

Companionship  
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Issue 2, 05



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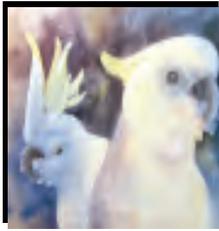
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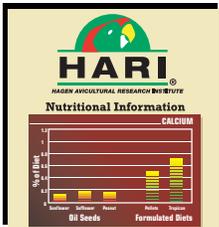
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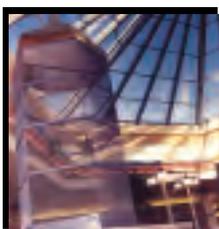
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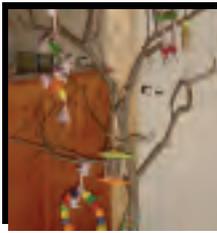
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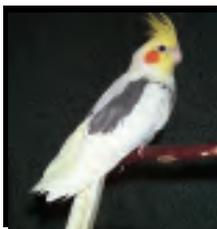
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*Black Headed Caique,  
four month old chick from H.A.R.I.*

*Cover Photography By: Dale Robinson*

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## Editorial Note:

We sincerely apologize for the delay encountered in the release of this second issue of Parrot Life Magazine. We wish to thank all the international support we've received from our readers and subscribers, your encouragements have been vital to our survival. As young fledglings, we have encountered technical difficulties foraging in this international avian industry. As observed with parrots in the wild, mature, experienced, and resourceful individuals chaperone the young chicks of the flock. We were fortunate to have the guidance and generous support from H.A.R.I. for the release of this issue.

In collaboration with the Tropic / Tropimix product line, Parrot Life magazine is offering you the chance to win a trip for two to the VI International Parrot Conference 2006 at Loro Parque, in the Canary Islands. Parrot Life magazine has also launched a new International PDD Awareness Campaign. Wear your ribbons proudly, promoting contributions

towards medical advancements for this deadly avian disease.

We've assembled an extraordinary compilation of editorials and graphics from professional avian consultants, conservationists, aviculturists, breeders, naturalists, veterinarians and technicians to offer our readers the most valuable information to enhance your knowledge to care for your feathered companions. We hail your comments and suggestions to allow us to continue to offer you a resourceful and enjoyable publication.

Josee Bermingham  
Editor



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- In order to win this contest, the selected entrant must first answer unaided, a time limited skill testing question. Contest is subject to the following rules and regulations.
- All information in the Official Entry Form must be supplied for the entry to be eligible. No mechanical or hand-written reproductions of the official Entry Form will be accepted. By submitting an Official Entry Form, each contestant agrees to abide by all the rules and regulations of this contest.
- Enter as often as you like. (Each entry must have a valid entry form and accompanied with an original UPC code off a Tropicana® or Tropimix® bag, (no xerox, no facsimile of a UPC code, and no sample package UPC code accepted).)
- All entries to the contest must be received by March 1st, 2006.
- One (1) trip for two (2) will be awarded. The free trip includes airfare, hotel, two (2) entry tickets to the VI International Parrot Conference including \$350.00\* cash. The prize must be accepted as awarded. No substitutions, refunds, transfers, or cash equivalent payments will be allowed.
- A random draw will take place on Saturday, March 15th, 2006 from all eligible entries. Trip must be taken to coincide with the VI International Parrot Conference September 27 to 30th 2006.
- This contest is open to all residents of Canada and the USA, including all International readers to Parrot Life Magazine over the age of 18 years. Not eligible to participate in this contest are employees, representatives and agents of Rolf C.Hagen Inc., and participating dealers. Also ineligible are members of the immediate family of, and persons who reside with such employees, representatives and agents.
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- All entries become the sole property of Rolf C. Hagen Inc., and none will be returned. By entering this contest all entrants agree to the use and publication of their names, photographs and addresses or publicity by Rolf C. Hagen Inc., or its advertising agencies, without compensation either during or after the contest.
- This contest is subject to all federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations. Quebec residents please note: All duties have been paid to the "Regie de loteries et Courses du Québec". Any litigation respecting the contact and awarding of the trip in this publicity contest may be submitted to the "Regie des alcools, des courses et des jeux du Québec".

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By: Mattie Sue Athan

# Does a Parrot "Enjoy" Companion Life?



Painted by: Shernya Vininsky

Those of us who live with companion parrots are increasingly under scrutiny, even attack from the animal rights movement especially in Europe and California. While aviculturists probably receive the lion's share of criticism, in many places even ordinary bird owners are sometimes called upon to defend the practice of living with feathered companions.

On occasion, bird owners disagree on avian care such as to trim wings or not to trim wings, cage liners that go unchanged for a few days, fresh fruit and vegetables not served on a daily basis, or a myriad of other "slights" can swamp a conscientious parrot person in guilt. Is it any wonder that those of us who live with birds can sometimes feel guilty or defensive? This guilt can have devastating effects on the relationship between the parrot and its person, up to and including giving up the bird.

The word "happiness" may be somewhat "anthropomorphic" - a term applicable only to human behavior. However, animals, especially birds, are perfectly capable of communi-

cating enjoyment of their own well-being. A bird that does not exhibit behaviors typical of healthy individual and/or social adjustment can be called "unhappy," and if a bird is unhappy, certainly re-homing is a humane and caring option. But bird-keeping isn't rocket science. Regardless of some of the rhetoric now being bandied about, birds are not difficult to accommodate. Just as bird behavior can clearly indicate something wrong, it can also demonstrate that it is absolutely right, in spite of what might be considered less-than-perfect husbandry. When feeling worried about the adequacy of care provided to our parrots, responsible owners can look for behaviors indicating health and comfort. While many well adjusted parrots will exhibit some or many of these behaviors, not all birds display all of the following activities.

• **Vocalization:** Although a frustrated bird might scream, an unhappy bird or a bird that does not feel well won't vocalize at all. Most avian vocalizations, whether singing, talking, or simply unintelligible chatter obviously indicate the feelings of well-being we humans associate with happiness.

• **Preening:** A healthy parrot keeps its feathers in order, but a bird that does little except preen may be experiencing boredom or failure of independence.

• **Bathing:** Most parrots relish showers or bathing in a bowl; many of them enjoy daily bathing. A bird that does not take an occasional head dip into a clean water bowl may not be feeling well.

• **Stretching:** A happy, satisfied parrot will stretch in several different ways. The bird might raise both shoulders at the same time. Perhaps the wing and leg on the same side of the body will be stretched in unison followed in a short while with a stretch on the opposite side of the body in a mirror image.

• **Flapping:** Many companion birds like to hold on tight to the cage or perch and flap their wings. This is not an unhappy bird behavior.

• **Tail Wagging:** When a healthy, happy parrot is anticipating a different activity, it may wag its tail feathers vigorously. This behavior resembles a giggle in humans and may be done after a less than pleasant activity such as falling off the perch or toy during play. It indicates that the bird is ready to proceed to the next activity.

• **Beak Grinding:** A sleepy parrot grinding the upper and lower beaks together with eyes closed or nearly closed is showing contentment. This is a self-comfort behavior and has no ill effects on parrots which may or may not have actual effect on the beak.



## *The word "happiness" may be somewhat "anthropomorphic" - a term applicable only to human behavior. However, animals, especially birds, are perfectly capable of communicating enjoyment of their own well-being.*

### • **The Fluff Up or Rough Out:**

Temporarily ruffled feathers by a parrot that is not in a drafty environment or exhibiting concurrent signs of illness demonstrates well-being, interest, or contentment. This behavior is often accompanied by a tail wag or even a brief whole body shake. A bird with fluffed out feathers who doesn't feel well may stand on both feet and exhibit other indications of discomfort.

### • **Sleeping on one foot:**

An unhealthy bird may need to grip the perch with both feet. A healthy, well-balanced bird usually pulls one foot up under the belly feathers when sleeping. When a bird has been resting in this position, their foot becomes warm or even hot which to humans may not feel normal.

• **Toy Play:** Parrots are not unique in having the luxury of play behaviors as adults, but very few adult animals use toys for play.

### • **Tongue Wiggling or Tactile Use of the Tongue:**

Tongue wiggling can be an invitation to pet. The tongue is a sensory organ in a parrot, and a parrot that allows petting of the tongue is usually enjoying a happy interchange, although even a sick parrot might allow tongue petting by a favorite person.

• **Beak Wiping:** Although a parrot might wipe its beak off on a perch or cage accessory if it has an accumulation of food remnants, often, when this is done, it's an expression of happiness relating to that which is being wiped, whether it's a perch or a person.

### • **Pinpointing or Eye Flashing:**

A quick narrowing of the pupil, causing the iris to enlarge indicates interest or excitement by a healthy parrot. Pinpointing often indicates motivation to vocalize, like foot tapping it can also be accompanied by territorial aggression.

### • **Dancing or Head Bobbing:**

A dancing, head bobbing parrot is usually expressing energy and well-being. Head bobbing behavior may escalate to courtship or sexual behavior.

### • **Leaning or "Begging":**

A parrot flattening itself and leaning toward something or someone is expressing a desire for that object or person. If the bird is flighting, this behavior probably precedes flight.

### • **Flying or Following:**

A bird that is willing to follow you around the house on wing or on foot is either delighted with your company or stalking you, but either a following or stalking bird is a self-confident, healthy avian.

### • **Beak "Chattering":**

Tongue wiggling in cockatoos and some other parrots is often accompanied by a rapid up and down movement of the upper beak. This behavior is a clear happiness behavior, although a few mischievous birds might use it as a solicitation to pet, then bite for the fun of it.

• **Tapping:** Tapping with foot or beak against a perch, wall, toy, or human is a signal or a territorial display that may be accompanied by aggression in a mature bird, however, it is

certainly an indication of well-being in these still part wild creatures.

• **Sexual Motivation:** While biting and other territorial behaviors might accompany sexual displays and masturbation, these are usually an indication of a healthy, happy bird.

A sick or maladjusted bird will engage in few or none of the behaviors mentioned above. If you are concerned that your bird isn't demonstrating a sense of well-being, take it immediately to an avian veterinarian. Once the bird is determined to be healthy, then examine and enrich the bird's physical and social environment. Birds are the personification of joy. Feathered bliss is both obvious and contagious, and sharing the happiness of birds is the essence of life for those of us who keep their company.



Mattie Sue Athan  
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IAABC Certified Parrot Behavior Consultant, Award Winning Author. Her most recent Barron's book, *Parrots*, won the Best Non-Fiction Book Award from the Oklahoma Writers'

Federation. She also recently released the novel *Parrots in the City*, one bird's struggle for a place on the planet. Here she joins Jon-Mark and JoAnn Davey to document the status of wild monk/Quaker parrots and their reintroduction into North America.



If you're like me then this is how your morning goes: First thought when the alarm clock goes off "thank God for the snooze button..." Then, at one point, the image of that wonderful first coffee makes you get up. And there it is, the miracle happens once again; that first God-sent sip! Ahh, heaven...

But what if your friends, children and spouse had already left to harvest that magical bean. What if they were working exposed to harmful insecticides and chemical products? What if those chemicals were so toxic that they were banned in North America? What if they were cutting down the forest, Mother Earth's lungs, to harvest the beans? What if hundreds of bird species were on the verge of extinction because they were cutting down their habitat, nesting cavities and food supply? Then would that coffee taste as good?

Yet... this is what's happening in coffee plantations throughout the world. All of them? No. Some plantations and co-ops are now producing a coffee that is a lot safer to harvest. It's called Shade grown coffee, Bird Friendly coffee, Organic and Fair Trade coffee."

What exactly is shade grown coffee and how can it help save birds lives?

### The problems:

Traditionally, coffee grew in harmony with the forest, under the shade of the over-story trees, providing habitat to countless tropical and migratory bird species. In the 1970's, the coffee leaf rust fungus (*hemileia vastatrix*) attacked Brazilian coffee plantations. So, dreading that awful fungus that had forced Sri Lanka to abandon coffee harvesting for tea in the 1870's, many farmers started to clear the forests that provided shade to their coffee plants and switched to a new, open-field, full-sun agricultural system.

The plan worked and the leaf rust was not the catastrophe that many feared. However, during this same modernization period it was observed that plants grown in the traditional shade-tolerant way did not suffer from the effects of leaf rust either. As it turns out, the cool temperatures of high elevation plantations and the long dry season were responsible for the leaf rust's demise. This type of harvesting requires the destruction of forests and the intensive application of agrochemicals, which is an unhealthy combination for workers, wildlife and local communities. So why did these countries continue to modernize?

As chance would have it, the chemical industry was ready to respond to this new demand with all the necessary products: synthetics fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, nematocides, rat poisons and others. Even though it was common knowledge that coffee took time to grow, it was estimated that higher yield should be obtained. "To produce coffee at a better price no matter the cost."

It is now known that this type of harvesting is contributing to soil erosion, water contamination and forest destruction. Coffee is grown in the middle of mountainous regions which are amongst the richest ecological zones found on Earth.

However, in all honesty, I must point out that during my research when I gathered the information from a "master torréfacteur" he claims that pesticides are used only on Robusta and Arabica coffee of very poor quality, those that are cultivated down the mountain's slopes (on the flat land). Coffees that are cultivated on the mountains, the good quality ones, don't need insecticides.

# Ever think about Shade Grown coffee?



On the left: Organic coffee beans.  
On the right: Coffee grown with chemicals.  
One picture speaks more than 1000 words...

Coop: KNCU Tanzania, Photographer: COPYRIGHT Eric St-Pierre

# FAIR TRADE, CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY?

## The solutions:

We now have a choice. We can be informed consumers and support shade grown and fair trade coffee from now on. "In many countries, small scale producers of coffee (also of tea, sugar, cocoa, rice, etc.) gathered to create cooperatives that are able to sell their production through the Fair Trade Network."

They are then getting a FAIR price for their products (4 to 10 times more!), that allows them to have sustainable agricultural practices.

Fair Trade is a first step towards the recognition of their socially and environmentally sustainable practices.

### **Shade grown coffee is harvested in traditional plantations. Some claim it is Bird-Friendly coffee. In fact:**

*"In traditional coffee farms the shade-tolerant coffee shrubs are grown beneath a canopy of native forest trees intermingled with fruit trees (tangerines, avocados, bananas, plantains, lemons) and other plants. ...The ecologically diverse coffee farms also benefit farmers economically by providing a variety of products for local consumption and for sale, plus some insurance if coffee prices are low." (No. 161 November 1996)*

*"Several advocates of shade and organic coffee production methods such as the Organic Crop Improvement Association Inc. and the Rainforest Alliance are attempting to provide some type of classification system to allow this to happen. They were among the co-sponsors of the first Sustainable Coffee Congress organized by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center held in Washington, D.C. in September. The hope is that one day buying "shade coffee" will be like buying dolphin-free tuna."*

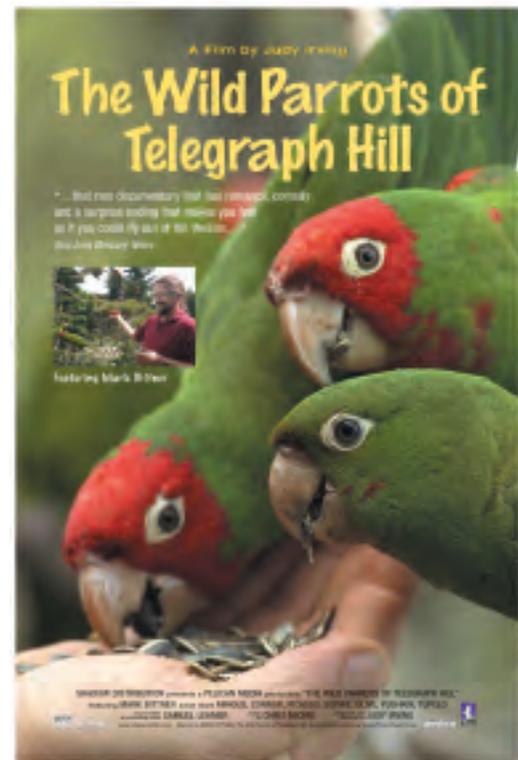
**Bart Sbeghen: BIODIVERSITY AND COFFEE IN LATIN AMERICA, Editor: Jane Villa-Lobos**

### **Encouraging fair trade and sustainable harvesting is fundamental in the race to save our rain forests.**

Shade grown coffee is easily available and doesn't cost much more than regular coffee. It can be found in most supermarkets and some coffee shops, but if you can't find it just search for shade grown coffee on the internet and you will find many distributors around the world. Ask your local merchant and coffee shops to offer this eco brew. There are probably others who would buy it if it was easily available, but the best would be to drink less coffee after all ! It would be a healthier choice for yourself, our rainforests and all the species harmed by its destruction. In fact, deforestation, whether it be partial or complete will harm bird species, however, salvaged trees can provide some habitat for foraging and nesting.

The Baltimore Oriole is one of the many species that is suffering from tree cutting for the full-sun coffee harvesting. So make those birds happy by sending a clear message to the big producers by purchasing shade grown coffee (and cocoa too).

Bird clubs and avian conventions in particular should support this by promoting and offering only bird-friendly coffee at their meetings. Lets not forget that Styrofoam cups are not recyclable, so buy your own thermos-reusable cup for the car and your bird club meetings. Hey, why not? It can and should be done.



Lots of news. First of all, for those of you in Canada, the film "The Parrots of Telegraph Hill" opened in Toronto and Vancouver on July 15, 2005. It will begin to roll out in other cities shortly. More details as we get them.

Also, the film will start regular theatrical screenings in New Zealand in late September and in Australia in October 2005.

The full schedule can be found here:

<http://www.wildparrotsfilm.com/seeit.html>

## The Smithsonian Magazine Tourism Award for Conservation 2004

This was awarded to the Finca Esperanza Verde (Green Hope Farm) Ecodge and Nature Reserve in San Ramn, Nicaragua. This innovative ecotourism project, started by Durham-San Ramn Sister Communities and Nicaraguan partners in 1998, offers visitors a unique experience to participate in the harvest of shade-grown coffee, and join local guides on treks in tropical ecosystems. *By: Sylvie Aubin*

● Smithsonian national zoological park  
<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/>

● Biological conservation newsletter

<http://ravenel.si.edu/bcn/issue/161.cfm>

● Équiterre  
<http://www.equiterre.qc.ca/english>





# A Multi-Faceted Approach to Parrot Conservation

by: *Desi Milpacher*

---

The warm, still air is pierced with the calls of macaws and Amazon parrots - all airborne, flying in pairs or groups. Others romp in the trees, displaying breeding behaviour or acting up simply because they can. They are miniature rainbows, these vibrant, social birds of every environment from rainforest to bone-dry caatinga and woodland. They are also in danger, in peril from the very beauty and intelligence they display. That is where the World Parrot Trust comes in as a beacon of hope for these animals, as many as 90 species of which are endangered.



To reach these goals, the World Parrot Trust promises to:

- Restore and protect populations of wild parrots and their native habitats.
- Promote awareness of the threats to all parrots, captive and wild.
- Oppose the trade of wild-caught parrots.
- Educate the public on high standards for the care and breeding of parrots.
- Encourage links between conservation and aviculture.

## History

---

The World Parrot Trust (WPT) was founded in 1989 at Paradise Park located in Hayle, Cornwall, UK by Michael and Audrey Reynolds, as well as Andrew Greenwood and David Woolcock. Since that year the organization has been able to fund vital conservation work for 37 species of parrots in 22 countries, as well as introduce a global petition with 223 other organizations to end the importation of wild-caught parrots into the European union, a massive undertaking that resulted in the collection of almost 33,000 signatures from 140 countries. The World Parrot Trust has also opened many worldwide regional branches in North America, Asia, Australia and Europe. These branches work to achieve the aims of the Trust, which are the survival of parrot species in the wild, and the welfare of captive birds everywhere.

## THE WPT 12

---

All of the endangered parrots of the world face problems mainly due to habitat loss, logging and illegal trapping for the pet trade. While the World Parrot Trust helps out many different research projects, the organization and its regional branches have focused their greatest efforts on a group of threatened and endangered parrots called the WPT 12. With each project WPT uses the aims previously listed to achieve the protection of these parrots. The following describes each species and any current projects in progress.

## African Grey

---

(*Psittacus erithacus*) **2004 IUCN Red List Category** (evaluated by BirdLife International - the official Red List Authority for birds for IUCN): **Least Concern**

Large, grey and with a striking red tail, this vocal parrot is unmistakable. Although it is not threatened worldwide, there is agreement that the indiscriminate trapping of this species will lead to its loss in West Africa in the near future. The global population is unknown. WPT has led a petition recently to ban the import of wild-caught parrots into the European Union, which would immediately affect these birds, as they are the second highest wild parrots imported. An ongoing study in Lobeke National Park by volunteers with the WWF aims to address issues related to the quantity of birds harvested in the area, trading routes and local networks, identifying capture sites, law enforcement, education, monitoring the species and studying its reproductive biology.

## Echo Parakeet

---

(*Psittacula Echo*)  
**Critically Endangered**

This parakeet is found only on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Once widely but thinly distributed on a few islands in this area, the wild population is now at 100 individuals, up from a low of 12. The WPT has helped fund the work of Carl Jones and his team since 1990 to save



**Blue-throated Macaw "*Ara glaucogularis*"**  
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the Echo parakeet, providing well over \$150,000 US. Aviaries built by the Gerald Durrell Endangered Wildlife Sanctuary in Mauritius are used to house and hand-raise babies brought in from the field that would not survive otherwise, to maximize egg and chick survival. Aviary produced chicks are also fostered in wild nests when needed. This work has increased the Echo population by as many as 80 birds in two seasons.

numbers from 50 to 100 birds. After remaining elusive for many years, this species was rediscovered in 1992 by Dr. Charles Munn. The World Parrot Trust is aiding the Bolivian government in locating and protecting these few remaining birds.

## Blue-throated Macaw

---

(*Ara glaucogularis*)

**Critically Endangered**

This large macaw is endemic to a small area of the Amazon basin in northeast Bolivia, where it

## Golden Conure

---

(*Guaruba guarouba*)  
**Endangered**

The Golden conure is found south of the Amazon River in Brazil, in tropical rainforest. The global population of this species is unknown. Dr. Carlos Yamashita has studied and worked with the



**Lear's Macaw**

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Golden conure for many years. The WPT has helped with the Golden Conure Survival Fund, which has provided over \$25,000 US to Dr. Yamashita's vital work.

## *Lear's Macaw*

(*Anodorhynchus leari*)  
**Critically Endangered**

The Lear's Macaw is found in a small area in Brazil. This vivid, blue bird inhabits dry terrain, roosting and nesting in sandstone cliffs. The world population is approximately 250 birds. The WPT helps protect this species by funding BioBrasil, a successful Brazilian non-profit organization. BioBrasil employs scientific research, environ-

mental education, land purchase, local community sustainable development and low-impact ecotourism to achieve its goals of saving endangered wildlife and lands.

## *Great Green Macaw*

(*Ara ambigua*)  
**Vulnerable**

This macaw is found in the Caribbean and in South America. They flock near humid forests. The numbers are reduced to double digits in Costa Rica and it has been extirpated (a species no longer existing in this area, but occurring elsewhere) in much of its historic range. WPT's Great Green Macaw Conservation Fund has

raised over \$20,000 to help this species. Oliver Chassot and Guisselle Monge Arias are studying these birds in Costa Rica with support from WPT.

## *Imperial Amazon*

(*Amazona imperialis*)  
**Endangered**

The Imperial, a large Amazon, inhabits mountain rainforest in Dominica. Its numbers are estimated at between 80-100. The WPT has contributed funds to help purchase land for a national park, which will enhance the Imperial's survival. The WPT also plans to follow through with other conservation action to help this bird. Along with Paul Reillo and the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, the WPT has provided funds to build nest boxes which will allow them to view the birds directly or indirectly in areas such as foraging, nest cavity inspection with video devices. This procedure will also be done for the Red-necked Amazon which is also rare.

## *Moluccan Cockatoo*

(*Cacatua moluccensis*)  
**Vulnerable**

This large, peach-coloured cockatoo hails from Seram and adjacent island in Indonesia. This species prefers lowland forest below 900m, roosting in noisy groups. The world population is thought to be above 8000. The Trust is supporting a program by Project Bird Watch that harvests and exports Molucca nuts, thereby encouraging protection of this bird's habitat.

## *Palm Cockatoo*

(*Probosciger aterrimus*)  
**Not endangered**

The very vocal and jet-black Palm Cockatoo is found in Australia and New Guinea. Its wild population is believed to be around 30,000. This little-known species will be better known because of the Palm Cockatoo Conservation Fund, which has been launched by WPT. The fund will be used to continue basic biological research of this species.

## *Red-throated Lorikeet*

(*Charmosyna amabilis*)  
**Endangered**

This rarely seen Lorikeet is endemic to islands in the Fiji group, where it occurs only above 500m and below 1000m. The world population is considered to be less than 10,000. In collaboration with the Fiji National Trust the WPT funded a six-month expedition to locate, study remaining birds, with the long-term plan of protecting them. There is four other parrot species found on these islands.

## St. Vincent Amazon

(*Amazona guildingii*)

**Vulnerable**

The St. Vincent is one of the largest amazons; it measures 40 cm from head to tail. This bird lives only on St. Vincent Island, in the Lesser Antilles. There were perhaps 800 birds by 1994. WPT has helped restore degraded habitat as well as providing veterinary help, allocating funds for field gear to conduct surveys.

## Thick-billed Parrot

(*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*)

**Endangered**

The Thick-billed parrot hails from western and central Mexico. Previously, it ventured as far north as Arizona and New Mexico. There are between 1000-4000 of these heavy-billed, green parrots in the wild. WPT has supported studies for the translocation of these birds, and assessing their habitat needs. Other objectives for the conservation of this species include: the study of breeding biology, documenting chick mortality causes, documenting foraging behaviour, screening wild bird diseases, developing new community-based conservation techniques for local people. Claudia Macias and Ernesto Enkerlin-Hoeflich are leading these studies.

## Your support matters

The strength in our organization comes from a diverse group of people such as professional biologists, Zoologists, Veterinarians and caring individuals like yourselves. With more than 2000 worldwide members, the trust relies on the support for fundraising and awareness projects. Members receive copies of the Trust's quarterly publication, *PsittaScene*, which highlights the work of the WPT, and can also support the trust by buying 'parrot'phenalia through its online stores in the US and the UK at <http://www.worldparrottrust.org/>

The WPT relies on the donations and the fundraising efforts of its members to help these and other parrot projects. A question sometimes posed to the Trust: What happens to the money raised by the organization? With donated funds, research is possible. The money pays for lab equipment, vehicles, local help and tools to aid with the work. Local help is particularly important since it involves indigenous communities struggling with poverty. The process is important for protecting their heritage and livelihoods. If they can protect their environment a more sustainable economy can be achieved, for people, parrots and other animals. It has been estimated that protecting 50 of the most endangered species could have positive effects on 500 million acres of rainforest - a massive and sobering number. Since animals and plants are forever bounded together ecologically, it is vital the earth's organisms for rainforests and other environments to remain intact and healthy.



**Thick-billed Parrot (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*)**

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## Conclusion

The World Parrot Trust, through its many branches, uses its multi-faceted approach to conservation to great effect. Through restoring and protecting wild parrot populations and their habitats, educating the public on the issues facing wild and captive birds, building relationships with local communities and non-profit organizations and using the two disciplines of aviculture and preservation together, the World Parrot Trust achieves intelligent and reasonable conservation, in a world where extremes can sometimes dominate.

Sources: *PsittaScene*, Volume 15, No. 2, 3, 4, 2003, Volume 16, No. 2, 2004; The World Parrot Trust online; Rare Species Conservatory Foundation online; *Parrots - A Guide to the Parrots of the World*, Juniper and Parr, 1998; 2004 IUCN Red List, Birdlife International online; BioBrasil online, photo credits, WPT-UK.

*Desi Milpacher is an aviculturist with a small flock in the Okanagan valley. She has a diploma in Animal Health Technology from the University College of the Cariboo (now Thompson Rivers University) and has eight years experience raising parrots.*

## THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

One of the regional branches, the Canadian World Parrot Trust or CWPT, has been in existence since 1992, with Mike Pearson as its founding member. Since then the CWPT, through its dedicated volunteers, has supported a number of parrot conservation projects - most notably efforts to save the Dominican Amazons. Through the generous support of organizations like the Donner Canadian and Highbury foundations hundreds of thousands of dollars have been donated to the Dominica programme. CWPT has recently moved its offices west to British Columbia. Anyone interested in supporting the CWPT can contact:

Steve Milpacher  
Canadian World Parrot Trust  
#9 - 3151 Lakeshore Road  
Suite 425  
Kelowna, BC V1W 3S9





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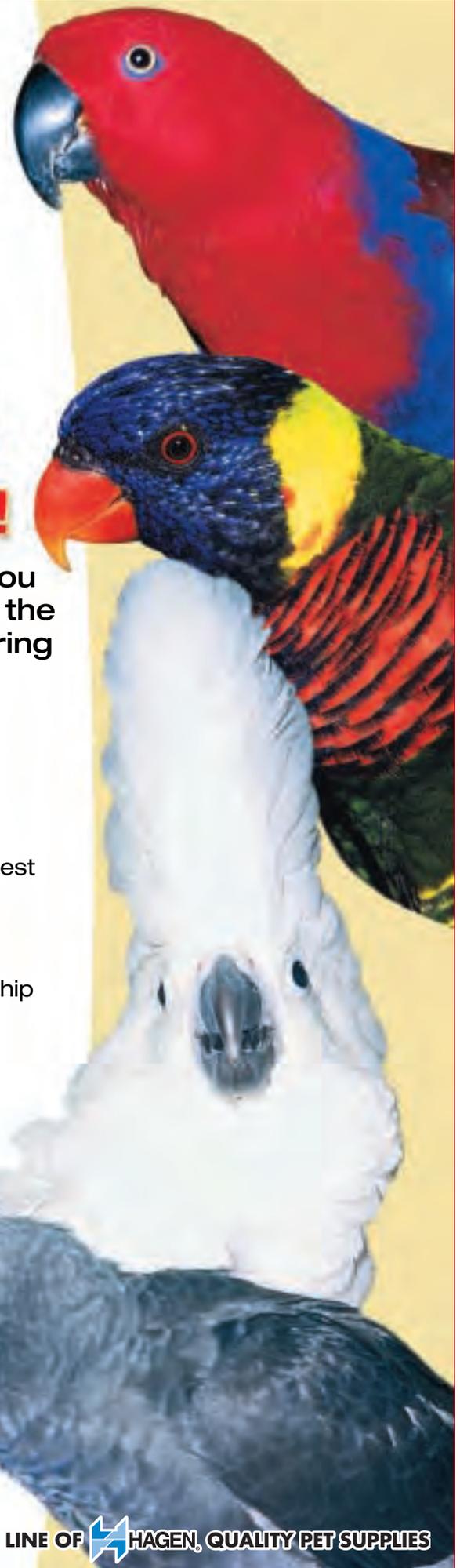
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# Part 2 Avian Nutrition:

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## TRENDS AND PHILOSOPHIES

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By: Mark Hagen, M.Ag. Director of Research, Rolf C. Hagen, Inc.

**T**he US based NRC uses the concept of expressing required nutrient levels based on certain dietary energy values, for all animal nutrient requirement publications. Fiber levels in seed kernels are much lower than what is declared on analysis statements on bags of mixed seeds. Since birds hull off the husks of seeds and nuts, these high fiber shells are not eaten by the birds but must be included in the whole seed bag analysis for packaging. This results in an under estimation of protein and fat and over estimation of fiber rendering the nutrient information on bags of seed. Selection by birds of the high calorie seeds and rejection of lower fat grains (which would balance out the fat) results in malnutrition and obesity.

Formulated diets balance fiber with other nutrients in a pre-mixed kibble where birds cannot select out the higher fat ingredients. The mess around cages from high fiber hulls, a negative aspect of bird keeping, is also eliminated with a formulated diet. Food used as a play toy is wasteful and unhealthy. Giving wood, rawhide and rope chew toys is far better for the long-term health of birds.

Optimum vitamin levels are harder to determine and can easily be missed in the bird. Deficiencies of several vitamins may result in poor reproduction. Resistance to disease and general health are difficult to measure. How much more Vitamin A, E or C should be added to a diet before the cost is wasted or the bird receives too much? One way around this is to add forms of the vitamins that are safer. Pro-vitamin A or Beta-Carotene are some examples which the birds can then convert to Vitamin A as they need it. Vitamin C may be required during stress or in babies and is a very fragile vitamin that breaks down quickly in foods. Using stabilized or chelated forms gives greater assurance the levels that are added are going to be received by the bird. One company warned users to remove Vitamin E supplements from male cockatoos once breeding began as they related excess E to aggression in male Cockatoos. Not having enough Vitamin E will lead to infertility but adding more than required does not necessarily mean birds become violent to their mates! Adding more Vitamin E than that required by the bird will help act as a natural anti-oxidant in formulated diets,

protecting fats from becoming rancid and other vitamins from being destroyed.

Excess Vitamin D3 has caused more problems in formulated food and attempts at supplementing cafeteria style diets than any other vitamin. The result of excess Vitamin D3 in the diet, especially in young macaws, is calcification of soft tissue organs such as kidneys, and this is easily found upon histopathology of biopsies. An Avian Nutrition Committee was formed by the US based Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) to look at issuing some guidelines on nutrient levels in maintenance bird diets. I had the honor to be part of this

*Calcium levels in oilseeds are so low that African Greys, after just a few years on seed diets, may develop muscle tetany or other problems.*

process and one of the most important recommendations that we made was that Vitamin D3 levels should not be higher than 2,000 IU/kg of a parrots diet (Gross energy diet range 3200 - 4200 kcal/kg). There is no reason why we should see baby macaws die of a painful Vitamin D3 toxicity, even though some commercial interests may not want such open exchange of private food research data. (see Feed Management, Watt Pub., Feb 1998, Vol 49 #2)

Common problems in birds on seed based diets are poorly calcified eggs and egg binding, weak bones, thyroid and muscle contraction problems. These are all related to the lack of several minerals in seed

kernels. Simply producing a supplement for seed based diets that contain a little of each essential mineral is ignoring the fact that some minerals may already be at high enough levels in seeds. Potassium and iron are two minerals, which are found at good levels in seeds. Too much iron supplementation may cause liver disease in some types of toucans, mynahs and other soft-bills. A closer look at each mineral deficiency is needed to prepare a proper supplement.

It appears that phosphorus levels in most grains and oilseeds are sufficient. Some of the phosphorus is unavailable to the bird as it is bound up with phytic acid. The ratio of phosphorus to calcium needs to be within a range of about 1:2, that is twice as much calcium versus phosphorus. Most mineral supplements for birds contain this ratio but, when combined with high phosphorus, low calcium seeds do not result in the correct dietary intake. Calcium levels in oilseeds are so low that African Greys, after just a few years on seed diets, may develop muscle tetany or other problems. These Greys would need emergency veterinary calcium supplementation as they have difficulty utilizing bone sources. Unfortunately, excessive calcium and its related nutrient vitamin D3 became a problem as breeders over-supplemented diets. In rapidly growing babies, calcium is deposited in soft tissue such as kidneys. Organ failure would result, illustrating the point that home made mixtures of food can be dangerous.

Formulated diets that have strict quality control on nutrient levels are safer for birds especially with inexperienced pet owners. Psittacosis is still a problem with some species but can be eliminated with long term feeding of a medicated pellet. This zoonotic disease can be found in sub-clinical carriers such as cockatiels. At HARI we have eliminated carriers of Chlamydia, which causes Psittacosis, by feeding a formulated diet with a 1% chlortetracycline premix added to the formula for 60 days. Other formula modifications need to be done such as higher anti-fungal levels (calcium propionate) and lower calcium levels. My point here is that formulated diets are our best answer to eliminating this disease from our aviaries. Adding drugs to drinking

*Formulated diets  
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water is not the best way to eliminate this disease from a carrier.

It is true that we are at the early stage of understanding the nutritional and behavioural needs of captive birds. But we will only learn more about their specific needs for fat, proteins and vitamins if we know the composition of the diet we are feeding them and what the birds get from it. This is almost impossible to figure out when birds can pick through cafeteria style feeding methods. All the wasted food would have to quickly be collected and analyzed and subtracted from the presented food; the difference being what the bird ingested.

In the 1980's, when I was working on my Masters degree I tried this and could not come up with accurate numbers there was just too much waste. I was, however, able to set up a unique food hopper, feed shelled sunflower, and collect the pieces of kernel wasted by the birds, in this case Goffin's Cockatoos. The metabolizable energy value of sunflower seed kernel in these caged Goffin's was 6,201 + 282 kcal/kg when determined in an ad libitum total collection trial and 6,094 + 86 kcal/kg when determined by force feeding with total collection. The average daily existence metabolism for the Goffin's under caged maintenance conditions was 48 kcal/day/bird or 185 kcal/day/kg of bird. This is about 2.2 times the basal metabolic rate predicted from formulas. Knowing the energy needs of a bird and the energy

value of a diet will ensure that enough of a nutrient is added or supplemented to that portion.

There are several different ways to switch birds to a formulated diet. Slowly decreasing the ratio of seeds to pellets makes for a messy conversion as the bird seeks out its oil seeds and throws the pellets on the ground. We have found it is better to use multiple bowls and allow the seed bowl to empty each day by feeding a lot less and always making sure the pellet bowl is full. Adding warm water and mixing in some sunflower kernel to the formulated diet improves the conversion. Moist food is more palatable to many birds, but spoils very quickly and should be replaced often even twice a day. Slowly switch to the dry form once conversion has occurred.

Questions of conversion rarely come up in America lately because most baby parrots sold to the pet trade are weaned onto formulated diets. We have found that this is easier than weaning to seeds supplemented with all kinds of soft foods. If the requirements for excellent growth and featheration are met then it would be difficult to say that the formula is not complete. So with tens of thousands of parrots having been raised on these diets we can worry less about knowing what the precise minimum requirement for each nutrient for each species of bird actually is.

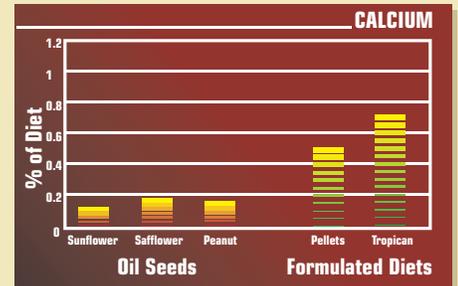
Some ingredients used in formulated diets have been questioned lately. While soybeans are an excellent source of protein, in the raw state they do contain anti-nutritional factors which interfere with protein utilization. These are, however, destroyed and inactivated during processing. Science does not have all the answers yet, forcing us to look at issues and questions in a structured manner (the scientific method) which allows some conclusion to be reached.

Too often breeders change something in their husbandry and equate success or problems to that change. There are many variables which can influence failure or success; weather, subclinical (undiagnosed) disease, experience, stress and others. In order to more accurately judge a new supplement or food it is important to minimize these other factors. One way to more fairly judge a product or ingredient is to only give it to half the number of pairs of a species and to treat the other half as a control group to compare to.

**Keep an open mind and always question "is there a better way".**



### Nutritional Information



Calcium levels in oilseeds are so low that African Greys, after just a few years on seed diets, may develop muscle tetany or other problems. These Greys would need emergency veterinary calcium supplementation as they have difficulty utilizing bone sources. Unfortunately, excessive calcium and its related nutrient vitamin D3 became a problem as breeders over supplemented diets. In rapidly growing babies, calcium is deposited in soft tissue such as kidneys. Organ failure would result, illustrating the point that home made mixtures of food can be dangerous. Formulated diets that have strict quality control on nutrient levels are far superior for birds. **Tropicana** has been on the market for over fourteen years with excellent results. **Prime** vitamin/mineral supplement was developed by HARI for those birds still eating seed and soft food diets, but dosages must be followed carefully.

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# What Are These Species

Check page 56 to see how well you know your Parrots



# La Volière

■ *The evolution of modern society, the unquenchable desire to return to nature, our concern for species' preservation and the environment. The need to stimulate our physical and mental development in search of a longer, fulfilling life. These factors have influenced architects and designers to integrate open-air, sun-filled rooms, water gardens, aquariums and terrariums into our homes and gardens.*

*"La Volière" is reemerging within our living space.*

*By: Jacques Therriault*

When the great European explorers discovered the new world they saw the birds from exotics lands, with beautiful colours and wonderful singing melodies. They were charmed and brought some birds back as gifts to theirs masters.

Nobles, kings, princes, popes and lords ornated their castles with these magnificent birds. From finches to parrots, exotic species were introduced in the homes of the great and the elite. Their architects and artists created superb cages that they called "Volière" to incorporate and blend in the "décor" of their sumptuous dwellings.

Today, these wonderful creatures can be enjoyed by everyone, whether our living space is big or small. We can accomodate into our home the type of cage to fit our environment and life-styles.

Meanwhile, in certain European and Asiatic countries, where climate is more favorable than elsewhere for exotic species, they continued to build large flights. These flights were mainly built outdoors. This provided a more natural environment, (spacious, aerated, natural light permitting flight) thus creating a sense of freedom. A promenade in the gardens would be accompanied by the chants of songbirds and one could marvel at their ability to fly. Some of the most wonderful public gardens still have flights today.

Years ago, already passionate about birds, while I was sitting in front of an exercise flight for my fledgling chicks I started to contemplate on this historical époque. This brought about the idea, in 1985, to build huge flights, aviaries to install in public places. The vision of creating flights for geriatric homes and facilities for the physically challenged became an inspiration.

This dream became a reality. And throughout the following years I designed and built flights in various public spaces such as hotels, commercial centers, residence centers and private homes.

Initially, our breeding colony brought success to our conceptual design by meriting over 300 bird shows. Prices varied at each event. Undoubtedly, the beneficial result of being housed in large flights transcended in their appearance, feather condition, posture and general well being. This had a cascading effect and now indoor flights in homes and apartments are in vogue.

### **Advantages of providing a "Flight" for your companions**

We now understand that the best way of achieving healthy living is to



One no longer needs to be royalty, aristocrat or a casino owner to have the pleasure of incorporating a flight in their home. The apartment flight 'La Volière' can be designed and integrated in a modest or refined décor. My associate, also a passionate bird enthusiast and I have created Les Entreprises J.T.F.L. Our mission is to design and create such flights, determined to adapt these to creatures who were meant to fly.

# The evolution of flight cages



Rapturous contentment, lively, stimulating, joy and distraction could be integrated within insipid lifestyles.

be in good physical health, and we persist to creatively find ways to remain fit. Despite the world's ever-changing state, true values remain unchanged. The best remedy for disease is prevention. We strive try to find miracle recipes, but common sense prevails: a balanced and complete nutritional diet, exercise in a healthy and clean, unpolluted, aerated environment and, if possible, the great outdoors! This recipe is valid for our well being as well as that of our cherished feathered companions.

Understandably space is often limited, although with a little creative thinking and imagination we can find an unutilized corner in our homes to design a flight for our birds.

A parrot's flight, with a back panel became a physiological division between to create two rooms in an open space. The flight cage can also be an element of design and décor. Artificial

full spectrum lighting fixtures are integrated within the roof. The interior is decorated and adapted with natural and therapeutic perches, shrubs and tree branches, and possibly the addition of a water fountain. To bridge practicality and aesthetics we complement the support rack with wheels and integrate a storage space for objects and material required for the care and maintenance of the birds and flight.

It has been said that birds prefer length to height, that the wire must be in this direction or another, all this has truth although there are ways to adapt to these requirements What is essential to understand is that confinement leads to boredom, they must learn to utilize all the space provided, by facilitating accessibility and creatively incorporating activity stimulating materials to arouse their curiosity and activity levels.

Certainly, avian specialists will all confirm that our birds' cages must be spacious, the largest possible. A simple



**A mixed flight for budgies and Australian parakeets within this botanical garden enjoys the natural sunlight, tropical mist and visitors' appreciation.**

corner on the balcony can be used to install a flight cage for daily exercise. Note that when the cage is large, it is often easier to clean, thus also contributing to better health care.

Les Entreprises J.T.F.L. have a reputation for fabricating easy-to-clean flight cages with many accesses and quality materials, non toxic, anti-rust paint. They can all be disassembled easily to take with you to the cottage, or to return indoors after the summer season. Wood is only used for decorative motifs inaccessible to the birds and for the storage cabinets to maintain optimum hygiene.

The multiplicity of the decors and materials available, the infinite possibilities for conceptual design, the eccentricity or simplicity of the architects and designers have obliged us to develop a unique expertise in North America in the fabrication and design of custom flight cages. We realized the place for flight cages in this modern world and harmoniously integrated these into hundreds of unique designs.

Editorial and photography by:  
Jacques Therriault  
Translated by: Josee Birmingham



# DO-IT-YOURSELF AIR FILTRATION SYSTEM

For this issue's do-it-yourself project we will show you how you can custom build a small, inexpensive yet efficient air filtration system.

Living with companion birds, we soon realized the importance of eliminating, as much as possible the dust particles in the air of our homes or aviary. The quantity and species of birds we care for, combined with our personal sensibility to dust particles can contribute to respiratory discomfort. Frequent misting of your companions and an efficient air filtration system

such as this one can dramatically reduce the dust particles in the air you and your feathered companions breath.

The materials used to build the exterior box of the filtration unit can be chosen to blend in with your style, furnishings and decor. With a little imagination, this unit can be subtly integrated into your home.

Traditional air filtration systems sold on the market are very efficient but expensive (approx. 250.00\$ to 450.00\$ Can.) and some are unpleasantly noisy. This custom built filtration unit costs approx. \$70.00 Can. and is relatively quiet.

## Tools required

- Circular power saw
- Screw driver / Power drill
- Hammer
- Measuring tape

## Required materials

• 1 HONEYWELL ventilation system with double FAN: HW-300C (Refer to photo A)

• 4" X 8" melamine sheet 3/8" or 1/2" thick (the melamine sheet can be replaced by another material sheet to match your décor).

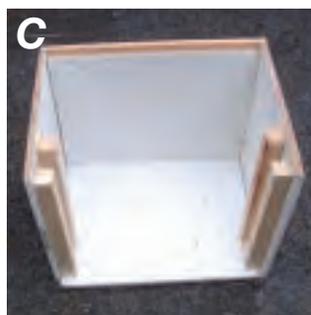
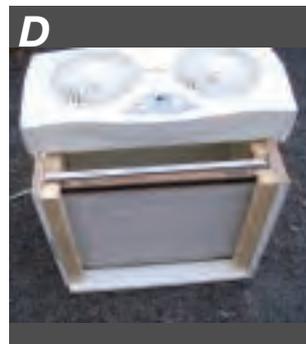
• 1 forence 2" X 2" spruce 8 ft. length

• 1 furnace filter 15" X 24" (for the pre-filter) approx \$1-2

• 1 filter 15" X 24" hepa filter or dirt demon or felt ( approx. \$5.00 Can.) (Refer to photo B)

- Nails & screws
- 4 wheels (optional)

**Approximate cost of materials: \$70.00**



## Step by step...

**1)** Cut the melamine sheet into the following sizes.

- 2 PIECES: 16" X 16" (for the sides)
- 2 PIECES: 23 1/2" X 16" BACK and under siding
- 1 PIECE: 23 1/2" X 3 1/2" (FILTER cover)

For a minimal cost, your home hardware center can precut these pieces for you when purchasing the melamine sheet and wood lengths.

**2)** Cut the forence (1" x 2") that will be used as tracks to insert the filters into the front of the unit into 4 equal lengths: 15" each.

**3)** ASSEMBLE the box with the 2 sides, back and under panels using the appropriately sized screws or nails (1 1/4"). (Refer to photo C)

**4)** The placement of 4 wheels is optional, but could be installed at this stage, screwed onto the bottom panel ( 1 at each corner-1 inch from the sides)

**5)** Install the 2 pieces of forence onto the front of each side panel, allowing a space for later insertion of the double filter (2 inches or depending on the thickness of your filters)

**6)** Install the ventilation system on the top (facing upwards) screwing it onto the side panels. (Refer to photo D)

**7)** Insert the filters into the front slot made with the forence pieces. The pre-filter in front of the hepa/felt/dirt devil filter - Now you have your 3 speed custom built filtration unit. (Refer to photo E)

- This ventilation system can either pull or push the air through the unit. It is preferable to set it so that the air is pulled through the unit's filters and then escapes through the top.

**8)** The filters should be cleaned routinely (weekly if possible) by vacuuming or shaking them outside. The filters should also be replaced periodically.

Living with over 35 parrot companions in our home and close to 100 in an adjacent building, the need for several inexpensive and efficient filtration systems became a necessity. My wife, Linda who has for a number of years suffered respiratory difficulties, could no longer endure the discomfort and uneasiness to breathe the dusty air produced by our feathered companions. Within a 1 week, I custom designed 3 units for our home and 2 others for the breeding aviary. The systems are set at level 2-3 during the day (especially the one installed close to the cockatoos!) At night we set them down to 1. Remarkably, by the second week, our macaws who would regularly sneeze throughout the night,

stopped. My wife is no longer struggling to breath and there is less dust on our furnishings. through the sunlight beams that enters our windows, we no longer see the particles of dust that were ever so present before.

Till next time, I wish you happy and healthy living with your avian companions.

Robert Papineau  
Perroquets en Folie  
[www.perroquetsenfolie.com](http://www.perroquetsenfolie.com)





# CANADIAN AVIARY



Article By: Sandra Davey  
Photography by: Wayne Davey

## The Niagara Falls Aviary:

# Birds of the Lost



When most people think of Niagara Falls, they think of the natural wonder and beauty of the Falls themselves. Well, if you are a bird lover, when you think of Niagara Falls, you should be thinking of the natural wonder and beauty of the inhabitants of The Niagara Falls Aviary: Birds of the Lost Kingdom. Located next to the spectacular Niagara Gorge, this relatively new attraction has quietly been gaining attention as a truly unique educational and entertaining attraction. Privately owned and funded, The Niagara Falls Aviary opened in June of 2003 and has since been awarded "Attraction of the Year" for 2003 and 2004 and "New Business of the Year 2003". As my husband is employed as the Aviary's Senior Keeper, I have had the privilege and pleasure of watching the Aviary develop through it's "fledgling period". In this article, I will lead you on a journey through the marvels of Birds of the Lost Kingdom.

Imagine yourself in the depths of the jungle, on a journey in search of the birds of a lost kingdom. Every aspect of the Aviary has been designed around this theme and attempts to represent a jungle in the process of reclaiming the buildings and surrounding areas of a lost kingdom. While birds are the main focus of the Aviary, other inhabitants of the jungle are also incorporated

into the display.

As you enter the building there is an area bounded by bamboo fencing that contains natural branch playstands to display the Aviary's handfed parrots. These parrots include a Yellow Naped Amazon, Alexandrine, Umbrella Cockatoo, two Congo African Greys and a Sun Conure. With the exception of the Sun Conure, these birds were all handraised by the Aviary staff and live together off exhibit in a large playroom. Besides being used for display in the Aviary entrance, these birds are also used for educational and promotional displays and for photo opportunities with visitors.

Once you pass by the parrots, an escalator takes you up two floors to the Small Bird Aviary. This planted aviary measures approximately 20' by 35' and is home to over 80 birds representing



approximately 35 species. The birds in this aviary are mainly softbills, including over 20 species of finches as well as doves, leafbirds, Bulbuls, quail and Jacanas. The aviary has a bamboo wall dividing its centre. This provides a way for birds to achieve physical separation from other aviary



inhabitants if necessary and also prevents you from seeing visitors who are on the other side of the exhibit (thus contributing to the illusion that you are on a journey of discovery through a lost kingdom). The enclosure also contains a small pond with a waterfall where you will often see the birds bathing in the trickle of water that falls over the rocks. The birds in this display are very acclimated to the presence of visitors and will often perch near the wire mesh, allowing visitors a close view. There has been breeding activity in this aviary with both the Blue-headed Parrot Finches and the California Quail producing young. Benches and potted plants line the pathway around the Small Bird Aviary, enhancing the overall experience and allowing visitors a place to relax and watch the behaviours of the display's



Imagine yourself in the depths of the jungle, on a search for the birds of a lost kingdom.

inhabitants. Large windows overlook the Niagara Gorge and river. Binoculars are available for use and the avid bird watcher is likely to spot several species of gulls as well as the chance of glimpsing a peregrine falcon winging its way through the gorge. Near the exit to this area is a small display containing three Goldie's Lorikeets and a pair of Roul-roul (also known as Crested Wood Partridge). The Roul-roul pair has had great breeding success and have raised their own young in this display.

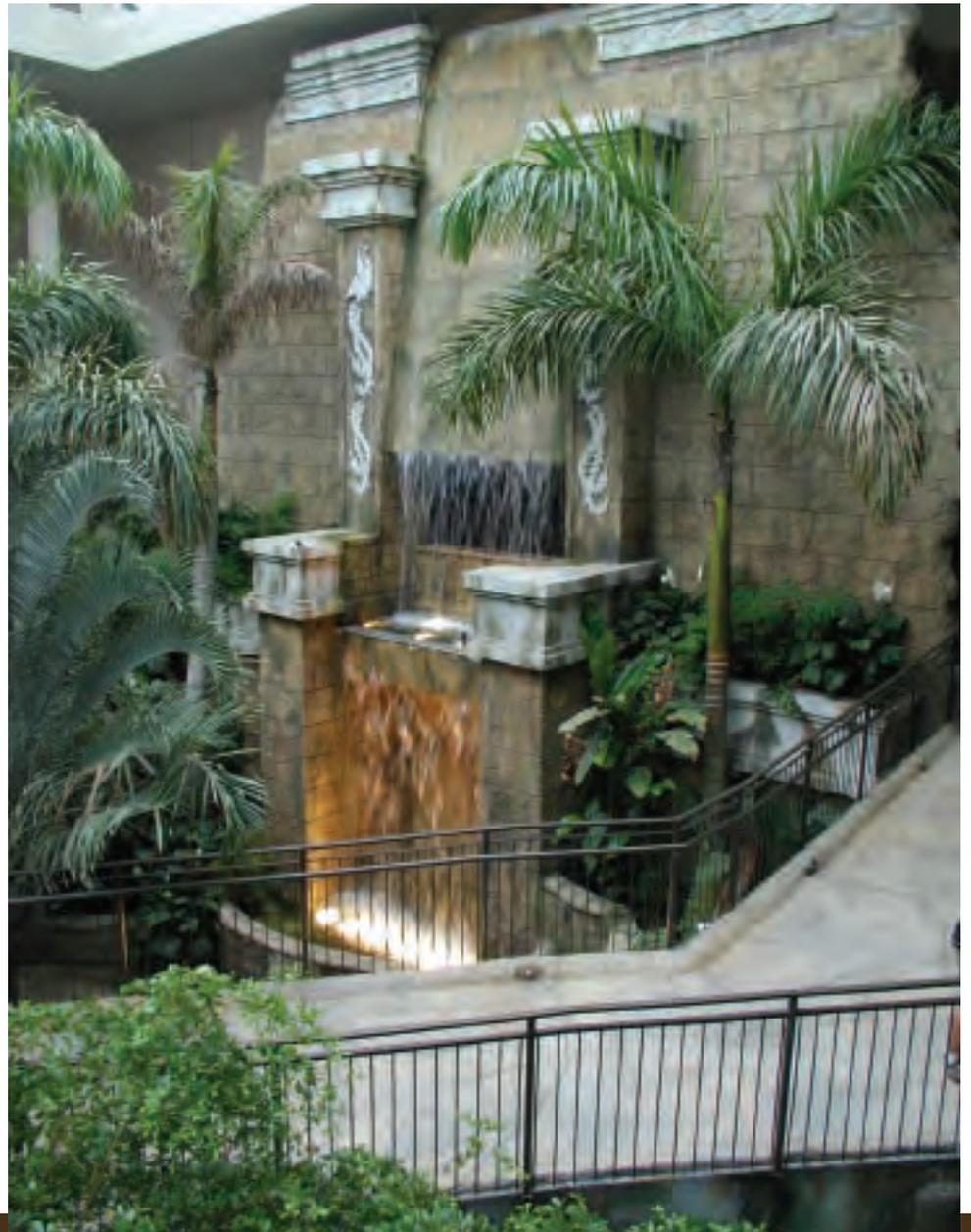
Just past the Roul-roul exhibit you will pass through a stone archway and enter into the nocturnal area. This warm, humid area showcases several jungle inhabitants that are active after dark. The path winds its way past exhibits of Yellow and Orange Rat Snakes, Poison Arrow Frogs, Boobook Owls, Brazilian and Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches, Leopard Geckos and Tropical Screech Owls. All of the exhibits are designed to allow excellent views of the inhabitants while allowing the animals to display natural behaviours. At the time of writing there are exhibits in progress that will house a Goliath Bird Eating Spider and Dwarf Caiman. A walk through the main part of the nocturnal area reveals a wooden bridge, stone ruins, a biplane, circa 1930, suspended from the ceiling, a small pond and a ceiling full of twinkling stars. Once you pass over the wooden bridge you approach the largest exhibit in the nocturnal area: the Egyptian Fruit Bats. The exhibit is designed such that the bats roost very close to the front of the exhibit offering excellent views. The bats are most active in the morning and late afternoon when they begin to anticipate feeding time. Their diet consists of fruits and vegetables supplemented with vitamins and minerals. When the food trays are placed on the feeding stations, the bats will flop face-first into the food and then hang upside down while munching away on their fruit.

Once you leave the bats you exit the nocturnal area through a set of double doors which lead you into the Main Aviary. Most peoples' reaction upon entering the Main Aviary is "wow!" The first time that I walked through these doors my jaw dropped with wonder - and that was before the construction was even finished! The Main Aviary is approximately 600,000 cubic feet and measures 55 feet at its tallest point. To put this into perspective, you could fill the Main Aviary with a half a million standard sized budgie cages. The pathway through the Main Aviary starts at canopy level and winds its way down to ground level. This allows the visitor to experience the birds at

different levels of the jungle. Also, since some birds have a preference for a particular level of the forest, it provides a good opportunity to view all of the Aviary inhabitants. All aspects of the climate in the Main Aviary, including temperature and humidity, are computer monitored and controlled. There is an automatic misting system to maintain the humid, rainforest-like conditions.

There are also closed circuit TV monitors that allow the keepers to monitor activity in the Aviary.

Immediately on the left as you enter the Main Aviary is an enclosure housing two Red Lories. These birds are captive bred, handraised siblings who delight visitors with their playful antics. Now that these birds are reaching sexual maturity they





*The Main Aviary  
is home to over  
200 birds  
comprising  
approximately  
40 species.*

level you pass through a large, beautifully ornate stone archway that is decorated with two stylized birds in relief. These same stylized birds also grace the sides of the 40' waterfall, which cascades to the jungle floor on your right. To your left is the peaked roof of the Java House where the flock of Java Sparrows is a common sight as they pick through the roof tiles looking for insects. Several walls of the Main Aviary are artistically painted to add to the illusion of being in the jungle. This illusion is so complete that several visitors have asked the keepers what they do when it rains! One wall of the Aviary is composed of a "living wall"; a system of vertical hydroponics that supports a variety of plants growing on the wall.

The Main Aviary is home to over 200 birds comprising approximately 40 species. Some of these birds include Silver Cheeked Hornbills, Chestnut Mandibill and Red-billed Toucans, four species of Turaco, Scarlet Ibis, Wood Rails, Australian Singing Crows, Aracari, Barbets, mynahs, starlings, thrushes, tanagers and many others. All

new arrivals are quarantined, then placed in a wire mesh flight at ground level in the Aviary for a period of approximately a week to allow them to become acclimated to the Aviary before they are released.

Several species of birds in the Main Aviary have either bred successfully or shown breeding behaviours including the Java Sparrows, Turacos, thrushes, tanagers and Wood Rails. In fact, the Wood Rails have been so successful that they now have a surplus which they are sharing with other zoos. The birds are fed a specially formulated zoo diet that includes vegetables, fruits,



will be repaired with potential mates. One pair will be kept on display while the other pair will be set up for breeding off-display. To the right of the Red Lory cage are two ornately carved wooden benches where you can soak up the scenery before beginning your descent through the rain-forest. As you begin your journey through the canopy



*The Java House is an original house circa 1875 from the island of Java and is a truly beautiful and wondrous structure.*

beans, protein in the form of eggs and hamburger devoid of fat as well as vitamin and mineral additives. There are a few birds with special dietary needs that receive additional dietary supplements such as the Glossy Ibis, which require a special pelleted diet to maintain their colour.

The only parrots on display in the Main Aviary (other than the Lory display mentioned below) are four Blue and Gold Macaws and one Moluccan Cockatoo. These birds have their flight feathers trimmed and are housed on rope and tree play areas to prevent them from damaging the plant collection (which is worth over half a million dollars). All five of these birds are handfed and well acclimated to people. Two of the Blue and Golds were destined to become breeding birds however their owner opted to donate them to the aviary instead. The other two Blue and Golds were owned by an elderly couple and were also donated to the Aviary. The Moluccan Cockatoo is also an ex-pet and was donated by his owner who was experiencing health problems. This bird was a feather plucker and habitual screamer. On arrival his chest feathers were shredded and he vocalized excessively whenever he could hear or see one of the keepers. After undergoing the standard quarantine period he was placed in the Main Aviary on his own rope and tree play area. After six months of being on display, due to the stimulation of watching the other birds and the visitors, he has stopped plucking (only a slight over-preening of his chest feathers is visible) and he is a very quiet and content bird.

One of the highlights of the Main Aviary is the Lorikeet Haven. This enclosure is approximately 15' wide, 40' long and 12' high and houses 15 Green Nape, Swainsons and Edwards Lorries. This is an interactive, walk-through exhibit that

allows visitors to feed a nectar mixture to the lorries. The lorries are fed throughout the day to reduce chances of aggression during public feeding times and there are set public feeding times monitored by a keeper with frequent rest periods for the birds throughout the day.

Once you exit the Lorikeet Haven you will come to the Java House. In the Java House is a display of Honey Creepers and Chinese Quail as well as an assortment of snacks and drinks available for purchase. The Java House is an original house circa 1875 from the island of Java and is a truly beautiful and wondrous structure. It was discovered disassembled, wrapped in rotting burlap in an old tractor trailer in a local farmers' field where it had sat for the better part of 20 years. Purchased by the owner of the Aviary, the pieces to the house were numbered but no key existed to instruct the builders how to fit it together. Over a period of two years the building was assembled and reassembled until the secrets of its structure were discovered. The house is covered in intricate carvings; these carvings have been reproduced on many of the pillars throughout the Main Aviary.

Once you leave the Java House the path leads you to the base of the waterfall where there is a marshy area, along a stream that runs through the jungle floor and to the base of the living wall where water drips off the rocks into a small pool of water. Once past the pool you will exit into the Gift Shop which contains a wide assortment of gifts and souvenirs sure to delight any bird lover.

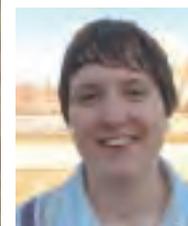
If your travel plans include a visit to the Niagara region, be sure to schedule at least half a day for a visit to The Niagara Falls Aviary: Birds of the Lost Kingdom. Who knows, you may even find

me sitting on my favorite bench at the top of the Main Aviary enjoying the view!

For more information contact the aviary at:

**www.niagarafallsaviary.com**  
**email: info@niagarafallsaviary.com**  
**toll free: 1-866-994-0090**

Special group tour rates, educational programs, birthday parties, meals and corporate meeting space available.



**Sandra Davey** graduated from the University of Guelph with an Honours Degree in Biological Science. She works as the Operations Manager of the Bird and Small Animal Departments for

Super Pet. True animal lovers, Sandra and her husband Wayne share their home with five companion parrots, two dogs and four cats. They also have a flock of just over 100 breeding birds comprising over 30 species of parrots. Sandra has served on the executive of the Parrot Association of Canada and also served several years as the Chair of the Canadian World Parrot Trust. While with the Trust, Sandra traveled to the island of Dominica to study Imperial and Red-necked Amazons in the wild.

# PERCHES: which ones should your birds have ?

A minimum of 3 different perch types should be offered



*These portable counter perches are great for the traveling bird and can be adapted onto a scale for weighing.*



*T-Stand perches are ideal for training exercise because activity and diversions are minimal, but your companion should not be left on these all day.*



*Play-gyms can offer activity and stimulate exercise. A variety of materials can be combined to offer comfortable perching.*

PERCHES	THERAPEUTIC VALUE	CLEANING & DISINFECTING	BENEFITS	CAUTION	NOTE
<p>Natural irregular (maple /apple)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irregularity provides weight of bird to be spread at different pressure points.</li> <li>• Chewing stimulates breeding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaned under water pressure &amp; oxyfresh.</li> <li>• Difficult to disinfect cooking is an option.</li> <li>• Throw out when worn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edible-benefits the natural trimming of beaks-inexpensive now found in pet stores, promotes breeding behavior, decreases boredom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid to collect from sappy species.</li> <li>• Avoid trees treated with pesticides.</li> <li>• Leg bands can get caught in ends of branches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inexpensive</li> <li>• Wash with oxyfresh to prevent outdoor undesirable pests to be brought indoors.</li> <li>• Messy but offers activity and beak conditioning.</li> <li>• Must replace frequently.</li> </ul>
<p>Rope perches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent to prevent and heal pressure sores, bumblefoot.</li> <li>• Ideal for arthritic feet and obese birds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean under water pressure.</li> <li>• Must dry.</li> <li>• Difficult to disinfect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers amusement</li> <li>• Easily positioned in cage.</li> <li>• Can alternate positioning.</li> <li>• Various sizes available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to dry after cleaning.</li> <li>• Must replace when worn out.</li> <li>• Cotton ropes, trim the fray part when worn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spirals swinging ropes-wall to wall canopy style lengths, one sided clip on also available.</li> <li>• Promotes activity.</li> </ul>
<p>Concrete reg. &amp; undulated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None other than maintaining nails trimmed &amp; offering a stable grip for fledglings.</li> <li>• 1/2 smooth side.</li> <li>• Less abrasive available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily scrubbed under water &amp; soap &amp; disinfectant.</li> <li>• Easily dried.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains nails trimmed</li> <li>• Ondulated offers some irregularity</li> <li>• Indestructible</li> <li>• Provides stable grip.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abrasive Can cause bumble foot pressure sores.</li> <li>• May break if dropped.</li> <li>• Heavy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should not be positioned for sleeping &amp; eating.</li> <li>• Well placed in door of cage for the "up" command when leaving cage.</li> <li>• Great for avian transporter.</li> </ul>
<p>Therapeutic perch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non abrasive, offers irregularity &amp; variable grip.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily cleaned, dried &amp; completely disinfectable.</li> <li>• Safest to use in pet stores and vet clinics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideal to stand and bounce.</li> <li>• Reduces foot cramping.</li> <li>• Variations for posture and pressure points.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not yet designed for medium to large birds.</li> <li>• Chewable perch should also be offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New innovative product entering the market.</li> </ul>
<p>Edible clay perches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New, innovative.</li> <li>• Promotes feet and beak health.</li> <li>• Smooth &amp; comfortable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should not use disinfectants since it is edible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clay is a natural detoxifier.</li> <li>• Smooth surface.</li> <li>• Not abrasive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once clay has been chewed, a cactus perch is exposed.</li> <li>• Will chip when dropped.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not allow bacteria from sticky decaying foods to accumulate on it.</li> <li>• Throw out when worn.</li> </ul>
<p>Plastic - uniform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of dimensions must be offered.</li> <li>• Ideal to place near feeding dishes.</li> <li>• Non-abrasive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily cleaned, dried &amp; completely disinfectable.</li> <li>• Safest to use in pet stores and vet clinics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to clean.</li> <li>• Inexpensive.</li> <li>• Smooth.</li> <li>• Light weight.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unnatural and undesirable to chew.</li> <li>• Must offer other variety and textures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended when used in combination with other perches of different materials and shapes.</li> </ul>
<p>Manzanite</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides smooth comfort and irregularity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood is easily cleaned but difficult to disinfect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indestructible.</li> <li>• Natural shapes.</li> <li>• Available in different forms.</li> <li>• Long lasting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chewable perches must also be offered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-lasting, should consider to have at least 1 in cage.</li> <li>• Large pieces available for play gyms.</li> </ul>
<p>Cactus branch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides comfort and irregularity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to clean, food infiltrates in pores.</li> <li>• Cooking needed to disinfect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light weight.</li> <li>• Provides easy grip.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes bacteria from sticky decaying foods to accumulate in pores of branch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers a different texture for perching.</li> </ul>
<p>Heated perch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thermo-Perch™</li> <li>• Thermostatically controlled.</li> <li>• Safe, stabilizes the bird's environment.</li> <li>• Reduces avian stress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily cleaned under water with oxyfresh or soap.</li> <li>• Soap/easily dried.</li> <li>• Disconnect before washing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideal for northern climate outdoor flights.</li> <li>• Ideal for geriatrics, fledglings and vet clinics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expensive</li> <li>• Must parrot-proof electrical connection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative &amp; comfortable!</li> </ul>
<p>Shower perch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure, solid and comfortable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hygienic, can be cleaned and disinfected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages showering.</li> <li>• Will allow your birds to grip firmly, providing more confidence and enjoyment in bathing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suction cups must be verified for efficiency and replaced when worn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All bird owners with companions should have this indispensable perch.</li> </ul>



# HELPFUL HINTS WITH PERCHES

*Severely old and worn out feet. A missing toe aggravated the bumble foot (pressure sores).*



*A minimum of 3 different perching materials and varied dimensions should be offered to your bird in his cage.*

*Medical attention is needed and padded / mattress perches will be adapted to provide comfort and relief to feet.*



*Garage sales are excellent to find Christmas tree bases or planting pots that can be adapted to create a natural play gym within your home or outdoor flight cage.*

*Vet wrap is used to tape the mattress onto the perch.*



*A tie wrap can be used to fix a natural perch to a metal chair. Natural perches should also be affixed to top of cages if birds are perching on metal wire. This prevents discomfort, arthritis and pressure sores. Tie wraps are inexpensive and can be replaced when needed.*

*This overweight 4 yr old macaw developed a severe pressure sore during the winter months, away from his outdoor exercise flight.*



*Rope perches were installed to his cage, along with treatment to alleviate the pressure on to his hocks.*



*Editorial by:  
Lucy Romamoff*





# CHICKS IN THE WILD

By: Josee Burmingham

Observations made while participating in the Proyecto del Loros, Yellow-napped Amazon Project under the supervision of Lora Kim Joyner, DVM.

Amazon nest in the mist! Tikal National Park, Guatemala.

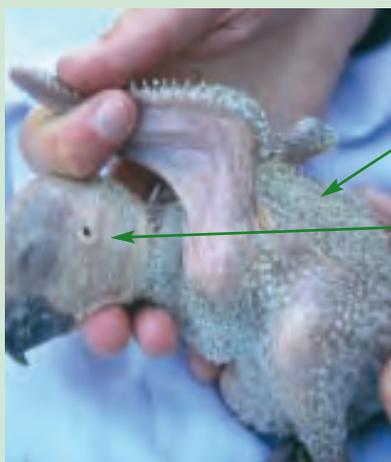
Amazon pair resting on tree near their nest cavity after the morning foraging and feeding of their chicks.



Yellow-napped Amazon chick (2 wks old) in wild nest.

Whole seeds are regurgitated into the crops of these young chicks, by both parents.

Bot Fly larvae, encapsulates in skin on abdomen of chick. Once the fly emerges, the capsule will fall and the skin will regenerate, leaving a faint scar. It is believed the bot fly larvae releases analgesic components. The chick doesn't appear to have any discomfort by the presence of this parasite. Removing the parasite will cause adverse reaction and infection.



Severe dehydration and anemia in chick, Subcutaneous mites are partly responsible for this!

A bot fly larvae can also be seen in the chick's ear.

These growing tail feathers show apparent defects often referred to as stress bars or fault bars. These lesions are zones of poor keratinisation of the feather probably resulting from a period of nutritional deficiency, skipped feeding in the nursery, slow crop or difficult weaning or access to food. Stress bars are now attributed in different degrees, and their numbers, apparent on your bird's feathers, are reflective of a nutritional or stress induced condition.



Neglected or abandoned chick?

An empty crop, and no parents in sight alerted the research team. The presence of Africanized bees near the nest cavity had kept the parents away from the nest for longer periods. The swarm of bees left the nest site a few days later. The parents were suspected to be young, inexperienced parents as well.



# The Nursery

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS SET-UP ?



Despite the technologically advanced brooder unit available for this aviculturist, a few husbandry guidelines should be reevaluated.

1) **There is a potential toxicity** and related health considerations resulting from aromatic hydrocarbons that are released by



cedar or pine shavings used as bedding material, Especially in this closed brooder system. Despite the ventilation system incorporated in this unit, it is preferred to have chicks in open air tubs should wood shavings be used.

A study found that chickens kept on soft wood shavings had higher incidences of respiratory infection. This is believed to occur from the phenols directly irritating the respiratory tract or indirectly from phenols altering the immune system.

Another potential risk is the ingestion of the wood shavings from these chicks. Macaw chicks especially, are prone to ingest bedding material, thus resulting in the impaction of the crop, or worst yet the proventriculus and gizzard. Try to select bedding material with optimum qualities such as:

- odor free & dust free
- no risk of entanglement
- can not be ingested- or easily digestible
- offers comfort and stability
- sanitary



Recycled newspaper litter has favorable properties for aviculturists. Avoid using the brands that offer dusty and small particles as these tend to impact the nares of the chicks.

Michelle Aubin, an innovative Canadian aviculturist has been using these table place mats on top of the bedding material for a number of years. These are



inexpensive, adjustable, comfortable, washable, prevent ingestion of substrate and prevent as well as correct splayed legs. These should always be used in transport of unweaned chicks and chicks with slow crops.



For larger chicks and weaning cages these plastic coated raised wire floors are quite practical. These also minimize bedding ingestion and promote sanitary conditions, although wire spacing must be safely evaluated to prevent feet from getting caught.



This macaw is comfortably resting on his stuffed clutch mate. Cloth diapers are sanitary but must be changed, washed and disinfected at every feeding to prevent soiled feathers. Feces must be washed off feet and ID bands.

2) **Stagnant water** in a brooder will promote bacterial contamination such as life threatening pseudomonas.

### Prevention:

1. Add a tbsp. of Safe-T-Salt, Sodium solution or Oxyfresh gelee to water recipient to prevent bacterial growth.
2. Empty, clean disinfect and thoroughly dry (ideally under natural sun rays) water recipient weekly.
3. Swab and culture water recipient of brooder and incubator periodically as a screening technique.

3) **Electrical wires** should never be exposed inside of a brooder. These can be dangerous if bitten and can strangulate a chick.

# The RainDance

Text and photos by:  
Celine Wandowska  
[www.oiselleriepapugi.com](http://www.oiselleriepapugi.com)

*Being a bird owner is a big responsibility. Our avian companions depend on us for every aspect of their care and well-being - ranging from the physical to the psychological. Over the years I've learned many tricks and tips for providing basic bird care to our feathered friends.*

Whether it's to clean feathers, encourage grooming, provide relief for dry skin, prevent or discourage feather-damaging behavior, or simply for the sheer enjoyment of it - baths (or showers) are an essential component of basic bird care.

Baths (or showers) can play a first-aid role as well. If you suspect a pin feather (growing feather with blood in the shaft); wish to provide relief for a wound or injury; suspect pododermatitis (bumble foot), or simply to evaluate the alertness of a suspiciously inactive bird - then bathing (or showering) can be used as a way to evaluate the level of seriousness before you consult with your avian veterinarian.

Caution must be taken to always provide a draft-free environment and have a warm heating source or lamp (100 watts is usually sufficient) in the room for when the misting, bathing; or shower time is over. If the weather conditions are warm enough, you can also bathe your birds outside with the garden hose. However, you should let the water run for a few minutes to help get rid of any bacteria that might have built up inside the hose. The same is true when misting your birds with a spray bottle. Bacteria can build up inside the bottle, so don't keep the same water in the bottle for days on end. Between each usage, the spray bottle should be emptied, rinsed and dried.

### *Bath Time*

Various techniques can be used when bathing birds indoors. These include using an infant-sized bath tub with an inch or two of water in it, bathing or showering the bird directly in or over



the sink with the faucet running, adapting perches for use in the shower, or simply waterproof the walls adjacent to your pet's perch and mist the bird with a spray bottle. If your bird prefers to bathe on their own, there are many types of bird-baths available on the market which can be fitted onto the cage.

Amongst the popular parrot species, most prefer showers and misters to bathing. Soft bills, Lories, Quakers and others might prefer using a birdbath, while African Grays enjoy bathing and showering equally. Some owners share quality time with their pets by sharing their showers with them, with the birds either perched onto the shower curtain or using a shower perch designed for this purpose. In the end, it comes down to the bird's individual preference.



## Showering

Even parrots that don't seem to like water for bathing or those that engage in feather damaging behaviors, such as plucking and chewing, tend to volunteer more readily if the water temperature of the mist, spray or shower is warm. The water temperature can be the same as when you shower, provided there are no temperature fluctuations, to avoid radical heat and cold exposures.



**All my companion Cockatoos prefer showering. To minimize the effort and save some time, I have adopted a method that suits everyone at once. Here is my favorite Shower Time technique.**

**A - Put your parrot** on a solid and properly affixed shower pole. Remember to place friends side by side and rivals at the opposing extremities, and those who love water besides those who are unsure and hesitant.

**B - Pull in the shower curtain.** Start the shower and adjust to a warm temperature. Cockatoos love to get drenched, soaked to bare skin when the temperature permits.

**C -** When everyone is wet, and you are still comfortably sitting on the toilet seat with its cover down, in front of your parrots, **vocalize to them**, repeat sounds such as: **BRRRR!** And encourage them to **"Shake those feathers!"**

**D -** Spread your arms and shake them like tree branches fidgeting in the wind and see what will happen! The rain dance for your feathered companions.

**E -** Magical moments can be witnessed during these quality bathing times.

# COCKATIELS

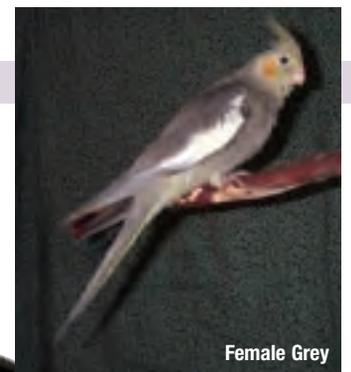


- **Tribe:** *Calopsittacini*
- **Species name:** *Cockatiels*
- **Latin Name:** *Nymphicus hollandicus*
- **Country of origin:** *Australia*
- **Availability in the pet market:** *Extremely popular parrot, widely available and several generations of captive breeding*
- **Size :** *reach 32 cm in length*
- **Weight:** *80-110 gr*
- **Clutch size:** *4-7*
- **# Clutches per year:** *2-3*
- **Incubation of eggs:** *18-20 days*
- **Fledging age in the wild (feathers fully grown)** *5 weeks*
- **Average ( healthy) weaning age:** *9-12 weeks*
- **Reproductive maturity:** *1½ yrs old*
- **Expected life span in captivity:** *13-18 yrs*



## Description:

Small, long tailed slender cockatoo, elegantly crested birds, small and narrow hook bills and foot structure make them agile climbers, wings are long and pointed. Many years of selective breeding has developed a range of colorful mutations.



Female Grey

## Behavior Rating (Scale of 1 to 10) 10 being the highest

<b>Personality:</b>	Sweet calm & gentle, fun & friendly, tremendous character.	
<b>Sociability:</b>	Gregarious by nature; they are exceptionally social if raised interactively. Many people should raise and train at once when young. Like any other parrots we must be careful of the one person bonding syndrome.	
<b>Easily tamed and gentle:</b>	(9)	
<b>Family companion bird:</b>	(9-10)	
<b>Playfulness:</b>	(4) Enjoys swinging and chewing	
<b>Biting behavior:</b>	uncommon	
<b>Physical contact &amp; demonstration for affection:</b>	Generally, female adore being stroked and caressed. Male enjoy to get handled but not caressed.	
<b>Singing ability:</b>	Males chatter & whistle melodies ; female mostly quiet	
<b>Screaming strength:</b>	(2)	<b>Frequency:</b> (7)
<b>Screaming pitch:</b>	(high pitch whistle)	
<b>Talking or mimicking ability:</b>	limited 0-3 female : 2-6 male boisterous & inquisitive nature.	
<b>Quality of pronunciation:</b>	Male: good, small clear voice.	
<b>Destructive behavior:</b>	(2) Due to it's small size.	<b>Chewing activity</b> (8)

### What degree of independence can this species develop? (6)

It is essential to encourage and develop this independence as early as possible.

**How much time will the bird require to be handled per day?** Ideally 1 hour per day of quality time, interactive activity, showering, training & flying. Caution: Avoid always having the bird on you! Let them develop independence.

**Eating fingers and messy droppings?** (2 ) tidy & clean natured

**Tendency to engage in feather damaging behavior?** (1) uncommon  
Caution: Do not expose to tobacco smoke

**How expensive is the bird to buy?** \$80-\$300 CAN., depending on the color mutation and age.

## Sexual dimorphism ?

The natural grey cockatiel: females have dull coloration of the crown, crest, cheek-patches and ear coverts. Tail feathers are irregularly barred and lightly marked with light yellow light and dark grey. Sex can also be guessed by their behavior and facial coloration at 3-6 months. Whistling and singing accompanied by the bright facial coloration of adults is usually a sign for a male, but they will retain the barred tail until the first complete molt after which their tail will be dark grey. DNA sexing is advised to confirm sex.



Left to right (Pied, Pied, White Face, Albino (White face lutino), Pearl, Pied)

## Color variations include:

**Pied** (varying white patches cover body), **Pearl** (each feather retains gray color, with white interspersed), **Lutino** (body feathers white with yellow/white/ orange face), and **Albino** (white feathers)

# SpeciesPROFILE

Parrot Care



— **What are its dietary requirements?** Offer a balanced nutritional diet. 60% formulated /granulated pellets like Tropicana. Plain seed mixes can lead to obesity as well as deficiencies in calcium and vitamins. Try to feed your bird formulated diets or at least provide nutritional seed such as Tropicana Cockatiel food, 30% seed Tropimix mix, Tropimix egg granules, millet occasionally, 10% fruits, veggies, rice, pasta... healthy home cuisine.

— **Light requirements:** 8-12 hours of natural sunlight or full spectrum lighting. 12 hours of non-interrupted sleep, especially for females. Caution prone to night freight-thrashers; should have night lamp and remove excess toys at night.

White Face Pearl and White Face



## Housing requirements

— **How spacious should the day cage be:**

A bird cage should be spacious, secure and cleaned frequently. Ideally a minimum of 20" X 20" would allow them some movement, activity and prevent obesity.

— **Keep bird cage in a safe location:**

Keep away from dangers such as direct sunlight, kitchen fumes, cold temperature and predators.

— **Sleeping cage size requirements:** 18" X 18" inches; it should be at least 1½

times the size of the bird with its wings fully expanded.

— **Stimulate activity:** Cage should have horizontal bars to encourage climbing, an open roof cage, play gym or flight is essential for exercise. Interior flight cages are easily constructed with small gage wire. Secure your home from any potential dangers before letting your bird fly around freely; always monitor its flight. (eg. Mirrors, open windows, fans)

— **What perch sizes should be offered:**

Minimum 3 sizes or shapes & texture; Ideally 5/8" wooden perch, a manzanita perch type and a therapeutic perch.

— **Additional in cage:** Swings, toys,

ladders and bells, twigs and safe destructible material, bath.

— **Water Dispenser:** Ideally, drinking water

should be changed twice daily. Train to drink from a water bottle as well as water bowl because cockatiels love to perch and drop feces in bowls.

— **How susceptible is this species to disease:**

hardy yet prone to obesity, egg retention, candida, some mutations are weaker, dependence syndrome similar to cockatoos (often recommended to have 2). Avoid drastic change of temperature and keep them away from danger as they are prone to explore.



White Face Pearl



White Face Pied Pearl



Pied



Albino  
(White Face Lutino)

White Face Cinnamon, 2 White Face Pearl, White Face



White Face



Chicks at  
fledging age

# THE GREEN FEATHER

The green feather chronicles will give you great eco-tips and advices for a safer home for you and your bird companions. We will also promote Eco-solutions and raise consumer awareness to allow our readers to make educated choices to help protect our environment. The plight of parrots in their natural habitat relies on our ability to protect and preserve their natural sanctuaries.



## Miners' Canary

Years ago, it was customary for mine workers to bring along a canary in a cage to the dept of the coal mines. The canary was to be their "biological indicator" for toxic fumes. Should the canary die, the workers

would evacuate the mine, knowing the fumes had reached lethal concentrations.

**MODERN TECHNOLOGY HAS NOW DEVELOPED RELIABLE INDICATORS FOR THE DETECTION OF TOXIC FUMES TO BE USED IN MINES IN SOME COUNTRIES. BUT WHAT INDICATOR IS USED IN YOUR HOME?**

Why is it that pregnant women must be careful to avoid using tile cleaners and oven cleaners as well many other potentially toxic products most people use without precaution on a daily basis? If these products are hazardous for pregnant women and our bird companions, shouldn't we question their use in our homes at all?

**Birds have complex and sensitive respiratory systems. Provide a safe home for your birds and family, and help protect Mother Earth as well!**

## Did you know?

- Cleaning Products can be dangerous to your bird's health
- Products such as bleach, ammonia, spot remover, floor and furniture polish, oven cleaners and tile cleaners can be harmful or fatal when inhaled by birds.
- It is estimated that 40lbs of toxic household cleaning products are used per year by the average North American .
- Biodegradable, Non-toxic, Odor free products are available as eco-alternatives. Brand names such as Nature's Clean, Melalluca, Oxyfresh are excellent choices. Learn about these Earth and Bird-friendly products!

**Here are a few home-made eco-alternatives you can use:**

**Instead of the toxic bathroom tile cleaners, you could use:**



- 50 ml of soap powder
- 10 ml of Borax
- 375 ml boiling water
- 50 ml chalk powder

## Instructions

- Dissolve the borax & soap in the boiling water.
- Let rest until it reaches room temperature
- Add chalk powder
- Place in airtight plastic or glass container
- Shake well before use
- To make it more abrasive add more chalk, 15 ml at a time, to get desired effect.



To replace glass and window cleaners that contain active ingredients such as toxic ammoniac. Use recycled newspaper with vinegar and water.

*If you need something more powerful here is another recipe.*

- 30 ml cornstarch
- 250 domestic use ammoniac
- 250 ml white vinegar
- 4.5 L water

The Canadian Green Consumer Guide ©McClelland & Stewart Inc.1988

## RECYCLE!

Milk bags can be cleaned and used to store freshly picked organic pesticide-free berries and garden vegetables for the long winter months



recycle bag once empty



Cut along top, clean thoroughly, dry upside down



Store in freezer your winter's supply

## REUSE

Buy safe baby toys for your parrots at garage sales! Multi-colored rings, pyramid games, and the toys that require forms to be inserted in the matching opening. Most of these plastics are not recyclable so, I reuse them instead, at a 10th of the cost or less!



# CONSERVATION

## CAIQUES IN THE WILD

By: John McMichael

I purchased my first pet Caique, a Black-headed named Sammy, twenty years ago. From that time on, I wanted to learn as much about them as I could including how they live in the wild. My quest for this information has been difficult because no naturalist has ever focused on them as a wild species. Thus, we know little about Caique ecology and conservation needs. Over the years, however, I have gathered snippets here and there from bird guides, early descriptions, bird magazines, and scientific literature, as well as made several trips to South America in hopes of learning more. Here I present some of what I have learned.

Caiques are restricted to the low elevation rainforests of the Amazon/Orinoco basin. Naturalists speculate their failure to move out of this range is either due to their lack of capacity or lack of propensity for flying long distances. This also accounts for the sharp separation of the ranges of the only two species of Caiques. The range of the white-bellied (*Pionites leucogaster*) is entirely south of the Amazon River and the range of the black-headed (*Pionites melanocphalus*) is entirely north of it. The two species only encounter each other to any degree in their western ranges where the rivers are narrow, but even there a ridge of the Andes Mountains is sufficient to separate the pallid form of black-headed Caique (*P. m. pallidus*) from the Yellow-thighed form the White-bellied caique (*P. l. xanthomerius*).

To the south and east, a broad savannah called Cerrado separates their range from the Pantanal and the Atlantic coastal forest.

They tend to prefer dry forest, not those that are flooded during the rainy season, yet they like to be near water. Even so, there are reports in the scientific literature that they live and breed in Maurita-palm swamps, a favored breeding place for blue and yellow Macaws, and at the edges of seasonally flooded forests. It can be difficult to see Caiques in the wild since they prefer the forest canopy 10 to 40 meters above one's head.

There they move about in and just above the canopy as single birds or small flocks. This was the case during my visit to Cristalino Ecodge this past October. There, I saw a flock of three Yellow-tailed Caiques (*P. l. xanthrus*) on several occasions that I suspect was a pair and their chick. On one occasion, I was able to watch them for several minutes while one picked and dropped twigs from a tree, one chewed on a bromeliad, and another explored a cavity just above a crotch in the same tree. Unfortunately, they were too far for me to get a good photo. All of my other sightings from the tower were far too brief. My guide was able to call them in once along one of the trails while searching for other birds by recording and replaying back their sounds. When they came near, I was able to see their bright yellow tails but also saw that their bellies were a dirty brown.



**One of my big concerns is how caiques are faring in the wild. No naturalist considers them endangered.**

Photographed by:  
John McMichael



“Stewie” Photographed by: Heléne Strömbergsson

Caiques are restricted to the low elevation rainforests of the Amazon/Orinoco basin. Naturalists speculate their failure to move out of this range is either due to their lack of capacity or lack of propensity for flying long distances.

This is unlike Caiques in captivity that have snowy white breasts. Specimens that naturalists have collected from the wild almost invariably have dirty bellies. This is probably due to the bird eating juicy fruits and the accumulation of sap from leaf bathing. Seeing these birds, I realized that the bright white bellies of our pet caiques might actually be an anomaly. In contrast to Cristalino Lodge, at Tambopata and other sites in southeastern Peru, one can easily observe Yellow-thighed Caiques (*P. l. xanthomerius*) in large numbers. This is because there, they descend to take clay from licks called colpas. From blinds overlooking the colpa, I saw as many as fifteen or twenty Yellow-thighed Caiques taking clay at once. Dr. Brightsmith (AFA Watchbird, 2004) recently reported that colpa usage at Tambopata peaks just before egg laying and after chicks hatch. Thus, Caique visitation seems to be seasonal, so if you are planning to travel there, it is best to go in October or November. (This makes sense to anyone breeding caiques. Female birds, if left out of their cage, will deconstruct one's walls to get to plaster or cement just before they start to lay eggs.) I suspect other Caique subspecies visit

colpas within their ranges too, but not on such a large scale. One of my big concerns is how Caiques are faring in the wild. No naturalist considers them endangered. Only two nations continue to export them - Surinam and Guyana, two of the smaller countries of South America. Thus, they are under little threat from export. Further, except for two subspecies, the Pallid and Yellow-tailed, aviculturists are now breeding the Black-headed and Yellow-thighed in sufficient numbers that there is no longer a need to take them from the wild. Even the Green-thighed (*P. l. leucogaster*), although rare in North America, is breeding well in captivity and will probably eventually become available in the pet market. On an earlier visit to Brazil, I saw as many as 13 Green-thighed Caiques living and breeding in one cage in the São Paulo Zoo. People are also breeding them in the US, in Europe, South Africa, and probably elsewhere. The main threat to wild Caiques is local human activity. In Brazil, I witnessed a huge fire on my return flight from the Cristalino Lodge. Eduardo, my guide told me that in the dry season the smoke often puts such a pall over the Cristalino Reserve that no birds fly.



Except for two subspecies, the pallid and yellow-tailed, aviculturists are now breeding the black-headed and yellow-thighed in sufficient numbers that there is no longer a need to take them from the wild.

“Stewie” Photographed by: Heléne Strömbergsson

These fires and large logging operations may be the gravest habitat threat, but there are others. Increasingly, people and wildlife are competing for the same foods. Susan Moegenburg (Ecology Letters, 2003) noted that when people over-harvest wild palm fruits, Caiques and other frugivores must find food elsewhere. George Smith (Caged Bird Hobbyist, 1996) noted that caiques often raid rice crops in the early morning and if it rains or there is heavy dew, they become wet and are unable to fly. The locals can then easily catch them and they often end up in a dinner pot. This brings me to another threat, the poverty of the people of the Amazon, particularly indigenous peoples. They hunt parrots primarily for food but secondarily for feathers. They use the feathers to make a variety of body ornaments that they sell. While it is fortunate that the population

of many of the indigenous peoples seems to be rebounding, their increasing population is putting more pressure on the resources within the reserves set aside for them. Nonetheless, the outlook for Caiques in the wild is relatively good. Several governments in South America, especially Brazil, have made it a legal offence to keep or sell parrots and other native species. This, however, is widely flouted. Yet, there is a general realization of their value in the environment and this is cause for optimism.

#### Brief Biography of John McMichael.



John McMichael graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a Ph.D. in Biophysics. He is retired now, but for most of his career, he did research on vaccines to prevent infections due to *Neisseria Gonorrhoeae*, *Moraxella bovis*, and *Moraxella catarrhalis*. For this work,

he honored by being elected a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology. He purchased his first Caique in 1984 and since then, focused almost exclusively on this species. He has successfully bred Caiques for over sixteen years and collected an extensive number of published records pertaining to them. In addition, he has traveled extensively in South America to observe them in the wild.

#### Newly hatched Caique



# White-bellied Caiques



## Behavior

Young caiques soon gain their reputation as comical gesticulate clowns; always eager to climb out of their baby pens and soon out of their weaning cages. They initiate game by chasing balls, throwing about their feeding spoons, bouncing about like kangaroos. In their cages, they can often be found in the bottom; lying on their backs playing with a toy or grape in their beaks...One must always be vigilant with a caique for they fear nothing and are out and about at any given moment. Unlike many other avian companions they manifest no hesitation when presented with a new toy, their insatiable sense of curiosity can have them pursue a desired object into an open drawer, or have them plunge under a running faucet for a shower...even when the water is hot! They must never be left unguarded; let us not forget the cooking pans on the stove, simmering sauce pans, dirty soapy water pails and all the other unimaginable potential household dangers. To prevent accidents, constant supervision is essential when these youngsters are out of their cages.

We often refer to caiques as being hyperactive, and that is an understatement. I can recollect one particular moment that I saw a

caique exhausted and eager to regain his cage. It was upon our return from a bird exposition, where he had spent 2 days amongst a dense crowd, an exhausting background noise and vibrant lights.

Caiques are always ready for game and exploration. As a mere stimulus can spark their excitement, playful interactions and games can often turn into a ferocious competition. We must be careful not to encourage this extreme state of excitement when engaging in game with our companions. Like children overwhelmed by their game ending up in fight; caiques can become aggressive, bite and shed blood. It is imperative to learn to bring back calmness to an overly excited state, by speaking softly, by toning down the gestures and subtly offering an alternative imperturbable activity.

It is absolutely indispensable to structure Caiques at the earliest age. Uneducated, the fledgling will soon conquer his territory, establish his limits and impose his laws, which is certainly undesirable, especially critical for he will soon reach adolescence. Limits must be reinforced with gentleness, patience and perseverance. As they are intelligent little creatures, they will immediately perceive that you are imposing a limit, defiant he might challenge your authority by biting. It is

difficult to impose a behavior onto a Caique, thus it is best to try to deviate its intentions, bring about a distraction, regain a sense of calmness and gradually we can lure him to obedience.

Regardless of the Caiques' nature to seek human interaction and companionship, they are independent parrots, which means that they do not necessarily desire to be caressed or fondled. The mere pleasure of being in the presence of his companion, in the same room, atop his play gym, within distance of your voice and arm is often enough to satisfy his need for affection. Contrary to Sun Conures, who cuddle against you, crawl into your shirt and embrace you with kisses, like our feline companions, Caiques are more distant. Beware to impose your physical manifest of affection onto them when they do not desire it... Although, there are absolutely magical moments when a Caique will indulgently caress his body against yours, nestle himself in your hair, will rest on his back on your knees and accept to be pet. This behavior is not necessarily of sexual nature, since we have experienced this with our youngsters as well.

## Level and frequency of screaming and vocalizing

It is always difficult to talk about the degree of noise that each perceive depending on their level of tolerance. Certain people will complain about the level of vocalization of cockatiels as well as the incessant chattering of budgies. I have even heard of someone who was annoyed by the chirping of finches...Caiques are not particularly noisy; their morning and sundown vocalizations are of short duration and tolerable. Their screams resemble a door screech or a whistling kettle, which can reach intensity and become irritable, especially if the bird feels threatened or tired. We know that parrots vocalize in the wild to communicate, locate and warn others of their species; in our homes, these cries can soon become annoying, without saying maddening. As Caiques know how to find occupational activities within their enclosures when provided toys, branches and objects to peek their curiosity, and because they are not malady dependant on their human companions, they are amongst the least noisiest parrot companion species. When a caique streaks insistently, there is usually something bothering him in his environment, which he feels threatened by. I recommend going to see immediately what could be causing this commotion. It took me close to one hour to unveil what was provoking alarm screams from Micky, supported also by his cage mate Angie: an insect had crawled out from a bag of seeds and was flying about their flight cage; when I finally captured this beast, everyone regained their collected state.

Caiques are not good talkers: they imitate quite well repetitive noises heard in their home, telephone, microwave, but are not so inclined to use the human language. My young male (now 3 yrs old) says his name very clearly, with a cartoon character voice, repeating three times «Micky, Micky, Micky» when he wants to come out of his cage. No one taught him this; he learned by himself to repeat his name that we would use every time we would speak to him. Our three other caiques converse with their South American language that I still try to understand.

## Male/female differences

There is no visual sexual dimorphism between the male and female Caique; a DNA test is required ensuring the proper sex determination of this species. Breeders can determine the sex of the bird based on their behavior, but its judgement can be misinterpreted for there are exceptions in individuals. Generally, the male is more aggressive than the female which tend to be more timid. In the wild, the male exhibits more aggressively, necessary to protect the pair's nest, chicks and mate, he must be watchful and vigilant.



Our oldest couple is a contradiction to this rule: Kiko is a gentle male, slightly distraught and submissive to his female, Kalinka. She on the other hand conducts herself often like a male; she is the one who comes out of the cage first, who feeds at the feeder of her choice first, often chasing Kiko in their cage. Kiko has never bitten any of us since they have been under our guardianship. Even during excited levels of activity; Kalinka has without doubt demonstrated her biting abilities with conviction, without warning, to each and every one of us. She has gone through periods where her behavior was so unpredictable, that avoiding her rage of aggressiveness became a challenge. We would watchfully observe her eyes, and attitude; trying in vain to slow down the excess of energy hoping to prevent the inevitable bites. Despite our brave efforts we would finally have to use Hibitane and Band-Aids for our fingers. Fortunately, gradually her excess of aggressivity diminished. Since she has experienced «motherhood», Kalinka seems to have softened her behavior, towards her mate Kiko as well. My second pair, which is now 3 years old exhibits behavior that is more representative



of this species. Micky, a macho male, takes all initiatives, engages the interactions, explores, solicits and leads Angie, his mate to abide by his commands. Angie is more timid, hesitant and will touch an unfamiliar object, or enter in an unknown territory only once Micky has surveyed it first. Micky has developed an animosity towards my husband; he has chosen me as his second mate. The privileges manifested by this claim are demonstrated by Micky, following me wherever I go, he leans onto and rolls on my cloths, burrows in my shirt, will lay in my hand while showering under the faucet, and will allow me to return him to his flight without resistance when the game is over.

When our 4 Caiques gather in the kitchen, they interact as a lovely flock of small parrots; they fly, chatter and playfully chase one another without aggressivity. They were housed in the same breeding room for more than two years, visiting each others flights and feeding stations, exchanging vocalizations that older Caiques share with youngsters and visa versa. This cohabitation possibly halted the desire to reproduce for Kiko and Kalinka. We were driven to separate the pairs so that the miracle could happen....

## Nutrition

Caiques have a good appetite, and feast on a varied diet. My pairs were probably weaned on an abundance of variety as well for they savour a diversity of fruits, veggies, beans, granules and seeds. Sally Blanchard has said.... "what is nutritionally important is not only what is offered, but what is consumed and especially what is metabolized by the body".

If I evaluate my pairs, their dietary needs are met: they are athletic and muscular, have irreproachable plumage, beaks and well groomed nails, alert eyes and prompt reflexes. The formulated pelleted diet is always present in their cage in abundance: granules and Tropimix Parrot Low Fat Bean Mix. As well as 1 spoon of Cartame Seeds. To supplement this diet, everyday they are offered a freshly cut mixed vegetables macédoine, my recipe of cooked brown

rice and quinoa and a brochette of fresh fruits. Occasionally they are offered boiled chicken bone and meat, a little fish, low fat cottage cheese. For activity whilst feasting, I offer a branch of celery, a carrot with top, a squash, spinach leaves, dandelions, rappini, heart of mild pepper, etc. For dessert, when I leave the room, I treat them with a walnut or almond (or 3 cashew with shell). Every bird awaits this treat and will then allow me to leave the room without too much objection.

## Caiques and children

(This is a frequently asked question when adopting a species or another). Do Caiques interact well with children?

Before the age of hormonal awakening (adolescence), Caiques, like many other parrots in captivity like to interact with children whose level of energy resembles its own: lots of game, cries of excitement, laughter and unconditional attention. But beware, as soon as the hormones invade their system, Caiques become unpredictable and their behavior can spontaneously change. Although it appeared content to play with the child, without warning he attacks the approaching hand to bite it painfully. We should never allow a young child to play with a Caique that has not learned to decode the posture of the bird. In the phase of excitement during game playing, a gesture can provoke an aggressive reaction from a bird that he will not even understand.

A Caique needs to recognize in his counterpart a certain dose of assurance; it sees in a child one that can be dominated. If the adult has established a relationship based on confidence with his Caique, based on a firm discipline with limiting constraints, supervises the game between a child and bird, he will be able to prevent sudden attacks.

## Conclusion

Caiques, Black-headed or White-bellied, are exceptional parrots. Their curious, comical nature is captivating, sociable yet extraverted and definitely independent. They require a spacious cage, with many things to shred and tear to bits; it is the price to pay to have a bird well suited in his feathers, sane and healthy. Caiques are resistant birds that do not fear cooler temperatures, they do not require particular care, other than those that ensure good hygiene, a healthy nutrition and lots of physical activity. Learn to understand your Caique, decode its body language, evaluate his degree of excitability, respect its profound nature, immutable of a creature still wild at heart, barely domesticated that must adapt to a captive life that often surpasses its own reason. It is the only way to establish a harmonious relationship for possibly the next 30 years of companionship.

Article and photography By:  
Danielle Odulinski



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# ~ IN THE NEWS ~

## AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

### A HANDS-ON GUIDE TO DEALING WITH GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES DURING A CRISIS

By: Sandee L. Molenda, C.A.S.

The day began as any other. I woke at the crack of dawn, put pots of rice and beans on the stove for the birds, poured myself a cup of coffee and sat down at my computer to check e-mail. The subject line was bold and attention-grabbing "British Columbian Authorities to Exterminate Birds". I immediately clicked on the e-mail and read a painful, powerful plea for help by a British Columbian avian shelter. **Approximately 400 parrots and other birds had been slated for euthanasia to prevent a possible epidemic of deadly avian influenza that had been recently found in British Columbia's poultry population.** The panic and fear in the e-mail was painfully evident. As someone that had been in California during a recent Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreak in the poultry population, I know how devastating this news can be. Unlike other diseases that are deadly if caught, both Avian Influenza and Exotic Newcastle Disease can result in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of birds without any of them having the disease. This is because both diseases can devastate poultry and poultry are part of the food supply. The potential for government overreaction was very real and very frightening. Since I had worked with governmental authorities in the United States on both Avian Influenza and Exotic Newcastle Disease containment and eradication, I decided to investigate further and offer whatever experience I could.

#### ***Governmental Authority***

It is important to understand the ramifications that governmental authorities must contend when dealing with these two dreaded diseases in order to develop an effective strategy to help eliminate the diseases and yet, preserve the exotic bird population. I learned this firsthand when I was asked by the United States' Department of Agriculture to become a member of a Task Force that was set up to deal with the Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreak in 2002 to 2003. Education, both of the avian community and of the government, were the tools that were utilized during that time to eradicate the disease, protect the multi-billion dollar poultry industry and prevent the indiscriminate wholesale slaughter of unaffected pets and exotic birds.

Both Avian Influenza and Exotic Newcastle Disease are classified as Schedule A Foreign Animal Diseases that Affect the Food Supply. This is the highest category of disease outbreak and can be economically devastating to

a country in which the disease is found. International law demands that all poultry products from countries that have verified outbreaks are immediately ceased and strict quarantine and isolation protocols are enacted. In Canada, this meant that ALL poultry and product sales were immediately halted from the entire country - whether they originated in British Columbia or some other province hundreds or even thousands of miles away. Considering, at the time Canada was also finishing up an international ban on beef due to a single case of bovine spongiform encephalitis (Mad Cow Disease), the Avian Influenza outbreak in British Columbia was the worst news at the worst possible time. Furthermore, China was reeling from an Avian Influenza outbreak that had crossed from poultry into humans.

**Unlike other diseases that are deadly if caught, both Avian Influenza and Exotic Newcastle Disease can result in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of birds without any of them having the disease.**

The death rate from 'bird flu' was a horrifying 80%-90% and it had the potential to spread into a global pandemic. This could conceivably reduce the human population of the earth by millions. Under those circumstances, it was understandable that the Canadian authorities needed to stop the Avian Influenza outbreak as quickly and efficiently as possible. I decided to offer my END Task Force experience to the authorities as well as the avian community in British Columbia hoping we could all work together to stop any possible epidemic.

#### ***Mounting a Campaign***

I immediately contacted the sender of the e-mail by telephone. I needed to determine the authorities' plan of action, the names and contact information of those in the government that were in charge and how to rally the avian community in British Columbia to work with

the authorities to protect their birds. Fortunately, although I am an American, I have spent a lot of time in British Columbia, having attended and/or spoken at many of the Canadian Parrot Symposiums held in Victoria each year. Also, as founder of the International Parrotlet Society, an organization that has many Canadian members, as well as serving on the Boards of other organizations such as the International Aviculturists Society and the American Federation of Aviculture, I have many contacts in the Canadian avicultural community. I would hope that those that knew me would trust my experience and listen to my strategies and recommendations. Suspicions against the governmental authorities as well as the usual 'political' disputes in the avian community, made it an uphill battle. But I was fortunate that I was able to communicate the need for everyone to work together in order to accomplish the goals of stopping the spread of the disease and protecting the exotic bird population.

While many in the avian community, particularly those that take in birds that need homes or are pet bird owners, find the economics breeding birds distasteful, this 'economic incentive' that was the ONLY avenue to be utilized to save the birds. After all, the entire crisis itself was spawned because of economic impact. Granted, the economic impact on the poultry industry, but the exotic bird industry also had an economic impact and that needed to be pointed out to the authorities. The authorities also needed to be informed that one result is not contingent on another - in other words, the exotic bird industry did not have to be sacrificed in order to protect the poultry industry. That was the message I was able to convey to the authorities in California and felt the Canadian officials could be similarly persuaded. Upon hearing this, even the most ardent 'anti-breeders' realized this was the only way to save their beloved birds. Breeder also had to accept that everyone was a part of aviculture and to be willing to work side by side with his or her former critics. To their credit, everyone was willing to let bygones be bygones and work as a team.

#### ***Effective Strategies***

I then wrote a letter to the Agricultural Minister in British Columbia that was in charge of managing the outbreak. I identified myself and provided my credentials. I included my occupation as a professional breeder, author and lecturer, my many affiliations with avicul-



## In Conclusion

tural organizations, especially those that had Canadian members, and my experience on the Exotic Newcastle Task Force as an independent commercial breeder.

My first and most important point was, of course, to convey the economic contributions of the avian community to the Canadian economy. This included everything from supporting farmers that grow seed and produce, to the steel and plastic industries that build cages and toys, the electronics industries that produce brooders and incubators, the shipping industries including trucking and air transportation and, of course, veterinarians, pet shops, behaviorists and breeders. Aviculture also supports conservation both in captivity and in the wild, veterinary research and breakthroughs and education as many organizations that offer scholarships for young people. Finally, I reiterated that Canada does not allow the import of wild-caught birds and many of these species are critically endangered in their native lands due to deforestation and other encroachments due to the constantly increasing human population. It was explained that some people had worked for decades to preserve endangered species that could be lost in the wild someday.

I offered my assistance in helping to utilize the avian community to assist the authorities rather than alienating them with threats of mass extermination of their birds. I educated them on the steps that were taken during the Exotic Newcastle outbreak including voluntary shut down of bird gatherings such as club meetings, bird marts and shows, in-home quarantine of birds, moratorium on shipping birds, establishing biosecurity protocols and PCR-DNA testing and vaccination for poultry. I also informed them by using resources such as pet shops, feed stores, bird clubs and media public service announcements to educate the public on biosecurity and other measures would be relatively inexpensive but also very effective.

I sent copies of this information along with drafts of handouts and information from the US authorities and thanked them profusely for their time and consideration. I sent copies to every Canadian aviculturist I knew as well as veterinarians and important figures in the Canadian avian community such as Mr. Mark Hagen of Rolf C. Hagen International and Mr. Jim Taylor of the Canadian Symposium West. They were able to rally hundreds of aviculturists to write letters, attend public meetings and stand firm by their conviction that they would undertake the measures necessary to help prevent the spread of the disease.

It was due to these efforts that these wonderful people that the outbreak was eventually defeated and the birds were saved from governmental euthanasia. It was not easy nor was it without pain or even risk but eventually Avian Influenza was eradicated from British Columbia and aviculturists still had their beloved birds. As with Exotic Newcastle Disease in California, the disease was never found in the exotic bird population - only in poultry. Also, as was done in California, the government was able to do its job to protect the food supply but not at the sacrifice of exotic birds. It truly was a success story.

It was the avian community in Canada that was the real hero in this saga. They put themselves and their birds at risk with the government and were willing to step up and take responsibility for their birds and the prevention of this disease. Also, the Canadian authorities that had the legal right to exterminate every bird on the Island, not only listened to the avian community but worked with them to find alternatives to mass slaughter. While it is always preferable not to have to deal with the government, it is truly heartening to know that it is possible to work with them to protect the countries' resources as well as our beloved birds. Let's hope this is a trend that continues far into the future.



Sandee L.  
Molenda, C.A.S.

### Biographical Information

I have been breeding birds for more than 20 years and parrotlets exclusively since 1986. I have received various avicultural awards for my work with parrotlets as well as various exhibition awards over the years. I have written books, magazine and journal articles on parrotlet care as well as other avicultural topics. I have also given a variety of presentations on avicultural issues at national and international conventions as well as dozens of bird clubs across the country. I am also certified under the Avian Specialist program of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council.

Cofounder of the International Parrotlet Society, I am a former board member of the International Aviculturist Society and the American Federation of Aviculture. Currently, I am a Director of the Great American Bird Show, National Cage Bird Show and the African Love Bird Society. I was a Co-Chair of the Pet Bird Issues Advisory Panel started by USDA and worked with Bird Clubs of America to establish educational campaign for the care of birds by pet shops. I also am very involved in legislative issues and have testified before state and Federal legislators as well as advising Canadian legislators regarding regulations affecting bird ownership.

## Your Guide to dealing with the Government bureaucracy

### Tips for Writing Letters & email

1. Be brief but specific.
2. Substantiate your point with facts and evidence.
3. Send personalized letters and emails, not form letters.
4. Use appropriate titles and names.
5. Identify the matter.
6. Be professional in tone without accusatory or abusive language.
7. Include all documentary evidence.
8. Include return address and contact information.
9. Use respect and courtesy.
10. Thank the representatives.

### Personal Appearances - Meetings & Hearings

1. Dress professionally - jeans, t-shirts are inappropriate.
2. Groups should wear duplicate buttons or pins to show solidarity.
3. Bring all reference materials.
4. Organize notes, etc., prior to the meeting.
5. Arrive early and bring something to take notes.
6. Provide documentation when appropriate.
7. Speak clearly and calmly.
8. Limit speech to the appropriate amount of time allowed.
9. Thank the representatives.
10. Answer any questions they may ask.

### Important Points To Communicate

1. *Aviculture provides to the economy*
  - Promotes employment.
  - Payment of taxes.
  - Supports other industries.
  - Raised millions of dollars for funding of veterinary research and conservation projects.
2. *Supports education*
  - Aviculturists often volunteer at schools to help educate children on proper bird care and bird conservation issues.
  - Avian organizations work with scouts to help promote avian welfare and husbandry.
  - Avian organizations award educational scholarships to children.
3. *Effective Disease Control Measures*
  - Offer veterinary expert testimony.
  - Provide biosecurity protocols and in-home quarantines.
  - Offer voluntary procedures such as the cancellation of bird marts, shows and prohibiting attendance at club meeting with birds.
  - Offer information publication via clubs, web sites, email, journals, newsletters, magazines, public service announcements, veterinary clinics, feed stores, pet shops and bird supply outlets.

# THE GOOD CHEF

Recipes for treats that are good for your bird and that are easily preserved without danger for your bird's health.



Gone are the warm cozy evenings on your balcony or in the courtyard. Gone are the hot afternoons spent lazily on the swing sipping a cold drink while chatting away the hours with friends. You can now put away your bird's harness, outside play gym and toys; winter is coming. But still on those sunny cool mornings you can put a coat and drink your coffee outside enjoying the sun and crisp air. You can go at night for a long walk with the dog to play in the fresh snow, and come back to a hot cup of tea. Dare to put your patio table out with chairs with warm cushions and invite friends over on a Sunday afternoon. Have a nice Brazilian or Irish coffee with homemade hot pecan pie. Let not winter put a damp on your outside life and keep enjoying that balcony and courtyard. But what about your bird? He can't go for a walk, or sit on the balcony for coffee or a piece of pecan pie. He won't be getting out for a few months now, he will not be breathing that crisp cool air. What can you do to help him during those dreadful months of winter?

## Here are some tips;

- 1 - give him fresh air with an air purifier or an air exchanger.
- 2 - don't make your bird live in an oven; try to keep his room to a cool 16 Celsius.
- 3 - a humidifier to keep the humidity around 45%
- 4 - don't be afraid to perch your bird on the shower curtain rod when you take your shower (lots of hot humidity there), and why not let him take one too!
- 5 - Provided your bird is not overweight and is active throughout the day, almonds could be added to the diet in limited quantities.
- 6 - a good full spectrum light for 6 to 8 hours a day makes a great difference in the plumage's appearance and general health. Make sure to replace your neon or bulb following the manufacture's recommendations.

7 - To prevent vitamin A & E deficiencies, during the upcoming winter months, consider adding **Red Palm Oil** to your birds' diet, and why not include it in yours as well!

Red palm oil comes from the fruit of the tropical palm tree *Elaeis guineensis*. This nutritious oil has been used in Asia and Africa for thousands of years. It naturally contains antioxidants such as tocopherols and tocotrienols (vitamin E), and carotenoids (vitamin A). This oil is known for its richness in the vitamin-A precursor beta-carotene which gives the oil its red color, and its high efficiency. Amongst its numerous benefits it is easy to digest and absorb and contains the omega-6 essential fatty acid - linoleic acid. Red palm oil is natural: not hydrogenated.

It contains no trans-fatty acids, and improves blood lipids and raises HDL cholesterol.

This oil is often used in Caribbean cooking, so look for it in Haitian or Jamaican food stores. Once you've opened the bottle, we suggest that you keep it in a jar in the refrigerator since it becomes spoiled quite fast.

I recommend you take about half a teaspoon and melt it in the microwave oven. Add this to the day's portion of dry or fresh food. It has a strange smell but the birds love it. You should have no difficulties to get your bird to eat it. Use it in moderation 1-2 times / week, and perhaps 3 times / week at the end of winter if you see the need for it. It also works wonders 2-3 times / week for a weaning bird who's feathers are a bit "ruffled", especially with macaws.

## DVD REVIEW



**Breathtaking, magnificent and stupendous DVDs of parrots in the wild.** Dr. Stafford and his wife, Marie, donate their time and resources to travel into the field to visit and evaluate "in situ" conservation projects. They have compiled an **illustrious collection** of video footage that has been **brilliantly mastered** to pay tribute to these fascinating feathered creatures.

**Parrots International** currently has three DVDs of Parrots in the wild:

**Amore!** Features numerous species of macaws, amazons, conures and toucans

### Saving the Baby Blues and the Parrots

**International DVD #1** (species specific videos of the Lears Macaw, Blue-Throated Macaw, Red-Fronted Macaw, Clay lick video in Peru, and the Great-Green Macaw).

You can be a part of the good things Parrots International is accomplishing. Join Parrots International for \$55. **100% of your membership is directed to the support of Parrot International Conservation and Research Projects In The Wild.** Your support will make a tangible difference toward "in situ" conservation. A one year membership in PI is included with your first donation as well as a copy of the Parrots International DVD of your choice.

A description of each of the DVDs can be found on the PI website at:

<http://www.parrotsinternational.org>



## Fun & Serious web links.

### The Avian Web

<http://www.avianweb.com>

This site offers excellent information for the companion bird owner and aviculturist. It also links you to a vast repertoire of other bird site links.

### Environmentally Friendly Products and Resources!

<http://www.enviro-friendly.com/environmentally-friendly-products-resources.shtml>

### Alternative cleaner to harsh chemical products:

[http://www.greenpeace.org.au/get\\_involved/?type=cleaningthehome#recipes](http://www.greenpeace.org.au/get_involved/?type=cleaningthehome#recipes)

<http://qp-society.com>

The Quaker Parakeet Society encourages understanding of Quakers as companion parrots through education and strives to prevent further restrictions of ownership, promotes protection and preservation of Quaker natural habitats.



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- Exotic fruit flavoring without added sugar which can promote pathogenic organisms
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# Fun Parrot Facts

## How old can birds live?

Anecdotal reports have claimed that birds have lived in excess of 90-100 years. In actuality, little documented evidence of the lifespan or aging process exists in the literature.

Dr. Susan Clubb has published the most recent data on aging in Macaws from studies at Parrot Jungle in Miami, Florida. Some of the Macaws were documented to be at least 57 years old. We're beginning to see Cockatiels that are over 20 years old.

I have personally cared for one male African Grey, Freddie, who is almost 30 years old, in perfect health and feather condition. Napoleon, a male Mollucan, 28 years old and a female Amazon who is 27.

And, of course, there is the famous Mollucan Cockatoo King Tut. He was brought from Indonesia in 1925 as a youngster and greeted the visitors up to 1989 at the San Diego Zoo. We can say that he died at a venerable age.

What about non parrot birds? 5 years? 10 years?

Most hummingbirds live between 4 to 7 years but some species have been known to live between 8 to 12 years! Not bad for such a tiny creature.

Ravens and the Andean Condor have a life expectancy of 70 years!

One of the first banded waded Albatross was registered in a census in the Galápagos in 1994 and was at least 38 years old.

The albatross has possibly the longest development for its babies with a 9 year childhood before it is able to reproduce.

SYLVIE AUBIN





# Quiz

## Test your old bird knowledge!

Last time I quizzed you on macaws and tried very hard to trick you, this time I was gentler and tried not to bruise your ego... So you should do better on this one, as it is easier and without tricky questions.

**1- My Double Yellow-head Amazon is now 26 and recently I went to a class on bird health so, full of new knowledge, I checked her choana for papillae but she has none. I asked someone in the bird business and they told me that it was normal for old birds not to have any papillae. Is this true?**

- A) Perfectly true. Choanal papillae disappear when birds reach puberty.
- B) Absolutely false. Birds should have healthy papillae at all times. It can be the first indicator of health, vitamin A deficiency and, or illness.
- C) It's true only for Amazons, they don't have papillae at all.
- D) It's true only in a bird that is old enough that it's reproductive system has stopped working; it's the female reproductive hormones that produce the papillae.

**2- I recently bought a Patagonian Conure who is almost 13 years old, she only eats table food. The lady at the pet store told me that I should try to convert her to a good pellet diet. But hey, what does she know! She only wants to sell me more**

**stuff! Anyways, my bird is way too old to change her habits. Right?**

- A) Right! You are one smart customer. If table food is keeping us alive and in good health then of course it's good for birds!
- B) You are right; changing diet at a certain age is not only almost impossible but can also be very dangerous for your bird's health.
- C) You should keep going to that pet store! They give good advice. No matter how old it's never too late to make positive changes. A good balance diet with 70 % of a good quality pellet should only improve your bird's health.

**3- My blue and gold macaw has been limping for a few months now. A friend told me I should take her to a vet but I think she only has the same thing as me: old age! After all, she's well on her way to her 40th birthday! Going to the vet would be futile. Am I right?**

- A) No! You should find out what the problem is. It could be bumblefoot (see article in Issue #1, page 46), she could have injured herself (watch carefully if there is no constriction!), it could even be an egg binding problem if it's recent!
- B) 40 and she doesn't need a cane? Of course you are right! She is really old and apart from moving to Tucson Arizona there is nothing you can do to help your poor old sweetie.
- C) Limping is not that uncommon and not much to worry about. If I were you I would not pay too much

attention to it. It might even be an act to draw attention! You know how manipulative those macaws are!

- D) Of course it could be arthritis but if so, there are ways to help her. Please get as much information on that subject as you can (after you've had a vet check all other possibilities). Read carefully this issue's article on Aloe Vera.
- E) A and E.

**4- Recently I bought a male Cockatiel at a yard sale, he looked so pitiful, and the man there told me he was 12 years old and has always been alone. Since he does not really like us to touch him I feel he would be better with a companion. But he is so old and has always been alone; will he like and accept a companion?**

- A) Like us, birds do like company in general. Your Cockatiel would probably be very happy to meet a new bird friend. Cockatiels adapt very easily to new companions. Still, introduce them with precautions, do quarantine and test the 2 birds for any diseases.
- B) Of course not! After 12 years alone without any bird contact, he doesn't even know he is a bird. Leave him alone, it could be very disturbing for its mental health to finally meet another cockatiel.
- C) No problem if it's a female they tolerate other birds very well. But if it's a male it's too late at this age to try to make him live with another bird; he is too old to accept to share his territory.



**5- My uncle has a female red lori who is almost 16 now. She has always lived with my uncle but now, due to health problem, he is moving to a nursing home. We would love to keep her but the problem is that she never lived in a cage since my uncle was always at home with her. But we are both working and are very nervous to leave her alone to roam in the house. Will she adapt?**

- A) Forget it. She is too old now to be confined to a cage, she will probably pluck and maybe die of boredom.
- B) No problem at all! Lorries are really adaptable birds; she will accept any change you will impose on her.
- C) She will probably adapt with time since Lorries are very easily adaptable birds. But it is a lot of change at the same time. Try to let her keep as many habits as possible at first, then gradually make changes.

**6- Can we tell the age of a parrot by its eyes? I almost bought a female Amazon but even though the breeder told me she was 12, I had doubts... Her eyes were funny; the irises looked like tractor wheels. Is it because she's old?**

- A) Absolutely not; it's a sure sign that she was in a breeding "mood".
- B) It has nothing to do with age. However it does mean that she is going blind.
- C) Yes indeed, it is an indicator that she is pretty old. It doesn't tell the exact age, but it does mean she is not in her prime anymore.
- D) It's the opposite! It means that she is still very young. So much in fact

that her eyes did not reach their adult shape.

**7- I just adopted this really nice Jardine who's already 14 but he doesn't talk and I am currently trying to teach him a few simple words. I heard somewhere that if they didn't learn to talk when they were babies it's too late to teach them anymore.**

- A) False. Almost all parrots at almost any age can learn a few words if their desire for it is strong enough.
- B) It depends whether your bird was handfed or not; if so, it's still possible but if not forget it, he will never learn to speak.
- C) He could still learn, especially if there is another bird at home who speaks.
- D) A and C.

**8- Dogs and cats hair change color when they are getting old. Will my bird's feathers change colors too?**

- A) Absolutely. Dark feathers will tend to become blackish and pale feathers will become whitish.
- B) Not at all, birds are not plague, like most animals, by a change in their "hair" coloration.
- C) They do not drastically change colors but they do change; you will notice after a while that the texture is a bit different and the coloration too. However they do not become grey or white (apart from those who already were of course!)
- D) There is no change in their coloration but the feathers do tend to grow sparse. Some old parrots even become bald, mostly male; same as humans.
- E) B and C.

## Analyze your results:

### Q-1:

If you answered A you start with a minus 5.

If you answered B you get a nice 10.

You are right, they should have healthy choanal papillae at any age, otherwise something is not right and you should investigate.

C you get a fat 0. Why should Amazons be any different?

D you get 2 points just because you must have hesitated so long before choosing that one! And you must be of the male gender to be confused by an argument of that kind...

### Q-2:

2 points if you answered A; you are critical and do not believe everything everyone tells you.

4 points for answering B; you are not so far from the truth. It could and should be done but slowly with good monitoring of the bird's weight and health.

Also 4 points for answering C since it is true but you should do it cautiously.

### Q-3:

5 points for answering A; it could be many things and it NEEDS to be investigated thoroughly.

0 for answering B; 40 is old but still not that old that you should stop looking out for your bird's health. After all, she still might have a good 20 years ahead!

C-Minus 5 for you! Yes they can be manipulative but limping could be serious and lead to very dramatic problems.

D-5 points there too. Birds as other animals do suffer from arthritis and rheumatisms and yes there are certain ways too help. Your diagnosis might just prove to be right on the target, but still it needs investigation.

E-10 points here; you are very alert and knowledgeable. You notice things and analyse them but you're still well aware that many possibilities exist and you take your bird's health at heart.

### Q-4:

A- 4 points only. That was an easy one. Cockatiels do adapt and accept other Cockatiels easily (in general).



## ALOE VERA

By Josee Bermingham, Avian Veterinarian Technician

Having been repeatedly referred to as a the **“Wand of Heaven”** and the **“Plant of Life”**, the Aloe Vera plant is definitely one with many virtues



Underutilized here in North America there are convincing reports, trials and research that confirm its potential for use as a safe and non-toxic remedy. In my entourage, people are aware of the topical gel's therapeutic effect on burns, yet very few are familiar with the tonic drink and gel as a natural remedy for many other ailments. Its secrets have yet to be revealed in the avian medical community as well. **Over-the-counter, non-toxic and inexpensive, it's readily available, especially if you keep a plant at home and at the cottage in case of emergency!**

The history of Aloe Vera for centuries used by civilizations throughout the world, is fascinating. The oldest documented usage of this plant dates back to 1550 B.C in the Egyptian Book of Remedies. It was an Egyptian tradition to offer this plant at a funeral ceremony to accompany the Pharaoh to his last rest in the Valley of the Kings. A reference in the Bible claims that this plant was cultivated by God to give men a means of healing themselves. I would recommend this web link for additional information pertaining to its properties, research, and different usage by humans and animals alike.

Aloe vera myth or medicine?  
[www.positivehealth.com](http://www.positivehealth.com)

This miraculous plant, should definitely be part of every avian first aid kit. Some claim it has fabled medicinal properties. Yet according to Dr. Peter Atherton, “Evidence of its therapeutic power dating back to 70-90 AD; Kings and Queens, Pharaohs, Indian, Chinese, Greeks Romans alike have used this miraculous plant for therapeutic armoury .” Dr. Peter Atherton's recent book THE ESSENTIAL ALOE VERA can be purchased from Mill Enterprises.

I recommend its uses as a complementary or alternative medicine especially when other known therapies have failed to be effective, or a natural remedy with no known toxic effects are preferred to use.



- 100 % pure gel form.
- Liquid drinkable form. (stabilized pure Aloe Vera gel and juice)
- Have a real live plant in your home and at your country house!
- Capsule form.
- In Russia Aloe Vera is available as injectable to treat herpes and numerous other infections.



It is a safe, non-toxic remedy, with few allergic reactions. (Reactions are usually to a product additive, rather than aloe itself.)

It's rich in all vitamins especially Vitamin A ,C and E excluding vitamin D. Unusual for plants, it also contains Vitamin B 12- essential for vegetarians and our parrot companions.

### What makes the plant therapeutic?

The plant's complex nature and components and their synergistic powers are apparently responsible for its therapeutic nature. Pharmaceutical companies around the world have tried in vein to synthetically reproduce its properties. Recently a spokesman for EQUITERRE (an agency that promotes fair trade and equity around the world) explained how one corporation actually owns the plant's genetic code, and has recently prohibited indigenous cultures to gather it from the wild.



● **A** - Mucilage layer of the plant which surrounds the inner gel are *mucopolysaccharides*: enhancing the immune system by acting as immunomodulators. These polysaccharide also help detoxify.

● **B** - Aloin and anthraquinone found in the sap under the skin are used to make laxative drugs. Small amounts of anthraquinones are beneficial as they act as antibacterial and anti-viral agents.

### References:

- Dr Peter Atherton M.B.Ch.B., D.Obst. R.C.O.G., M.R.C.G.P. Positive Health issue 20 June/July 1997 Aloe Vera Myth or Medicine?
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## ALOE VERA

### Therapeutic properties of Aloe Vera

- Anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties
- Immunomodulator
- Pain relief: analgesic properties and prevents bruising
- Anti-inflammatory
- Gastro-intestinal aid. Effective in treating GI inflammation, ulcers, colitis
- Detoxifying agents
- Enhances immune cell function
- Anti-pruritus (anti-itching) and accelerates tissue regeneration
- Purgative - to relieve constipation, peristalsis

### Recommended avian dosages

- Aloe Vera gel can be offered in a small cup. Many birds readily enjoy this.
- Oral dosage: have your avian veterinarian evaluate this dosage with you based on your pet's weight
- Topical spray: 1 part pure Aloe Vera juice to 3 parts water. Rinse with water a few hours later.
- Wounds and bites: apply open section of mature plant and wrap as a band aid under bandage.
- Nasal flush: 1 ml pure gel in 10 ml lactated ringer's solution.

## CAUTION

Despite its extremely safe usage it is advisable to discuss and advise your avian veterinarian, nonetheless!

Myth, reality and its undeniable therapeutic powers to relieve numerous health conditions are amongst its virtues. However, do not consider this a miraculous therapeutic agent for all illnesses that have not been medically evaluated. Should diarrhea, apparent discomfort or adverse reaction occur, discontinue its use immediately. Aloe Vera is not a permanent cure for arthritis, inflammation and immune system deficiency. Symptoms suppressed by this treatment will often return once the oral gel is no longer given.

Avian conditions that can benefit from Aloe Vera	Emergency treatment	Prevention	Alternative remedy	ORAL	TOPICAL	SPRAY
Treatment of burns or for crop burns	+			+	+	
Treatment of intestinal ulcers, abscesses & cysts			+	+		
For intestinal and cloacal papillomas caused by a herpes virus. The gel also relieves cold sores!			+	+	+	
For feather damaging behaviours & to soothe irritated skin.			+			+
Used to treat wounds & damaged epithelial tissue: even mouth lesions!	+				+	
Use for neonates to aid digestion and restore crop motility	+			+		
Cleansing, antiseptic and powerful anti-microbial against bacteria, yeast, fungi including pseudomonas! which is very difficult to treat with antibiotics in a nursery	+	+	+	+	+	+
Applied on bumblefoot, pressure sores under foot			+		+	
A detoxifying agent when birds are fed seeds, veggies & fruit treated with pesticides and chemicals.		+		+		
When treating allergic reactions (immunomodulator)			+	+		+
Before stressful events (bird shows, vet exam, moving, breeding season)		+		+		
Before the mosquito season: Could possibly build immunity to fight against West Nile Virus!		+		+		
For treatment of hypovitaminosis A, C & E. The gel lacks vit D.			+	+		
For the geriatric bird: to relieve the aches and pains of aging, arthritis & heart disease		+	+	+		
Proventricular dilatation syndromes, to increase peristaltic movement of GI tract, increase protein absorption & increase normalization of stool bacteria.			+	+		
When the immune system has been challenged (viral or other pathological incidence either following quarantine or bird shows)			+	+		
Added to a saline solution to flush congested sinuses			+	+	+	
When toxins are ingested or inhaled (ex. birds who have been exposed to cigarette smoke)	+			+		+
To aid in the treatment of hepatitis and fatty liver condition			+	+		
Some studies suggest it also has an anti-parasitic effect		+		+		+

**B- 0** on the contrary, if it has forgotten that it is a bird, it would only be good for its mental health to be reminded that it is indeed a bird!

**C- 2 points;** at least there is a bit of truth in that reasoning. Some birds do make their territory and that's why you should introduce birds in a new neutral environment, not in one's territory.

**Q-5:**  
**A-0** you are not giving birds in general and Lories in particular enough credit. Birds are very adaptable creatures, especially Lories. And moreover your information is outdated. If you are still thinking that parrots pluck themselves as soon as they encounter a frustration or that they are bored!

**B- Minus 5** for you; you just don't care what will happen to that bird. She just has to live with whatever you decide. Yes, Lories are adaptable birds, but there is a still a limit to that adaptability.

**C- 10 points;** you are a sensible person. They are adaptable but after 16 years one will be well advised to let her keep has many old habits as possible. Maybe the possibility of giving her a complete secure room to herself with her future cage in it should be explored (if it's possible of course). If that's possible put all her favourite food and toys in the cage and leave all doors open so she would be tempted to go explore it. Do give her time to adjust to that new life.

**Q-6:**  
**A-Take off 10 points!** Female parrots do not apply make up to their eyes to attract male parrots...

**B-2 points;** it could lead you to believe that a bird with eyes like that was going blind, since it does indicate old age.

**C-10 points;** this was not an easy one. It could well be interpreted as a sign of eye disease. But it is indeed old age that can cause degenerative ophthalmologic changes including iris atrophy.

**D- 0 points;** and I'm generous! At that point you should all know that young birds have, in some species, a difference in the coloration of the eye but not in the shape of the eye.

**Q-7:**  
**A-10 points;** you are right, same as for us, they can learn at any age! It might take more time to learn but once it is learned it's there to stay.

**B- Withdraw 15 points here!** When humans began to keep parrots in captivity they did learn to talk. Do you really believe that those parrots were handfed 500 years ago...

**C- 10 points;** you too are right, same as young children and machos, competition and imitation are two great motivators to learn something new.

**D-20 points;** it's never too late to learn and doing it from a compatriot helps even more!

**Q-8:**  
**A. A-0 points;** it is not believed nor documented that feathers grow darker or whiter as the birds age.

**B. 5 points;** that's true, birds are lucky! No artificial coloration is needed for them to keep the grey and white at bay. Their colors just won't quit!

**C. 10 points;** you know enough to know old birds. Indeed, at a certain age you can notice subtle changes in the appearance of the feathers and facial skin

**D. Minus 5 points;** birds are not plagued with baldness. This is some wicked trick that nature plays on human males to offer sweet revenge for the human female who had to endure over the years: corsets, high heels, waxing, plucking...

**B- A grand 20 points!** They do not change colors but it doesn't mean that there is no difference at all. After all, aging takes its toll on all living creatures.



## Parrots in Shakespeare's art...

You love parrots, animals in general and suspense that make you keep the lights on at night?

Then read "Bare Bones" by Kathy Reich.

It's a wonderful thriller, well written with a suspense that just won't quit! This is the sixth book in the Temperance Brennan series. Tempe is a forensic anthropologist who divides her working time between North Carolina and, Montreal... Same as her creator, Kathy Reich.

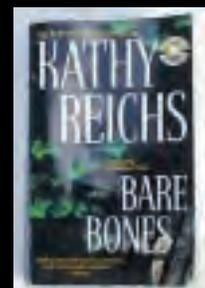
In Bare Bones, Tempe comes across a lot of bear bones, human bones, a few bird bones and unusual feathers... After submitting those feathers to a specialist she is shocked to find that they belonged to a very rare bird...

Yes, you guessed it, Spix macaw feathers!

As the plot complicates and the tension elevates you get to know more about that famous (or infamous, depending on your perspective!) bird and also about many illegal animal traffic that is going on in our much civilised North America.

If you still don't know what CITES stands for, you will know it by the end of the book! A very good detective novel, written by someone who truly takes animal cruelty to heart. A sure hit with those of us who just can't get enough of a good mystery.

The only hitch; she seems to think that only someone with a scientific background should be good enough to breed rare species. As an aviculturist I felt a bit insulted. But hey! This is my bone to pick and it's quite a controversial issue...



By: Sylvie Aubin

# West Nile Virus:

## MAXIMIZING PREVENTION

Original printing in June 2004, Dave T. Longo: genus\_amazona@hotmail.com Psittacine Avicultural Research Centre/Longo's Aviaries

What is West Nile Virus and why is it a cause for concern? It is a virus that is spread only by the bites of infected arthropods. It may cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and also may cause myocarditis (inflammation of heart muscles). Of the arthropods, mosquitoes are the main carriers (at least 43 species worldwide) and, to a lesser extent, ticks. There is no evidence of direct animal to animal, or animal to human transmission.

**Wild birds are the primary hosts for WNV** but the virus may also infect humans, domestic fowl, large domestic animals, and non-human primates. Prior to 1999, the virus was only reported in Africa, Asia and Europe, and had never been found in the Western Hemisphere. Incubation period is 5-15 days following bite of infected mosquito.

**The 1999 New York outbreak** of West Nile Virus caused disease in at least 60 humans and resulted in 7 deaths. **It also killed at least 5000 wild birds**, mainly American Crows, and caused deaths in at least 20 other native wild bird species. (American Robin, Bald Eagle, Black-billed Magpie, Black-crowned Night Heron, Blue Jay, Blyth's Tragopan, Broad-winged Hawk, Bronze-winged Duck, Chilean Flamingo, Cooper's Hawk, Cormorant, Impeyan Pheasant, Laughing Gull, Mallard, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo). Several species of Psittaciformes; the Ringed-neck Parakeet and the Vasa Parrot, and Cockatiel have also been shown to be susceptible to the WNV.

*We are currently undergoing tests on one of our amazon parrots that was acquired from Alberta a year ago. The symptoms are muscle atrophy and attempts to show activity, but the desire to be active is lacking. We suspect the party who kept the bird prior to moving it to our facility may have had it outdoors and it was exposed to the virus!*

The virus also caused disease in at least 22 horses (at least 10 of which died or had to be euthanized) while at least 21 other horses became infected without showing any sign of disease. The following year, WNV migrated north and arrived in Windsor, then in 2001 it migrated into the Greater Toronto Area. Since then, it has migrated from region to region in Canada. In 2002, the number of cases dwindled in Ontario

but took a long leap and hit in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba. Now in May of 2004, it has already been found in Owen Sound, ON, less than 10km from our new operation.

**Dr. Branson Ritchie at the University of Georgia** is working with a research consortium on an **avian-specific vaccine to prevent West Nile Virus associated disease**. Reaching the level of treatment is the choice we do not want to have. To date, there have been several zoos in North America which have been and still are vaccinating animals other than equines with vaccines that are primarily for equines. This is a temporary solution and should be used as a last resort to protect the animals until a vaccine specifically made for other types of animals exists.

Another method of controlling the insects is spraying with insecticides. While insecticides kill the insects, it is harmful to birds, aquatic organisms and bees of course. This procedure takes much longer to break down or has a slower solubility in the environment, generally the water and earth.

Prior to 1999,  
the virus was only  
reported from  
Africa, Asia and  
Europe.

One interesting application is to introduce growth regulator hormones like "methaprene" into bird baths or pools. This will stop the larvae from developing into adult stage. There are several other applications that can be used as preventative treatments. Stopping this problem in its tracks is essential!

When enclosing specimens susceptible to WNV in exhibits or outdoor enclosures, mosquito netting is an ideal solution. We should first have a good framing plan for enforcing the netting. Reinforcement should be installed or mesh removed for winter months from snow payloads or its weight thereof. This can be one of the more expensive routes.

Stagnant water vs. ponds; here is a situation where any body of water that has a lack of circulation is where mosquitoes will lay their eggs. Dead circulation or stagnant water can exist in buckets, pots, car tires and tire depressions in small grain gravel and grass. All these elements should be removed and depressions in the ground (gravel, sand or grass) should be filled or flattened. Ponds should have complete circulation throughout all areas.

A sure-fire prevention method is to introduce a small species of fish that consumes primarily mosquito larvae into these bodies of water. There are two that are commonly used. The Georgia Giant Bream "*Gambusia holbrooki*" that is being produced by the billions in the U.S. There are fish farms that exist which specialize exclusively in this species. They can be acquired for as little as .4 cents ea (US) and will eat anything



Look for preventive applications for larvae at your local Garden Center or Hardware.



Plant a citronnelle bush.



Build a bat house



Install mosquito netting on out side of flights.

alive that fits in their mouth. Another option is the Golden Minnow (*Bacillus thuringensis*) which is not as aggressive. These are being used by a few aviculturists and colleagues of mine with great success.

Another predator of the adult mosquito is the bat. We can introduce colonies of bats to desired regions by directly applying or installing bat houses. Some houses can hold colonies from 25 up to 100 or even 300 bats to each house. To put this idea into more perspective, one bat alone can consume more than 1,200 mosquitoes, moths or similar sized insects each hour. Location is crucially important to ensure their move into your habitat. The face of the bat house should be positioned towards the west so there is a minimum of 6-10 hours of exposed sunlight prior to sunset. This buildup of heat will ensure the house stays warm throughout the night. If it is too warm, it should be ventilated. The colour of the Bat house, whether or not it requires ventilation is determined by the climate and where in North America you are situated. Bats generally follow bodies of water; streams, rivers and creeks where insects frequent. The house should be located approximately 400m or 1/4 of a mile on either side of the water. We found evidence of bats at our new facility and built a large holding for the bats. It has only been installed in June of 2004 so occupancy may have already begun this year.

One of the better alternative methods is the Propane Mosquito Traps. This device converts propane into carbon dioxide that lures mosquitoes to the trap. There is also heat and a blue light that also draws them closer until the trap vacuums them into the capture chamber. It serves 3/4 of an acre and does have to be plugged in. It does not let off any toxic fumes, so relocation can be suited if you have a long enough extension cord. At \$300.00 each, they are not that expensive but when dealing with larger zoological institutions, acreages becomes a factor or these can be applied only to the subjects' areas that are susceptible to WNV.

If we are to completely minimize WNV, we have to stop the carrier. Utilizing all these methods mentioned and more will optimize the absence of WNV. Chances are less than 0.001% any animals will contract WNV if all these applications are introduced.



Search out areas where water can sit and stagnant. Eliminating the perfect breeding ground can help minimize the problem.



Eliminating mosquitoes from the premise is one of the key elements to fulfilling our responsibilities in maintaining these animals in their peak performance, health and behaviour. Only when they are in these conditions, are they most advantageous when both exposing them to and educating the public.



By: Dave Longo

Longo Aviaries

# EMERGENCY HARDWARE

Various tools that should be part of your first aid arsenal



Hemostats to remove bleeding pin feather in case of emergency.



A) Steel open bands are usually placed following quarantine, importation and sexing, for the identification of larger psittacines.

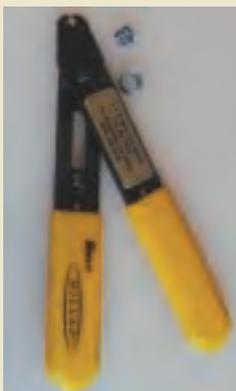
B) Aluminum captive bred closed baby bands.



Scissors to remove bandages, trim cotton rope toys and groom flight feathers.



This open band must be tightened safely. A gap thicker than your finger nail could be hazardous.



Cutters are used to remove baby bands in case of emergency and cutting wire or toy to free bird if accidentally caught. Steel ring cutters to remove bands from smaller species .i.e. budgies, canaries, finches, lovebirds and parrotlets.



Open band pliers needed to close "open" bands securely. Your breeder or avian veterinarian clinic should be able to assist you with this procedure. These are expensive tools to purchase and technical skills are required to perform this operation.



Technical assistance from an experienced bird handler should be used to perform this procedure. In case of emergency, always have 3 handlers (1-restraining the bird, 2nd- restraining the leg, and the 3rd -attentively removing the band).



Two vise grips must be securely fastened to each tip of the band. One on either side. Once both vise grips are fastened and securely gripped, leg and bird are properly restraint, apply pressure twisting in opposite direction from one another.



This should spread the band apart in opposite direction and release it from the ankle.

**In case of an emergency, such as a leg fracture, the removal of the band could be necessary.**



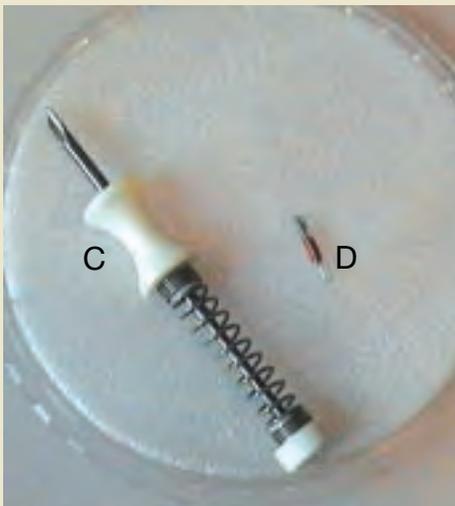
These old quarantine bands are the most difficult to remove. These are closed with a screw but are not closed baby bands!



In an emergency situation, where inflammation could be foreseen, the removal of this band will necessitate the use of these wire cutters. This procedure requires extreme caution and technical skills

### Identification is essential!

Should you be forced to remove the identification of your bird - consider having a microchip implant placed by your avian veterinarian. Identification is crucial for future reference either for breeding or proof of ownership. Unfortunately for the time being there are different brands available and various decoders are needed to track all manufactured microchips. Conserve the removed bands in small plastic bag stapled to your bird's birth certificate, health records and identification file.



C) Injection instrument  
D) Micro chip



Decoder reading chip following the procedure, where by the chip was implanted into the breast muscle.

# The Night Owl Camera

The Night Owl Camera nest monitoring this device is an innovative tool for the avid aviculturist. It provides both visual and audio supervision and recording capabilities with minimal disturbance to the nest.

We've listed a few situations that could benefit from the installation of the night owl camera.

- If parental neglect is suspected. If there is a history of abandonment, mutilation or death of the chicks, over-preening, chicks overfed or unfed, stunting.
- To monitor a female with a history of dystocia (egg retention), chronic egg layer or hypocalcaemia.
- To assess the development of each chick within a clutch, especially in a large clutch such as Quaker conures. A camera could help evaluate whether the clutch should be retrieved to allow the youngest to thrive and prevent them from being neglected or crushed. Recurrent disease in chicks from a specific nest, stunting /slow crop/dehydration /splayed legs, no feeding response or cries for feeding can be detected. To supervise mate aggressivity and behavior.
- For flights with colony housing-are there intruders entering the nest harming the chicks?
- To verify the identification of the parents within a colony flight.
- To monitor a new pair. Have they really bonded?
- Troubleshooting infertility.
- Troubleshooting DIS (dead in shell eggs)
- To study: splayed legs, assist hatching, hen and male parental involvement in caring for their chicks.
- To monitor egg development (is the hen brooding, turning her eggs adequately and at which frequency, is she eating, picking or rolling them?)
- Is the egg pipping or hatching? Will you need to assist the hatching process?
- To monitor or identify disturbances in the environment that may affect the pair's behavior.
- To monitor a chick or eggs being fostered. Will they accept them as their own?
- To monitor the health condition of a brooding hen. Is she being fed?
- To monitor pair behavior and parental care in wild nests protected by conservation management and research programs.



# Observations from



The Quaker eggs have successfully hatched. Optimum parental care is provided by both parents. We are able to monitor very clearly and precisely the activities of the pair and growing chicks 24 hrs/day.

- It is a fascinating experience to observe the nurturing behavior of the pair.

Pair bonding: male feeding hen



- At night, the female clumsily stumbles over her chicks when she enters to feed them. She then gathers them around her, positions them upright to be fed.
- The male also feeds the chicks, and preens their fledgling feathers. He does so even when the female is away from the nest.

Older clutchmates sufficated the smallest



- Unfortunately we witnessed the death of the youngest chick, under the weight of the two oldest clutch mates. Upon viewing the chick's

condition, we immediately intervened to remove him from the nest, but we were unfortunately too late.

- Earlier we had observed this youngest chick peddling on the wooden surface - free of wooden shavings. The addition of substrate to the nest also allowed us to evaluate the chicks that appeared strong and healthy. In hindsight, the oldest or youngest chicks should have been retrieved to the nursery.

Nest bedding removed: possible cause of splayed legs



Chicks now in Nursery



- The chicks are now in the nursery and the camera monitoring device has now been placed onto another nest.

Until next time,  
Benoit Guilbeault  
Hagen Avicultural Research Institute

# STEP BY STEP NEST-CAM INSTRUCTIONS

The night owl monitoring camera was installed at the Hagen Avicultural Research Institute a few weeks ago. This device was generously donated for research by Mitch Rezman at Windy City Parrots. We will be updating the surveillance of the pairs' behavior, reproduction success and health of the chicks they will raise throughout the up-coming issues.

For the trial installation, a pair of Quaker parakeets were selected. The pair had already laid a clutch of 5 eggs, when the nest cover equipped with the camera device was exchanged. Quaker nests are inspected daily at HARI, and as they are accustomed to inspection of their nest, the installation process had no negative affect on the pair's behavior.

- Install, and test all the connecting cables and screen monitors before you install the unit onto the nest.

(PHOTOS 1, 2, 3)

- Evaluate the length of wire required to connect to the monitoring screen or recorder. "We've found the Night Owl to be simplicity itself, from mounting it inside just about any birdhouse or aviary nest box, to running the 100-foot cable into the house and plugging it into the TV. Have a Wood duck box, or other nest box farther than 100-feet from the house? No problem. You can daisy-chain additional 100-foot extensions between camera and house. Cameras have been connection to 1,000 feet of cable with no loss of video or audio signal".

- Ideally install the camera before the breeding season.

- Locate the ideal site in nest box cover, make sure it is at the opposite side of the nest entrance and suspended over the area where the clutch will rest.

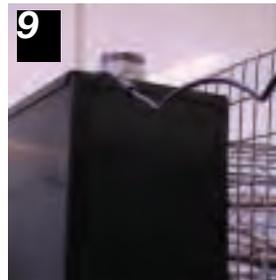
- The camera must be protected from rain and humidity, select either the cap of a spray can or a PVC tubing and cap for wooden nest boxes.

- Perforate a hole in the nest box cover. A Bi-metal hole deep cut style 1 3/8 " (35mm) affixed onto the drill is required to perforate metal nest covers.

(PHOTO 4)

- Adjust the lens with a test trial first. Then tighten the screw once the adjustments have been made.

(PHOTO 5)



- Adjust and insert a spacer onto which you will affix the camera with screws onto the wood spacer and through the plastic cap. (PHOTO 6)

Make sure the light sensors on either side of the camera are not hidden or pressure applied to them when inserted into the cap. The lens must come out slightly through the nest cover, so that the range of vision is as wide as possible.

- Evaluate the depth of the nest and species capacity to chew the camera and exposed lens. The camera and connecting cables must be protected from this at all times.

- Once the installation is done, seal the cap with duct tape.

(PHOTO 7)

- Make sure all the cables have been installed. Ideally vermin and bird-proof the cables by inserting and running them through PVC tubing.

(PHOTO 8)

- Nest box cover is then installed onto nest, making sure the electrical wires are not in reach of the birds.

(PHOTO 9)

- If you have several metal nest boxes of the same size, then the cover can be exchanged, with the monitoring device in place, between nests. (after careful disinfection of the cover!) as seen with this particular metal nest box.

- A video camera or computer screen monitoring system can be used in conjunction with a recording video or computer software.

(PHOTO 10)

# READERS' STORIES

## Plume of a feather

### WIZARD - THE BLUE-FRONTED AMAZON

*It was a rainy Chilliwack morning, as I browsed through the Vancouver paper checking out the "bird" classifieds. An ad caught my attention. I made the phone call and was soon readying myself to make the 1 hr. drive to check out a Blue-fronted Amazon that someone was selling. My moustache parakeet gave me a sinister look as I headed out the door.*

*"Wizard lived right in downtown Vancouver. His Greek owner was moving back to Greece and needed to find a good home for this beautiful bird. A elderly, Greek lady sat in the apartment living room crocheting the most incredible bedspread. She spoke no English but conversed with the fine feathered friend who sat atop his cage, very much interested in her handiwork plus the goings on outside his window.*

*I explained to the owner, Papaioannou, that I was coming out to look only, and really wasn't in the market for another bird. I spent a good hour and a half observing, visiting and listening to one sided conversations as other "bird" people phoned to inquire about the Amazon. It was very apparent how attached Papaioannou was to his lovely wizard and how he had agonized over the decision to part with his gorgeous green bundle of feathers.*

*As I watched this amazing 8 year old creature I knew there was a good chance he might be coming home with me. Mama Papaioannou, I could tell, was also hoping I would become the new caregiver. Unknown to Wizard, I was falling in love.*

*He was reluctant to step on my hand, but Papaioannou reassured me that it had taken him some time before Wizard gained his trust. The past five years they have been the best of buds! This home was Wizard's first residence after leaving the home he hatched in.*

*Soon, with cage, food, accessories and bird loaded into my hatchback and a teary-eyed Greek waving good-bye,*

*Wizard and I hit rush hour and headed east on Highway #1, back to Fraser valley.*

*My passenger remained alert but quiet until we were a couple of miles out of the city. "Hello, hello" he would repeat until I responded. He seemed totally at ease with the freeway drive.*

*I set him up with food and water by a window in the family room. Metro, my moustache parakeet, voiced her disapproval. She certainly was not the gracious "welcome to our home" sort of gal.*

*Leaving Wizard to settle in, I decided this would be a good time to wipe down the fridge shelving. This would keep me in sight of both birds. As I busily cleaned, with my head stuck far in the fridge, I heard "Watchya doing in there?" The male voice was startling and caught me off guard. No, it wasn't Cal, my husband coming home. It was Wizard, the Blue-fronted Amazon. By that evening, he was stepping on my arm.*

*It has been almost 9 years since Wizard became a part of our household. He is intelligent and entertaining, independent but caring. He can sit quietly, daydreaming as he stares out the window. He has a lovely vocabulary and the most contagious and delight laughs. I will never forget the first time my mother-in-law heard the hearty laughter that went on and on. The more we laughed with him, the more he laughed at us! He was the best treasure anyone could find on a dreary, rainy day.*



**Wizard - 17 years old (Show time)**

## Wizard - eating oatmeal



Wizard lives in a large cage with a play gym on top. Metro lives beside him in a cockatiel sized home with a climbing tree on top. On any given day, Metro can be found at Wizard's place sampling food and checking out the toys. On good days they will sit within inches of each other. They developed an interesting friendship and since Cal and I work full time, it is great to know they have each other to share the day with.

I don't know for sure how much Greek cuisine Wizard ate in Vancouver (although I do know bananas and pasta were favorites and still are) but here in Chilliwack, Ukrainian dishes are sought after. Cabbage rolls and potato/cheese perogies truly excite him! As far as activities, he likes clinging to

the back of an office chair and being pushed- full throttle down the hallway and around the kitchen island. He leans forward in anticipation and squawks happily. Showers bring out the goofiness yet he manages to look quite stately when bathing, as he lowers his bottom into the kidney-shaped bathtub.

He enjoys his little stuffed animals and will sometimes lay on his back as he growls and tosses them about in play. Whether chortling, whistling, whispering or egging on, this character is quite the number. His wolf whistle is real "uptown" but his attempt at the ABC's have country charm. Some evenings he hums and lightly sings himself to sleep. Deep head massages are another love of his. These he can also administer on his own when he feels his humans have not spent the necessary time on his massage.

This fun loving parrot sums it all up when he says, in one of his many voices, "I'm a good boy!"

Who says you can't move the city guy out to the country !

Maria Godart

(If you would like to submit your story, send it to Parrot Life's editorial office. All stories and photos submitted to Parrot Life Magazine automatically become the property of the publisher and cannot be returned.)

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## What Are These Species

Answers for page 16.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Sulphur-crested cockatoo<br><i>Cacatua galerita</i>                        | 8. Yellow-head Amazon<br><i>Amazona oratrix belizensis</i>               |
| 2. Scarlet Macaw<br><i>Ara macao</i>  | 9. Mealy Amazon<br><i>Amazona farinosa farinosa</i>                      |
| 3. Goffin's Cockatoo<br><i>Cacatua goffini</i>                                | 10. Lilac-crowned Amazon<br><i>Amazona finchi woodi</i>                  |
| 4. Monk Parakeet-Quaker<br><i>Myiopsitta monachus monachus</i>                | 11. Hawk-headed Parrot<br><i>Deroptyus accipitrinus accipitrinus</i>     |
| 5. Magna Double Yellow-headed Amazon - <i>Amazona oratrix magna</i>           | 12. Honduras Yellow-naped Amazon<br><i>Amazona auropalliata parvipes</i> |
| 6. Blue-fronted Amazon<br><i>Amazona aestiva aestiva</i>                      |  |
| 7. Costa Rican Blue Crown Mealy Amazon<br><i>Amazona farinosa virenticeps</i> |  |

This statue of a black-headed caique is the first of a limited series created by the Hagen Avicultural Research Institute.



H.A.R.I has awarded these collectable pieces to various outstanding charities and collaborators in the avian community. These were awarded in recognition of the devotement of numerous individuals that have contributed to the education, conservation, medical and aviculture advancements for psittacines internationally. H.A.R.I has donated major parrot groups a statue for them to use in club raffles and fund raising.

# Liberating Wings

## Birds as a Spiritual Practice

Rev. LoraKim Joyner, D.V.M.

Liberating Wings



POINT OF VIEW

The disciple was always complaining to his master, "You are hiding the final secret of Zen from me."

And he would not accept the master's denials.

One day they were walking in the hills when they heard a bird sing.

"Did you hear the bird sing?" asked the Master?

"Yes," said the disciple.

"Well, now you know that I have hidden nothing from you."

"Yes."

- Anthony de Mello, *Song of the Bird*

To be human is to seek. We seek fulfillment in our daily routines and in the overall arc of our life's journey. We seek authentic living, playing out our deepest values in all we do. We seek connection, awareness, and relationships rooted in love and trust. Yet what we seek often remains illusive, happiness hidden deep within our often busy and consumptive schedules. To liberate oneself to a life of joy people turn to spiritual practices.

Spiritual practices are those activities that help us connect to whole-ness beyond our ego and its daily concerns. Some call this God /Goddess, others call it the Cosmic Consciousness, and others call it the web of life or the universe. Whatever the name, the urge is the same - to live every moment in open awareness to all that is, without our projections drawing stormy clouds upon us and obscuring our chance for vibrant and compassionate living.

Birds are a spiritual practice - they help us discover wholeness in our lives. They are such strong symbols of freedom, beauty, rebirth, and joy. By being with them in an intentional manner, we open our subconscious to the archetypal power they present, and open ourselves to transformation.

Perhaps you are more verbal in the ways you connect to the web of life. If so, you might try repeating a phrase, chant, or a song. One that I frequently use is a Zuni Pueblo Indian Prayer adapted by Mary Grigolia and later by myself: *I add my breath, to your breath, that our days*

*may be long upon this earth.* That the days of all beings may be long. The sense of connection comes from knowing that the molecules you take in each breath not only were once inside the birds in your home and yard, but were in extinct feathered wonders and their reptilian ancestors, the dinosaurs.

Spiritual practices aren't just to mend your life, but all of life. When we connect to all, we are called to justice and to flourishing for all species. Whatever it takes for you to hear the call of birds, to hear the call of life will counteract the objectification that can sneak into any

Painted by: Shernya Vininsky



*Spiritual practices are those activities that help us connect to wholeness beyond our ego and its daily concerns.*

relationship. Objectification -- that is, treating others as objects for our gratification, rather than as beautiful ends unto themselves - is especially a threat with those less powerful than we are, including birds.

A spiritual practice therefore calls us to open our lives to the cries of birds, as they tell us of their complex social lives adapted to particular ecological niches. They embody the freedom for which we yearn. We need to feel with their wild hearts and think with their foreign avian brains, and understand what we can of their suffering. Most of all we need to celebrate their form of intelligence and beauty, and let the abundance of life flow over us whenever we are in the presence of birds. When a bird calls, there is nothing of life that remains hidden - all we have to do is find our own way of listening to life, and to love.

The spiritual quest has led some to build avian sanctuaries, others to join conservation groups, others no longer to keep birds captive in their homes or yards, and others to abandon veterinary practice on birds. Whenever we fly free with life, there will come waves of changes, and in the peaks and valleys enduring peace and joy.

(William Blake)

There is a statue in Hiroshima Peace Park commemorating the hope for peace following the devastating results of the atomic bomb dropped on this city near the end of World War II. One girl, Sadako, developed leukemia as a result of the bomb's radiation, and began to fold paper cranes. According to a Japanese custom, if you folded 1000 cranes, you would get your wish. She folded cranes in the hopes that they would augur good health, but had only folded 644 when she died. This statue is of her and in her hands there is a golden crane. The inscription reads:

**This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world.**

Whenever you hold a bird in your hand or in your heart, may you hear the cry of life and so find, and build, peace in the world, for all beings.

Rev. LoraKim Joyner, D.V.M.  
Avian Veterinarian Unitarian  
Universalist Minister  
El Paso, Texas

# Geriatrics

A thorough physical exam and preventive health program should be done annually to detect any changes related to aging. Here you can see the faded feathers, losing their luster. Delayed molting can also result in feather depigmentation.



Stiff joints and thinning of the skin on the feet are evident for this elderly Amazon. Depigmentation of the feet in spots has also been noted in some aging parrots. Cage set up and perches must be adapted for your aging feathered companion.

Older birds should always be closely monitored for weight loss or obesity. Their activity and metabolism slows down, and therefore their caloric needs must be reevaluated periodically. Nutrition is extremely important for your geriatric avian companion (geriatrics should be weighed at least 2-6 times per year).



Thinning of facial feathers and wrinkling of skin can be observed in this aging Macaw.

Care should be taken to preen feathers and trim overgrown beaks and nails. Some geriatric birds suffer with arthritis, bone and joint problems and neglect to preen themselves. You should carefully help them to groom themselves. Hepatic problems and malnutrition often result in overgrown beaks and nails.



Chronic renal disease is suspected to be responsible for this abnormal feather condition and destructive feather damaging behaviors. Many older birds suffer malnutrition and hyper-vitaminosis causing renal failure. Urinalysis, x-rays and blood chemistry can be performed to confirm the diagnosis.

Arthritis has twisted the toes of this cockatoo. (believe to be over 25 yrs old) Frequent grooming of the nails is essential to allow this bird to be comfortable. Neglecting to trim overgrown nails can result in accidents as well!



# What care should be provided when our feathered companions get old ?



A complete eye exam can screen for cataracts, corneal disease, uveitis, iris color change and degenerative vision conditions.

This 30 year old Yellow-napped Amazon suffers partial blindness caused by cataracts in both eyes. The eyelids are also drooping.



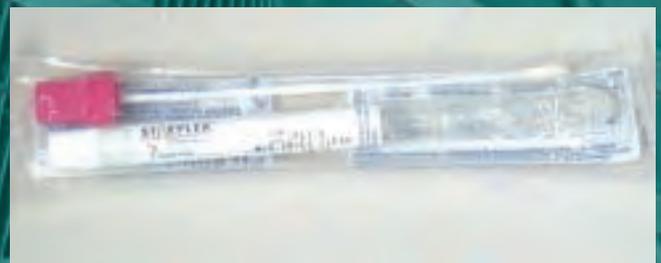
Hypovitaminosis A, calcium deficiency & obesity can result in sinusitis & flaky beak condition.

Aging birds should have their diets closely monitored and reevaluated upon each veterinarian visit. An aging bird might need to have special modifications made to it's enclosure to facilitate and stimulate activity & movement. The environmental conditions surrounding its cage should be draft and stress free, possibly slightly warmer. Rope perches are ideal for aching, arthritic feet, and softer woods should be offered to chew on if the beak condition is deteriorating.



The choana in the upper mandible of the oral cavity should be examined for swelling and deterioration of the choanal papillae.

The absence or blunting of the choanal papillae can be indicative of malnutrition and lack of vitamin assimilation. Secondary bacterial and fungal infections are complications of this condition.



These culturettes are used to sample the choana and cloaca of your bird to screen for bacterial and fungal infections of the respiratory and digestive tract. Your veterinarian will recommend screening tests be performed yearly to detect any abnormalities and to establish a database of your bird's normal flora.

# Everybirdie's a critic!

We watch, listen, read, try and taste anything new and old on the bird market!

*Then we critique and praise.*

Barbara Heidenreich  
Good Bird, Inc.  
[www.GoodBirdInc.com](http://www.GoodBirdInc.com)  
[www.AvianPublications.com](http://www.AvianPublications.com)

Good Bird is a book written by Barbara Heidenreich. Barbara gives examples of problems and solutions to help bird owners adapt to different types of behaviours in companion parrots. She focuses on 5 main topics, mainly: screaming, biting, bonding, cage bound, and feather damaging behaviours.

In Chapter 1 she explains how to prepare for positive reinforcements by using special things that your parrot most enjoys. She also talks about reading and interpreting body language. This chapter is most important because of the examples and solutions given. Most of us use tend not to pay attention to our pets' body language and yet it is essential to know why your bird is reacting the way he or she is.

Chapter 2 helps deal with the screaming bird. Why do they scream and how can we modify this undesirable behaviour.

Biting is the topic of Chapter 3 and is a not-to-miss-chapter. Barbara explains the reasons why your bird might bite and also how to tell when he is about to bite. This reflects back to Chapter 1 on body language.

Chapter 4 and 5 focus on human bonding and cage bound birds. Educated pet owners can avoid these problems if their bird is well socialized and handled by different friends and family members.

The final chapter is on feather picking. This topic usually applies more often to larger parrots. Barbara explains the many reasons why birds engage in feather damaging behaviors and what you can do to help.

I found this book to be very resourceful and enjoyed the straightforward examples and solutions that immediately follow one another. Repetition is found throughout the book, and yet is essential when learning to change undesirable behaviors. I would recommend this book to new parrot owners and all eager to understand companion parrot behavior.

Lena Dunne  
LGL Aviaries, Qc



## Proventricular Dilatation Disease

Parrot life magazine has launched a new awareness campaign to help raise financial support for ongoing PDD research and education. Get your ribbons along with your subscription, or at the Parrot Life magazine booth at various avian conventions. Wear it at bird club meetings and contribute to the fight against this deadly avian disease.

Visit "Stop PDD" on the web for more information on PDD.

<http://www.stopdd.org/Information>

Learn more about PDD, a fast-spreading infectious disease that kills many species of parrots and other birds, and solicitation of support for research on this disease and preventing its spread in the wild.



[editor@parrotlife.ca](mailto:editor@parrotlife.ca)

Anything new on the wild side of your bird's world? Let us know. Our staff will be happy to try, test or taste it...

## Shernya: - Watercolour / Mixed Media / Stained Glass Signature Member of the Ottawa Watercolour Society

### ARTIST PROFILE

Born in Montreal, Shernya Vininsky is an artist to be discovered. Some of her watercolors are done on canvas with a unique and special process. They are very large canvases composed of flowers and birds with a palette of soft and vibrant colors. These images makes one dream of the coming spring.

Shernya's paintings are in many private collections across Canada, in the U.S.A. and Europe. Her works are frequently on exhibit in the Gallery at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Stewart Hall Gallery in Pointe Claire, Quebec.

Take a tour through Shernya's site. Visit the gallery, sign up for some art classes, ask Shernya about upcoming shows and her one of a kind handmade cards.

[www.shernya.artbo.net](http://www.shernya.artbo.net)

Email Shernya at: [kv@ca.inter.net](mailto:kv@ca.inter.net)



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## B.E.A.K. Bird Emergency Aid Kits.



Stop PDD Canada and Burloak Animal Clinic have joined together to offer the Avian community B.E.A.K. - Bird Emergency Aid Kits. Proceeds from the sale of these first aid kits will go to PDD Research (Dr. Taylor) at the University of Guelph. The price for each kit is \$30 plus taxes and shipping if required. To get yours contact Chris White at 905-527-5292 or [chris.white4@sympatico.ca](mailto:chris.white4@sympatico.ca)

## Katrina Disaster

AFA Katrina Disaster Relief Effort for our fellow aviculturists who need our help. The items needed are seed, pellets, food dishes, perches, carriers.

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Barbara Heindenreich  
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[hometown.aol.com/~goodbirdcons/ult/index.html](http://hometown.aol.com/~goodbirdcons/ult/index.html)

Dr. Michael Taylor, DVM  
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