

## Why use an incubator?

The decision to buy an incubator is increasingly being made by growing numbers of keepers and breeders of birds of prey. There are clear, logical advantages to artificial incubation: taking away eggs for artificial incubation causes the hen to lay more and so increases the seasonal yield of hatchlings and an incubator provides the breeder a second 'nest' in the event of illness or inexperience of the parent(s) to give two examples. But perhaps the most important reason for the popularity of incubators is that the fascinating process of hatching and bringing a new life into the world is brought so close to the breeder.

It is hard to be indifferent to the sight of a hatchling emerging from an egg – it is a very human response to observe and marvel at such a dramatic natural event. When parent bird's brood and raise their own young it is often difficult to observe the incubation and hatching process. Parent birds are often aggressive and care must be taken to limit the stress and distress of human contact, when nests are examined. By incubating eggs artificially the breeder is able to observe much more closely and also takes on the responsibility for the care of the eggs and developing birds inside.

This 'parenting' role of the human surrogate means that the successful use of an incubator is intensely rewarding event and the interest is all the greater when the parent birds, with their particular personalities, are familiar to the breeder.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Bird of Prey breeders look for a 'small' incubator (few breeders need to incubate more than two dozens eggs at a time) which offers the quality, reliability, flexibility and control to give their prized eggs the best possible chance of hatching. Until recently there was a gap in the market for such an incubator which is why Brinsea have developed the Octagon Pro-20. Based on the highly successful Octagon 20 MkIII (which has been used with such success by The National Bird of Prey Centre of late), the Pro-20 also includes Brinsea's latest H22 Humidity Management Module, calibrated digital thermometer (each supplied with its own certificate of accuracy), novel foam isolation pads to protect developing embryos from any unwanted effects of vibration, a 15 page comprehensive instruction booklet and free 2 year guarantee. An optional temperature alarm system to warn of thermal variation in the incubator is available as an option. Although highly advanced, the system is designed to be as easy to use as possible – the Humidity Management Module in particular breaks new ground in user-friendliness. The Octagon Pro-20 incubation system costs £399.95 (including VAT) – not cheap, but the best never is!

**For further details contact Brinsea Products on 01934 823039.**