



PRESENTATION OF THE
RED SISKIN INITIATIVE AT
NATIONAL BIRD
COMPETITIONS

EXPERIENCE AT THE SERVICE OF CONSERVATION

by Enrique Azuaje
Photograph taken by Leonel Ovalle

The passion for birds is something I inherited from my family. It was very common in Venezuelan homes from our time in the 70's and 80s' the holding of birds as a hobby; and my family did not escape from it. By growing up in that environment, I think I developed an interest for birds. At the age of 12, I started with Australian parrots as a first experience, little by little, I started to increase the level of difficulty, by breeding other species.

But it was not until 2003 when I went into the world of Carduelis. The difficulty within the genus is high, but my eagerness to breed it and acquire all the possible knowledge about the species for the purpose of, at some point, helping it, gave me the courage I needed and made me continue. Currently, I am Veterinarian and have 14 years of experience in the breeding of this species, which has never ceased to impress me and teach me new things. The real reason for captive breeding must be that: to acquire knowledge about a species in order to preserve it and not only to recreate yourself. Also, implementing good breeding practices promotes the success of it. And promoting good practices somehow, we help not only the people that want to join the aviculturist world and obtain captive-bred specimens, but we also help the Venezuela Red Siskin. By doing this, we minimize the illegal trade of birds, which is one of the factors that harm this species the most, and also our passion, which is not other than the breeding of birds in captivity.

We currently have the first ex situ breeding center for the Red Siskin in our country, and I am honored to be part of this initiative. I hope that the knowledge and experiences I have acquired for years help this Venezuelan bird that is in need of us. My invitation is for all breeders, who in one way or another wish to contribute with their experiences in this species - which I think is why every breeder undertakes this journey within the aviculture world- to help a species that very much needs it.

**Enrique
Azuaje**

36 years old
14 years of
experience

“The illegal trade of wild-caught birds is one of the factors that most affects the Red Siskin and damages the breeder's reputation”