involved adding some program libraries to your Windows directory. You may remove them, but it is possible that they are being used by other programs in your possession, so I would advise keeping copies of them for re-installation if something fails to run as a result. The libraries in question are found in the Windows or Windows\System directory, and they are called MHAD200.VBX, MHGR200.VBX, MHEN200.VBX, CMDIALOG.VBX, and VBRUN100.DLL.

The Future of BirdData.

BirdData has been evolving for more than 7 years, and will continue to do so. I am very interested in your ideas to improve the program and add useful features. Thank you for trying BirdData 2.0.

BirdData 2.0
Registration Form
Version 2.0.01

Send this form with \$25 to:

Don Bradner
Arcata Pet
600 F Street
Arcata, CA 95521

You will receive a disk copy of the program
in its latest version, registered to you.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City & State: _____

If you wish, you may pay with a credit card:

Card type: VISA MasterCard AMEX Discover

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Disk Size: 5-1/4 3-1/2

Tell me what you like about BirdData: _____

Tell me what you would like me to add or change in BirdData:

Thank you for registering BirdData. Your registration gives me the
incentive to keep improving the program. Watch for updates.