Issue #3

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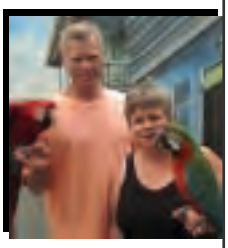

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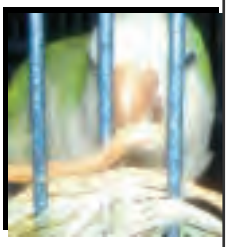

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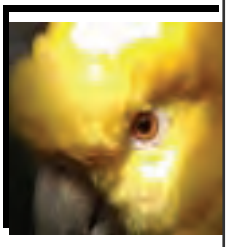

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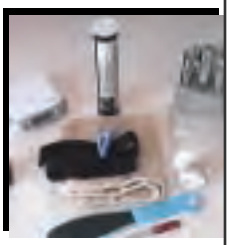

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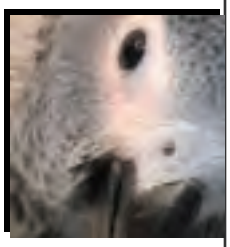

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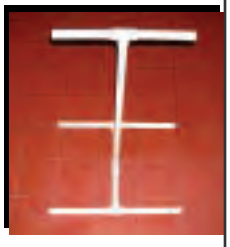

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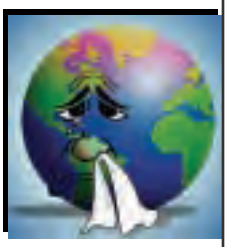

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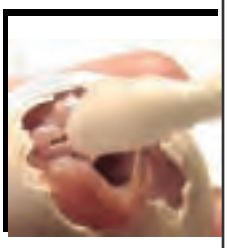

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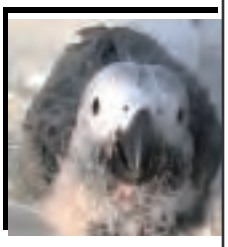

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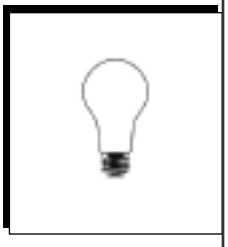

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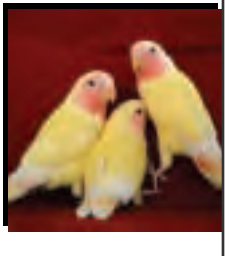

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All feathers used for this artwork were collected from feathers that had molted from a captive breeding colony.

Cover Photography By: Sacha Plante

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Editorial Note:

The fledgling days of our magazine launch are finally over, and now we are learning to forage through the canopy of fruiting novelties, ideologies, innovations and discoveries of the avian companion and avicultural world to provide our readers with refreshing editorials.
Collaboration from board certified avian practitioners such as Petra Burgmann DVM, who has in collaboration with her avian technician elaborated a useful guideline to converting parrots to pellets, Susan Clubb DVM highlighting the detrimental nature of the avian influenza paranoia and challenges faced by the avian community and Lora Kim Joyner DVM, continues to explore the complexities of issues threatening our survival as compassionate caregivers in her column Liberating Wings.
Louise Bauck DVM, sheds some light on the health benefits of providing full spectrum lighting to our avian companions whilst technical experts explore the fundamentals of lighting equipment available on the market. Nutritional advantages of supplementing with beneficial bacteria is presented by a researcher from Laval University, as an interesting introduction to neutraceutics. Conscientious breeders share their knowledge from hatchlings to fledglings. Practical editorial featuring assisted hatch techniques and intervention kit, management of slow crops in neonates, the "essential documentation and care package for a successful start as well as " Fostering Independent Play", the building blocks for a healthy fledgling development. Marvel at the weaving abilities of the Quaker parakeet. Be proactive and learn the fundamental basic restraint techniques to allow safe grooming and assurance in the event of an emergency.
Parrot Life has compiled the "Mind and Body Chart", a practical self evaluation chart highlighting factors that could be contributing to your bird's behavioral traits. It should be answered truthfully and brought along with your Pet Status File from Vol.1 when consulting an avian specialist.
Philippe Dutel our nature guide correspondent travels to the Peten, the land of the resplendent Quetzal, a paradise expedition for ornithologists, as we visit a humble Cuban style bird park for parrot lovers as our featured Canadian aviary.
Proaves Columbia in collaboration with the Loro Parque Foundation and the American Bird Conservancy, all supporters of the Alliance for Zero Extinction, bring us optimistic news on the Flamed-Winged Parakeet Project while our Canadian World Parrot Trust correspondent highlights the "Get Banded" Campaign, in support of the European trade ban of wild birds.
Contact calls were made to us from around the world to encourage us to proceed with this new magazine which is now diverging to become a collectible journal. Parrot Life will continue to preen out practical information pertaining to responsible care, promoting harmonious and lasting relationships with psittacines in captivity. Uniquely, in conjunction, raise conservation awareness for their plight to survive both in their natural habitat and as our praised feathered companions.

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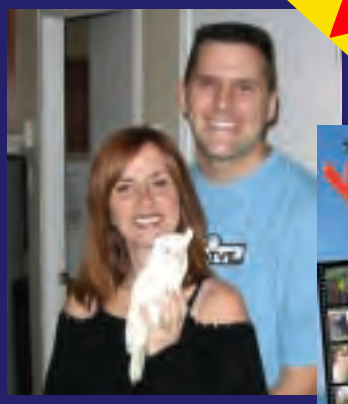

WE HAVE A WINNER

PARROT LOVER'S DREAM VACATION FROM TROPICAN™ AND TROPIMIX

CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to Mme Marie-Claude Roy of St-Eustache, Québec who is the grand prize winner of our Contest.

Mme Roy, the owner of a baby Goffin, has won a trip for 2 to the Canary Islands, including airfare, hotel and $350 in spending money, a prize worth over $6000. During her stay, she will have the unique opportunity to accompany Mark Hagen to the VI International Parrot Conference & Loro Parque.

We'd like to thank the numerous people who entered our contest as well as all the stores that supported this exciting promotion.

For all Canadians wishing to travel to this event visit the regional organizer's web link at:
http://www.hagen.com/hari/welcome.html
For additional information and travel arrangement assistance please contact Josee Bermingham the regional organizer assistant via email at:
josbermingham@aol.com
or phone at (514) 243-7564

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CONSERVATION

Paul Salaman, Director, International Programs, American Bird Conservancy. Photos by Fundación ProAves

Threatened Flame-winged Parakeets Flock to New Nest Boxes

Colombian Neotropical Migratory Bird Monitoring and Conservation Program ProAves Foundation - Conservation International Colombia. www.proaves.org

Little did ProAves Columbia's parakeet Project staff know just how desperate the Flame-winged Parakeet would be for nesting sites until they began erecting nest boxes. The Loro Parque Fundación-sponsored project (www.loroparque.org) had been studying the species-endemic to Columbian Andean forest near the capital city of Bogotá-throughout 2005, when they suspected that a lack of mature trees and nesting cavities could be a limiting factor for the species' population, that stands at just a few thousand individuals in an area where little natural forest survives. The Parakeet Project erected 20 nest boxes, beginning in mid-September 2005. When field workers revisited the boxes ten days later, they were astonished to find five boxes were already occupied by pairs of parakeets, some already having laid up to 13 eggs. This was obviously no coincidence, and clearly shows that simple and economical solutions can often be found to help threatened species' populations.

ProAves staff will continue to monitor and study the nest boxes and assess rearing success before expanding the nest box campaign. The Parakeet Project also works with the local community to promote awareness of the parakeet, which continues to be threatened by logging, and lacks adequate long-term protection. ProAves Columbia has partnered with American Bird Conservancy on several other rare bird projects and is a member of the Alliance for Zero Extinction.

Contact:
Paul Salaman, Director, International Programs, ABC, psalaman@abcbirds.org

Field workers erecting nest boxes in the Andean forest near the capital city of Bogotá

Flame-winged Parakeet on the edge of the artificial nest cavity entrance.

ProAves staff monitor chick development using calipers(a measuring device)

About Fundación ProAves and Colombia

Fundación ProAves is Colombia's bird conservation and research NGO, which supports conservation initiatives, manages nature reserves and national parks and raises awareness of bird conservation issues in Colombia and worldwide. Fundación ProAves currently successfully manages [3] pristine forest nature reserves in Colombia. ProAves has charitable status in Colombia and the UK and is keen to explore tax-efficient donation strategies with potential donors.

A} Chicks are also weighed in the field. Weight is a valuable indicator of normal growth parameters.

B} Several Flame-winged Parakeet clutch mates in an artificial nest box

C} Flame-winged Parakeet (Pyrrhura calliptera) chick pre-fledgling age

Pyrrhura calliptera chicks in nest cavity, soon to fledge. The project's proactive decision to erect nest boxes, clearly shows that simple and economical solutions can often be found to help threatened species' populations.

For more photos and information on the project, its funding sources, and partners, visit American Bird Conservancy (www.abcbirds.org), Fundacion ProAves Columbia (www.proaves.org).

Converting to Pellets©:

12 STEPS TO SUCCESS

Text & Photography by:
Dr. Petra M. Burgmann and Kristi Flemming

Dr. Petra Burgmann, BSc, DVM, Dip. ABVP (Avian Practice) Animal Hospital of High Park, 3194 Dundas St West, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2A3

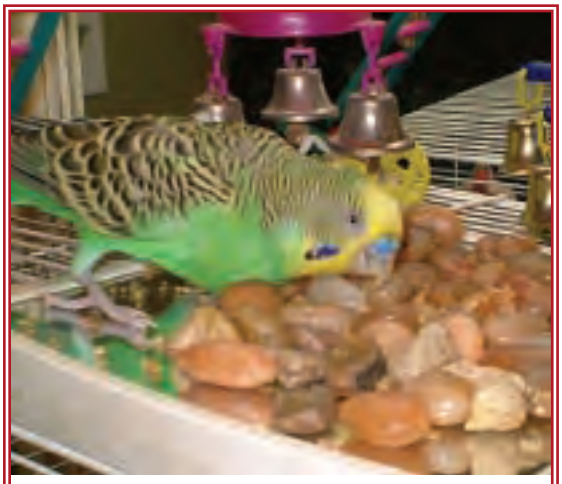
Biography Dr. Petra M. Burgmann

Dr. Burgmann received her Bachelor of Science (1980) and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (1984) degrees from the University of Guelph, and has been practicing exotic pet medicine ever since. She opened her own exotics practice, the Animal Hospital of High Park, in 1986. In 1993 she was the first Canadian to be Board certified by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners in Avian Practice, and she recertified for an additional 11 years in this specialty in 2002.
Dr. Burgmann is the author of "Feeding Your Pet Bird" as well as a contributing author, in avian and exotic pet medicine, to numerous other texts, journals and publications. She has lectured in exotic pet medicine at the University of Guelph, Seneca College, Toronto Academy of Veterinary Medicine, Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, Canadian Parrot Symposium, and many other special interest groups. She has also appeared on Cable 10 Community Broadcasting, CFRB, CBC radio, and CBC television.

Mother Nature has had millennia of experience in diet formulation, and the birds in their various natural habitats have evolved to fit the diets available to them in the wild. In the wild seasons change, availability changes, and one generation teaches the next what to eat. In captivity our birds are entirely dependent on what we supply them with, which usually has absolutely no resemblance to what they have evolved to eat. Consequently, birds on seed diets tend to choose the seeds they enjoy most and eat those in excess. Even if your bird ate all the seeds in the seed mix, an all seed diet has long been recognized as being woefully inadequate in supplying pet birds with a complete complement of essential nutrients, as all seed diets are known to be deficient in calcium, available phosphorus, sodium, manganese, zinc, iron, iodine, selenium, vitamins A,D,E,K, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, niacin, B2, and choline. Birds on all seed diets have invariably been shown to have excess body fat and deficient calcium reserves.
In fact, most domestically raised larger psittacines are

The recognition of this fact has led to the development of complete diets in the form of pellets, which are slowly replacing seeds as the staple diet of most pet birds.

raised on pelleted rations, and many of the nutritionally related problems, which were always common in these species, are slowly becoming a thing of the past. Nonetheless, there are still some birds that have been conditioned to eat "seed only" diets and it is in these birds that nutritional health problems are still common. Remember, it is our role as “Parrot Parents” to teach our birds what is safe and healthy to eat, and just as we would never allow our children to eat nothing but chocolate bars because “that's all he likes”, we have the responsibility to make healthy diet choices for our pets. This article should help you convert your bird to a healthier diet and thereby improve your bird's general health and longevity.



In the wild, birds spend up to 90% of their waking hours foraging. Using techniques which take advantage of your bird’s natural food-gathering behaviour, like hiding food between clean aquarium gravel, will allow you to introduce a healthier diet while mental and physical stimulation.

Introducing the new diet

Birds that have been eating seed diets for years sometimes resist the introduction of pellets. This is particularly true for budgerigars and cockatiels. Nonetheless, the importance of a good diet cannot be overemphasized, so persistence and patience are essential. Understanding your bird's natural instincts as they relate to food gathering and flock behavior can increase your likelihood of success.
Since birds are often suspicious of anything new, the transition from seeds to pellets must be done gradually. Starving a bird into eating pellets by suddenly removing his usual seed mixture is not advisable. Pellets must be introduced to a bird's diet in such a way as to allow the bird to become accustomed to the sight and taste of the pellets before totally removing the seed diet.
Encouraging acceptance of new foods begins by understanding a bird's natural behaviour. In the wild, food gathering is one of the most important tasks a bird engages in. Because of its high metabolic rate, a bird can starve within two to three days without adequate caloric intake. Consequently food gathering takes up a large part of a bird's day, and finding new food sources is a continuous intellectual challenge, and source of stimulation for the bird. In captivity, our habit of providing the same food source in the same location continually day after day does not provide suitable motivation, nor does simply placing a new food in the cage provide the motivation the bird requires to eat it. Motivation can only be stimulated by renewing the bird's interest in food as a source of pleasure.

When cooking the soft food recipe©, be sure to make the rice without salt or oil, and to used canned vegetables and beans packed in water without salt. For a healthier alternative, try brown or wild rice.

In the wild, most food gathering activity takes place at dusk and dawn. Thus, the first thing one needs to do is establish a twice-daily feeding schedule. A bird can fill its crop in 15 to 60 minutes, and this quantity of food will last 8-12 hours, so you need not worry about the bird starving during the day. However, common sense dictates that food must be provided twice daily on a consistent basis, and not forgotten, missing a feeding altogether. It is also true that very small birds such as finches and canaries cannot go this long between feedings, and a minimum of three meals a day is required. It is also useful to determine the amount of food your bird eats on a given day. If you weigh your dish after filling, and again before covering your bird for the night, every night over the course of 2 weeks, it will give you an idea of what your bird actually consumes. This can be important for the gradual conversion method, as many people have a tendency to overfill their bird's dishes. Even when they are offering a pellet/seed mix, the bird continues to eat only the seed, having been offered enough seed in the full dish to subsist on.

Twice daily feeding has several important psychological benefits. It increases hunger, thereby reawakening the desire for food that has been previously blunted by ready availability. It increases bonding between you and your pet, because the pet begins to recognize you as the food source. It prevents boredom by creating a mental state of anticipation. It also has the psychological benefit of allowing the bird to eat in a "flock" if you make a point of eating your own meals at the same time in the presence of the bird, because birds are flock feeders. You may have noticed with your own birds that they have the tendency to go to the food dish when you eat in their presence. We'll examine how you can take advantage of this instinct in the next section.

Once this pattern has been established, many methods of new food introduction can be tried. It is important to remember that the birds are always suspicious of anything new, so that new foods must be presented consistently several days or weeks in a row before you can even hope to have them noticed. Birds also have changes in taste as we do; they can become bored with certain foods, and go off them for a while, only to enjoy them again several weeks or months later.

Methods of new food introduction

Before getting started, it is important to have your pet checked out by your veterinarian to determine that your bird is healthy enough to undergo diet conversion. Birds that have had surgery or are convalescing from an illness should not undergo a diet switch unless advised by your veterinarian.

Gradual Conversion Method:

This is the method people are most familiar with, but has limited success because people are often looking for quick fixes. It involves mixing the pellets and seeds together in a 10% pellet/90% seed ratio for approximately 2 weeks. After this time, the ratio of pellets can be increased to 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%, with 2 - 3 week intervals between each stage. This method is most successful if the bird is fed a specific daily allotment of food based on their normal dietary intake, as listed above. Owners should be aware that, with this method, the bird often has setbacks where they stop eating or stall at a specific stage. This is where most owners give up. It is important to stick with it and take baby steps both forward and back as indicated by your individual bird. This is by no means the only conversion technique available, but using it in conjunction with one or several of the techniques listed below will exponentially increase your chances of success.

Several successful methods of new food introduction are as follows:

1. After the regular morning meal, during the day put some of the new food (pellets) in the food bowl, not the regular diet. If the bird gets hungry during the day, it may venture to try it.

2. Place a thin layer of the new food over the top of the regular diet so the bird has to pick through it to get to the known food. Make sure to sprinkle the new food over the top in front of the bird, so that the bird knows that there is something it considers edible underneath, or the bird may refuse to touch the food altogether.

3. Alternatively, cover the pellets with a thin layer of the regular diet. The bird will often eat through the top layer into the new food. Parrots in quarantine stations have been converted to pellets within a week by overlaying pellets with canned corn, fruit cocktail, or another food that they were used to consuming. If you are using any moist foods in your conversion efforts, remember that moist foods can grow bacteria quickly, and must be removed from your birds cage after 2-3 hours to prevent any spoilage that could make your bird ill.

4. In the wild, birds have a tendency to eat primarily during morning and evening, just like we do. You can take advantage of that by having your bird present when you eat breakfast/dinner, either on a play stand, or in their cage. Eating is a flock behavior in the wild. If one bird in the flock starts eating, the others will join in. If your bird sees you eating, it will be stimulated to eat too. If you take your birds food away 1 hour prior to dinner, its appetite will be piqued. While you eat, offer the pellets you have been using in their regular food dish. When your bird sees you eat,

When offering your parrot baked treats, be sure to offer home baked goods from bird-friendly recipes. Store bought muffins can be too high in fat, sugar and sodium to be a safe snack.

it will go over to its dish and investigate. It may take a few tries, but eventually it will start to sample the new food. After dinner, you can return the bird to its normal spot and give it a dish of seeds mixed with pellets. This is a highly successful technique because your bird is rewarded by increased time and interaction with their favorite people.

5. Knowing a little about the way your bird feeds in the wild can help you devise your own techniques as well. If your bird is a grassland bird (budgies, cockatiels, parakeets, cockatoos, etc…) they may be more inclined to eat off the ground. Place a mirror on the bottom of the cage floor and place several large stones on it. The stones should be too big for the bird too swallow, but small enough that the bird can rout around and move them. Natural aquarium gravel, available in different sizes (new, not used) can be good for this purpose. Mix a small amount of seeds in with the gravel. This will encourage natural foraging behavior in your bird. After your bird is foraging, you can begin to mix pellets in as well. This can be continued after your bird has switched their diet to allow your bird mental stimulation as they work for their food, just like it would in the wild.

6. If the bird is particularly people oriented, sometimes the best trick is to eat the new food in front of it. Make loud noises of approval, widen your eyes in an effort to imitate the bird's ability to dilate its pupils when excited, and make every effort to imply how wonderful the new treat is. If the bird comes over to investigate, refuse to share at first, increasing the birds jealousy and desire to try it. Remember that directly "mouth feeding" your bird is not advisable as our mouths contain bacteria which can cause gastrointestinal illness in birds.

7. Some birds will accept pellets more readily if they are first converted to a soft food diet (soaked pellets, rice, corn, mixed beans, mixed frozen veggies), and then to pellets.

8. The presence of other birds seems to be a real force in helping birds to convert to pellets. Competition for food, tendency to mimic, and group pressure prompts birds to eat new foods quickly. One bird's behavior depends in part on how the other birds behave. It is not surprising that groups of birds in a flight cage will begin eating pellets readily. If you have more then one bird in separate cages, and one is already a pellet eater, you can move the cages side-by-side during meal times, encouraging the seed eater to mimic the pellet eater.

9. A good method for smaller birds is to make "pellet pancakes", particularly if the bird is willing to eat bread or toast. Use pellet crumbles, and add enough water to moisten. Add the white of an egg, but only half the yolk (to avoid giving the bird too much cholesterol). Add just enough water and mix so that the mixture resembles pancake batter. Fry the mixture in a frying pan with a little vegetable oil. The mixture can now be broken into small squares and frozen in individual servings to keep it fresh. Thaw completely before serving, and crumble to an appropriate size for your bird. Combining this tip with tip #5 is often successful. You may also find many "bird friendly" bread/muffin recipes in magazines, books, or on the internet which use pellets and healthy vegetables as primary ingredients.

10. If your bird is fond of other types of food, you can use those to introduce the new food. If your bird likes fruit, stick pellets into the pieces of cut fruit. If your bird likes bread, work pellets into the surface of the bread. If your bird likes spray millet, stick pellets between the branches. If your bird likes honey sticks, use one that has pellets added, or make your own using corn syrup, a small amount of seed, and pellets.

11. Some birds are attracted by different things. Some birds will love brightly coloured pellets, others will prefer pellets the same colour as the seeds they are use to eating. Some birds like fancy shapes, others plain kibble. The important point is to keep trying until you find a pellet your bird will accept. Once you pattern your bird to accept new foods, you will find it easier to switch to a pellet of your choice. Consult your avian veterinarian for recommendations on appropriate diets.

IMPORTANT
When converting to a pellet diet, it is essential to monitor your bird's weight or it's droppings.

A normal bird produces 8 - 24 droppings in a 24-hour period. Purchase a small kitchen or postal scale, and outfit it with a perch (for lager birds) or a bucket (for smaller birds) to check your birds weight on a weekly basis. If the number of droppings decreases by 25%, becomes skinny and very dark, or if your bird drops more than 10% of its body weight, return to seeds and start again with lower portions of pellets, then increase the amount again gradually once your bird has returned to normal.

12. Never underestimate the effects of positive reinforcement. Watch your bird, and if you see them take a pellet into their beaks, or investigate a dish only containing pellets, tell them what a fabulous, smart and special birdie they really are.

Once on a pelleted diet, you will notice that your birds' droppings change from green to brown. Also, due to a higher water intake the droppings will be a little wetter and bulkier. This is normal and no cause for concern. However, should the droppings become very wet, or change colour to dark green or black, this may indicate illness or lack of proper nutrition. Have your bird seen by your veterinarian. Be aware of what you're feeding. If you are feeding a coloured pellet to your bird, that colour may come out in the droppings. Also be aware of normal variations in the stools your bird produces throughout the day.

The ideal diet for most birds is a diet consisting of 85% fresh pellets, 10% fresh dark leafy green or yellow vegetables, and at most 5% fruit. This must be the proportions they are actually eating, and not just the proportions offered. Birds eat to meet their energy requirements. If too much fruit is offered, the bird's energy requirements will have been met, but not the birds' nutritional requirements. Seeds are an important, if somewhat small portion, of a healthy diet for grassland birds (budgies, cockatiels, parakeets). These species should undergo the same pellet conversion techniques as above, and only have a small (5%) amount of seed added back into their diet when they are eating pellets consistently.

Converting to Pellets©

Always remember, the keys to any work we do with our feathered friends: Consistency and perseverance. Some birds may fight any attempt you do to switch them on to healthy diet, just as any child would. You may have to try every technique listed here, and try every pellet brand out there. In the end, your efforts will result in a healthier bird with the potential to live to its full life span. It may take more than a year, but it will be well worth it.

For a complete discussion of pet bird nutrition, other tips and tricks and other recipes, the best resource is Dr.Burgmann's book, "Feeding Your Pet Bird". It is available at the Animal Hospital of High Park (3194 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON, M6P 2A3), can be ordered through any bookstore, or go online at Amazon.com.

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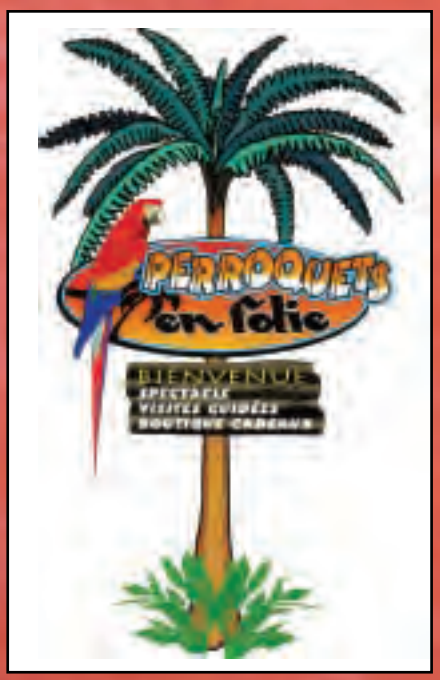
Kristi Flemming: Co-writer Kristi has worked with exotic animals, ranging from hamsters to dolphins, for 14 years. She also has extensive experience as a parrot nursery manager and is currently working as head technician and avian behavior consultant at the Animal Hospital of High Park. Kristi is a professional member of the International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators (IAATE) and the World Parrot Trust (WPT).

CANADIAN AVIARY

Article By: Josee Bermingham

Perroquets en Folie:

An ever Growing



This enchanting educational parrot tourist site has been in constant evolution for the past 5 years. The owners Robert Papineau and Linda Hervieux, started their adventure 12 years ago as parrot owners shortly after the acquisition of Channel, a cockatiel, their first feathered companion. The passion developed relentlessly, and progressively to what is now a family run bird park.

Perroquets en Folie is situated in Saint-Placid, adjacent to the Oka national Park, on the Northern outskirts of the Island of Montreal. This Bird Park is the home to 40 domestic parrot companions, and an additional 110 birds, a variety of 30 species of which are paired for breeding, education and display.

The outdoor flights are laid out and identified according to the species, geographical origin, South and Central America, Australia, Africa, and Indonesia. Macaws, Toucans, Amazons, Barbets, Cockatoos, African Greys, Lovebirds, Pionus and Senegal parrots are amongst the species exhibited throughout the site. Rhythmic Caribbean style music intertwined with the chattering and vocalizing of the flock greet the visitors at this tropical and exotic oasis.

Conscientious awareness to the environment

Robert Papineau's construction skills has been demonstrated in our Do- It Yourself column in past and current issue. He has a conscientious awareness to the environment and this has contributed to the innovative flight designs. He has incorporated the use of recycled construction material acquired at demolition sites and Eco-centers , such as the terracotta cement tiles that adorn the site to create an exotic flavor to the flights and décor. Combined with sliding patio doors and greenhouse panels, water basins, bamboo and recycle trees for structural framing and construction of benches for spectators to enjoy the presentations. The site has a capacity to seat 150 spectators at once under all weather conditions. The flight designs both in the indoor breeding installations and

The owners Robert Papineau and Linda Hervieux with Sunkist and Magoo

outdoors are safe and relatively spacious. The outdoor flights are winter resistant, necessary in our harsh Quebec winter weather and required countless lengths of galvanized wire for their fabrication. Despite the prevalence of paranoia

regarding Avian Influenza and the strict rules concerning all bird exhibits North Americans must abide to, the site will be in full operation this coming season, thanks to the double flight design (flights within protective flights to guard them from predators) and the existing roofs over each

outdoor flight which had been built into the original design to protect the birds from weather and also prevent wild birds and rodents from contaminating the birds.

Custom designed toys, transporters, brooders and intensive care units

Ingenuity and financial restrictions has inspired Robert to custom design avian transporters, toys, brooders and intensive care units from recycled materials as well. An enormous financial investment is required to care for the flocks' basic needs. Feeding a nutritious diet, electricity, heating, adequate full spectrum lighting and veterinary care.

On Site Educational Presentations

A visit to the parrot site will include an educational presentation, combined with performances from the family's feathered flock. An estimated 25 000 visitors have attended this presentation in the past years. The main focus of the presentation is to give parrot owners and bird enthusiasts a realistic overview of the responsibility and obligation to provide the essential physical and psychological needs to parrots in captivity.

Parrot Training De-mystified

Robert demystifies parrot training by demonstrating how encouraging his companions to perform without the use of sunflower treats is possible. He has developed a remarkable relationship with his 40 companion parrots that is built on mutual respect. He has a realistic expectation of their individual abilities to perform based on their physical and intellectual capacities. He is intuitive and understanding of their humor, eagerness or reluctantness to perform depending on the given moment and energy present from the spectators.

Zoo Animation and Zoo Therapy

During the off season of operation of the site which is 8 months of the year, Robert is engaged in zoo-animation in various schools. Specifically chosen companions assist him in these animated presentations. Grade school students, geriatric homes and even schools for the physically (hearing impaired) and the mentally challenged solicit the feathered Folie's presentation. He has developed the outmost confidence particularly with Pinocchio (a Yellow-fronted Amazon) and Sunkist (a Harlequin

The ATM , Montreal's train circuit offers an exciting one day excursion to visit Perroquets en Folie during the tourist season.

Macaw) to be at ease to animate and integrate zoo therapy to these individuals. Sunkist's vividly colored plumage and gentleness, as well as Pinocchio's singing capabilities, spark interest and awakens sense and awareness that are rarely exposed to such a lively stimulus.

A sanctuary but not a refuge

Although Perroquets en Folie offers a sanctuary for many captive birds, it is not a refuge for unwanted parrots. The costs related to caring for these birds and the potential threat associated with welcoming new individuals in the flock has a financial and emotional risk . Screening for popular, ever present avian viruses, and providing adequate veterinarian care to the present flock is barely feasible. Luckily they have maintained a professional relationship with a renowned avian veterinarian Jean Gauvin, DVM ,and his Exotic Bird Clinic in Lachine, that provides emergency care and yearly assessment of the flock .

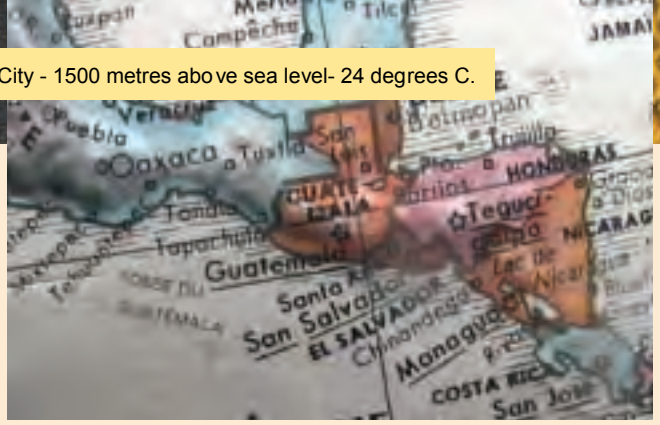
Responsibility of Caring for a Healthy Breeding Colony

The realities of operating a touristic site, breeding colony and traveling to various locations to present zoo animations often has conflicting demands. When a hatchling day 1 cockatoo must be pulled because of parental neglect it requires hourly feedings, no matter what else is on the agenda. And so Robert and Linda integrate these obligations amongst their busy schedule. Linda is also a full time nurse which has been beneficial to the first aid and health assessment of her flock. Their remote location has forced them to provide treatments and wound management for their flock over the years.

The Train of Discovery

The ATM , Montreal's train circuit offers an exciting one day excursion to visit Perroquets en Folie during the tourist season. This is part of a “Nature Excursion Program” the city has encouraged to allow low income families , and individuals without access to car transportation to experience a scenic and educational escapade at a feasible cost.

Additional information can be found at www.perroquetsenfolie.com



GUATEMALA

Editorial and Photo's by:
Philippe Dutel, Nature Excursion Guide

A NATURE EXCURSION TO THE COUNTRY OF THE RESPLENDENT QUETZAL

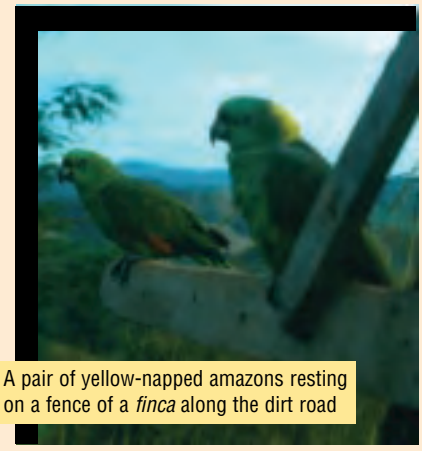
Day 1 The gigantic metal bird lands effortlessly on the tired, cracked, sun-baked tarmac of La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City. With Government Customs business out of the way, thirteen excitedly jabbering University of Montreal students emerge and form a compact group. From their behaviour, it seems apparent that they are waiting for someone… perhaps for me, Philippe Dutel, nature excursion guide.

I make my way over to the group, introduce myself and welcome them to the country of the Resplendent Quetzal. Tired though they are from their long flight, they remain exuberant, drawing on enviable reserves of youthful energy. Introductory formalities are hurriedly dispensed with and after a quick shower at our hotel no one seems to remember tired they had felt only a short while ago. A hastily improvised agenda takes shape and we scurry off to explore the *El Mercado*, the vibrant central market of this city of 2 million inhabitants. The numerous stalls explode in cascades of intensely fragrant, brilliantly-hued flowers, succulent fruits, vegetables, exotic spices, fresh meat and fish; samples of local delicacies are greedily consumed by various members of the group. As we delve a little deeper into the market we come upon an area devoted to the sale of colourful textiles of wonderful quality and unique handcrafted items. Of these handcrafted items some, like the vibrant *Typica* are of distinct Mayan Indian cultural origin rather than simply

Mayan Indian child dressed in typical cultural fabric

Guatemalan in origin. In this culture, bartering is a normal, ordinary, absolutely run-of-the-mill way to shop. There need be no hesitation or embarrassment on either side of the stall. Merchants actually view the ritual of bargaining as tacit acknowledgement by the customer of the superior quality of the items on offer. As group leader it is incumbent on me to secure a fair and equitable price for the items on behalf of both merchants and students.

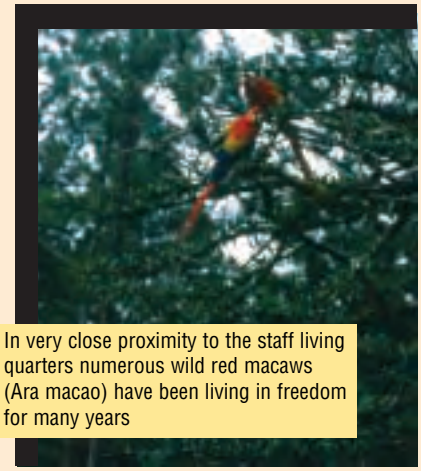
Day 2 We awaken at dawn; our bus stealthily leaves the city behind and rolls towards the eastern part of the country. As we near the coast, the temperature becomes increasing hot and humid. Some hours later our bus leaves the paved road behind and takes up a dirt one. We continue across a huge banana plantation. Our driver stops every now and again in order to offer the group sufficient opportunity to photograph the lush landscape.


A pair of yellow-napped amazons resting on a fence of a *finca* along the dirt road

We stop at an archaeological site, and a swarm of multicoloured birds generously let us admire and photograph them. Later, a man selling fresh pineapple in a village on lake **Izabel** provides us with a rejuvenating treat.

We resume our journey along the same dusty road towards the seaside town of *Rio Dulce*, on Guatemala's Caribbean coastline. Off in the distance, we finally spot our destination. Accessible by motor boat only, our simple thatched roof hotel awaits us in the midst of a mangrove swamp. A short reprieve: we plunk our feet in the cool water. Within the hour, however, we are whisked away by boat to nearby "Bird's Island", a pristine nature reserve where thousands of aquatic birds thrive and fat manatees frolic in the mangrove labyrinth.

Day 3 At breakfast we feast on a traditional Mayan breakfast at a friend's *finca*. Aside from serving the best breakfast in all of Guatemala this particular *finca* is special in another respect: it lays smack-dab in the middle of an enormous tropical wildlife rescue sanctuary sheltering both birds and mammals. All the animal residents at the shelter here have experienced some kind of trauma. Dedicated volunteers and permanent staff do their best to rehabilitate them, with a view to one day releasing them back into the wild.

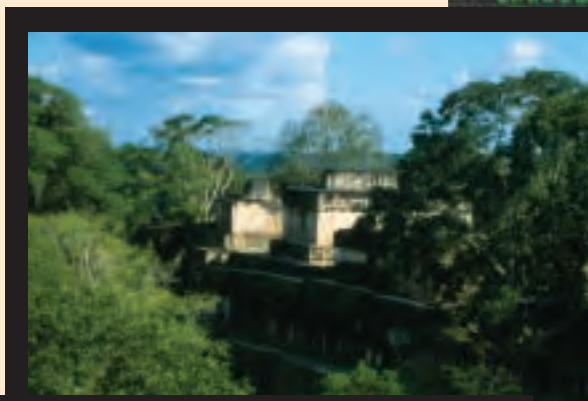


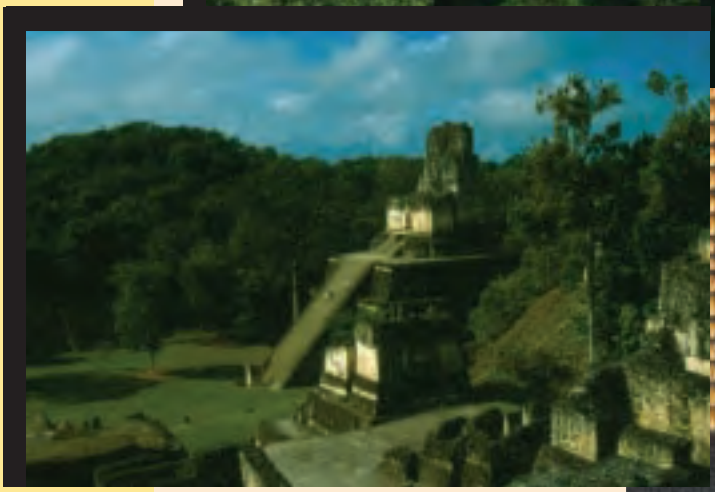
In very close proximity to the staff living quarters numerous wild red macaws (Ara macao) have been living in freedom for many years

Time to hit the (dirt) road yet again. We begin the day's outing by driving north, where the vast stretch of tropical forest called the *Peten* begins. This area is home to many of Guatemala's most beautiful archaeological sites, the first of which we encounter is the *Yaxhà*, a Mayan ceremonial site. Standing atop the highest point of the site's principal Temple, we take in a breathtaking view of the lush rain forest canopy below. Far off into the distance, we see the jungle landscape ensnaring great lakes and stretching as far away as the neighbouring country of Belize. Back on board our bus, we spend the remainder of the day travelling to our destination: the ancient Mayan city of Tikal.

Located within the Petén area of north-eastern Guatemala, Tikal National Park is situated within the boundaries of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. The parkland covers an area of 222 sq. miles; much of it consisting of ancient Mayan ruins.
At its peak period from 700 AD to 800 AD, the great Mayan city of Tikal supported a population of 90,000 Indians. 3,000 separate buildings dating from the period 600 BC to 900 AD are situated here including temples, residences, religious monuments decorated with hieroglyphic inscriptions, and tombs. Restoration work commenced in the 1950s and continues to this day.

Day 4 After an early and hurried breakfast, we make it to the famous ruins at daybreak. As the sun rises, we are privileged to observe several species of amazon parrot and multicoloured toucans foraging amid the trees. From our vista high atop one of the temples of the main plaza (at 212 ft), it is clear that Tikal National Park (which surrounds the ruins), is an ornithologist's paradise: over

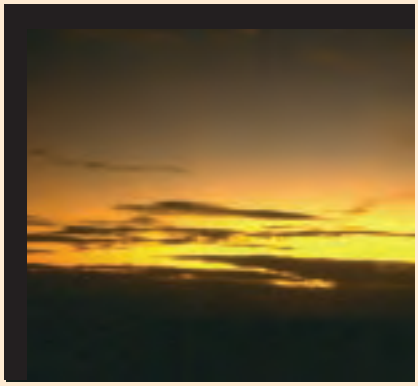




260 species of birds either make the park their permanent home or else migrate through the area. The park can be easily navigated by a series of trails where we encounter oscillated turkeys and coatimundi (a member of the racoon family) Later, some members of the group are thrilled to spot hummingbirds and glimpse a

coatimundia: a member of the racoon family

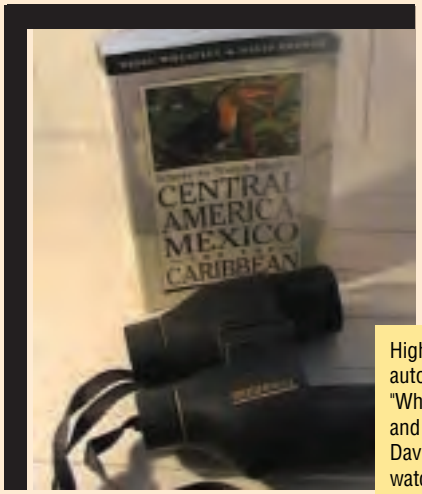
native species of fox. It is the noisy, huge black howler monkeys and the antics of the swift, smaller spider monkeys who steal the show, however. That same evening we gawk in awe together at an incredible sunset.



The Petén is an important refuge for many species, such as howler monkey, ocelot, margay cat, jaguar, puma, northern tapir, harpy eagle, macaws, Moreletti's and American crocodiles, iguana, beaded lizard and boa constrictor. About 133 of the animal species are considered threatened; some species are listed in CITES appendices as at risk from international trade (URL 1984).

Day 5 The following morning consists primarily of travel time: two hours in a 4X4 truck on a dirt road leading deep into the jungle and transfer onto a motorized pirogue (small, flat-hulled boat resembling a dugout canoe). Finally, we reach our ultimate destination: the Las Guacamayas Biological Field Station. The research centre lies within the buffer zone of the 1.6 million hectare Maya Biosphere Reserve in Peten's northern region, and is of particular interest to these Wildlife Management students. Our guide, Victor, welcomes us. He is an Itzà Maya, a passionate ornithologist. Proud of his cultural heritage, he enthusiastically embraces every opportunity that presents itself where he is called upon to share his knowledge of the natural world.

As we hike through the bushwhacked trails Victor points out several amazon parrot nesting sites where chicks have recently fledged. Noisy and clumsy babes, they draw attention to themselves. We are able to identify them through the dense foliage and witness their first flight attempts at this important stage of their young lives.



High Quality binoculars (Bushnell Spectator Plus, auto focus) and this Indispensable bird guide, "Where to Watch Birds In Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean", written by Nigel Wheatley and David Brewer© 2001 are recommended for bird watching in the Peten.

The view is spectacular from the main observation platform. Directly in front of us, in the highest part of the forest canopy, we can watch the keel-billed toucans at play to our heart's content. Amateur photographers in the group are thrilled. Within the hour, Victor identifies nearly 20 different species of birds. As we look below us in the fading light of the late afternoon we are able to make out the shapes of moreletii crocodiles drifting lazily with the current of a river.

Days 6 and 7 are spent in and around the Las Guacamayas Biological Field Station.

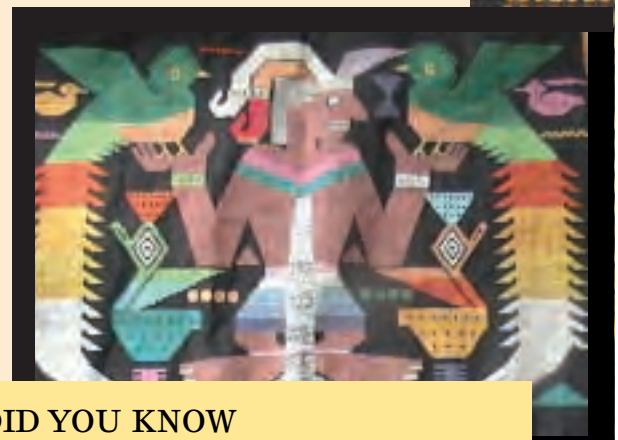
Day 8 We retrace our path back to the capital in readiness for the group to fly home. An illuminating and memorable experience was had by everyone. In particular, the group was profoundly impressed with the generosity of spirit and wisdom of the Mayan people. After all, it is they who have lived in this place for thousands of years and know its secrets best. From archaeological treasures of mysterious, ancient civilizations to the countless natural treasures we have encountered along the way: a truly rewarding and worthwhile experience!

Philippe Dutel
Nature Excursion Guide

Maya Biosphere Reserve, Peten, Guatemala

Visit this secluded reserve situated in a beautiful albeit environmentally fragile corner of Guatemala. In so doing, the dollars you spend will be helping to support the conservation efforts of *ProPeten*, a Guatemalan non-profit organization.

ProPeten is a Guatemalan non-profit organization staffed by Guatemalan professionals who assist rural families and protect the lowland tropical forest of northern Guatemala within the Department of the Peten. "We work to preserve Guatemala's impressive natural and cultural resources by creating jobs and economic alternatives for low income families, educating farmers and children about the benefits of ecosystem protection, and providing rural families with access to voluntary reproductive health and family planning resources. This integrated approach to creating healthy families in a healthy environment is producing solid success". *www.propeten.org*



DID YOU KNOW

The quetzal is a legendary bird living in the cloud forests of Central America .It Is the national bird of Guatemala and the national symbol of freedom for the ancient and present day Maya. The Quetzal figures prominently in the Mayas artwork, legends and temples. The male Quetzal appears on the Guatemala national flag and is name to the Guatemalan currency.

Despite it's sacred symbolism, the bird is nearly extinct in Guatemala. The habitat and food source of the Quetzal is severely threatened. Conservation management cannot rely on captive breeding programs as this species is known to die in captivity. Direct laws, such as fines for hunting Quetzels (which do exist in Guatemala) have not been successful.

Quaker Parrots
Weave Magic
Where They Live

By Ellen Feinstein Krueger

Quaker parrots are known for many things. They are smart. They are good talkers. They can be territorial. They have a lot of attitude. They are controversial because of their ability to adapt and acclimatize to different geographic locations where they might settle by chance. One of the reasons these South American natives are able to thrive and survive in such cold, hostile climates as the northern parts of the United States is they build warm, sturdy nests.

In the wild, the huge stick nests built by Quaker parrots serve as their homes, not just for raising their young, but also as a place to live year round. Each nest has multiple chambers that house multiple families. Each family's apartment is divided into multiple rooms which serve as nursery, play room and living room for the entire family. They're warm and sturdy and can stand up to very hostile weather.

It has been observed by those who watch Quakers, that specific birds within the flock specialize in specific tasks. Some are sentinels who warn the flock of impending danger. Some are hunter-gatherers who bring food to the nest. Others specialize in building the community nests. What is fascinating for those Quaker owners privileged to live with a construction specialist, is the building or weaving instinct activated and practiced in a domestic setting. Those Quakers that serve as "builders" in the flock dynamic, work constantly at practicing their craft in their cages and extended living areas.

My own Quaker, Fonzie, is a weaver. Her talents began to reveal itself when she was two years old. Though I am not sure exactly when she started, I first noticed her interest in weaving when her toys began to be stuck between the bars of her cage. Beaded toys on leather strips were stretched to the nearest wall and poked between the cage bars. Then feathers made their way from where they were dropped after a molt to the sides of the cage in an in and out pattern. When there was more than one long feather available, they would be stacked together and a true basket weave pattern was worked in the vertical bars. The set of plastic measuring spoons strung on a leather strip which previously served as toys for shaking and making noise, was poked through the bars in a splayed pattern. Only the teaspoon and tablespoon measures, which were too large to jam through the bars remained loose.

Not wanting Fonzie to run short of weaving materials and provoke the danger of yanking out feathers for the purpose of weaving, (which she has NEVER did), I tried to supply her with other useful weavables. Trying to follow the most natural path, I left a pile of clean twigs in a bowl on the floor of the cage, figuring this Quaker would gravitate to the same medium the wild Quakers used. After the screaming subsided, they were ejected, one by one, out her front door. Next I tried popsicle sticks. Again I was left to play pick up sticks from the floor right outside of the cage. I'd heard that some Quakers enjoyed using plastic coffee stirrers or drinking straws, so I put those in the cup on the floor of the cage. Those, too, were met with screaming, as well as Quaker swearing, and a rapid fling out the door.

Finally taking the hint Fonzie gave by using the toys on leather strips, I purchased some slender strands, 1/8" wide, of animal safe, vegetable tanned leather from a local bird store. In the wild, Quakers are seen flying with sticks two and three times their size, but I cut the yard long strips into eight inch lengths to give my bird an easier time. The strips were quickly picked up and turned into Fonzie's "nest".

As her skill developed, she wove her strips along the horizontal bars of her cage, along with the vertical. She made loops and zig zags, and figured out how to cling to the ceiling of the cage and work her magic there. One day I even saw that she'd woven a sugar snap pea pod through the bars near the bottom of her cage.

Of course I shared news of Fonzie's artistry to friends, who began sending me molted tail feathers from their birds. We have had tail feathers from Florida, Texas, Oregon, and New York. We have had tail feathers from green Quakers and blue ones. We have had red feathers from a Rosella, and white and yellow from cockatiel friends. When they first arrived, I found that Fonzie preferred her own dark green feathers and used them first. Next came the blue Quaker tail feathers and the tiels. The reds were used last, reflecting her color bias, but they, too, were eventually used.

Even with the generous gifts of other feathers, and my stockpile of leather strips, Fonzie uses up every bit of weaving goods she has. Happily, this does not present a problem. Just as they do in the wild, Fonzie is adept at moving her stock around.

When the weaving frenzy is upon her, Fonzie builds throughout the day, carefully positioning a feather or strip in a specific spot. She'll then go outside of the cage to look at what she has done and then pull whatever she's just placed out and carry it back inside the cage to put it in again, in the very same spot. This goes on for long periods of time.

Other days she will move everything from one wall to another, or from the top in the front to the bottom in the back of the cage. Or she'll work on the ceiling, making loops around the toys that are attached up there. While she does take time out to preen, eat, and play, most of her time is spent working on her cage.

The long chain of large plastic rings that has been in her cage for nine years presented a special challenge for Fonzie. Standing on a perch across from them, Fonzie worked for months trying to pull the lowest of the rings across the perch to hook it onto another perch. Last year, she figured out by standing on a different part of the perch, she was able to grasp the last ring in such a way that she finally pulled it over the perch and wedged it sideways against the target perch. No matter how often I unhook it, she patiently pulls it back over the perch to where it "belongs."

I'm often asked how Fonzie reacts when I have to remove her weaving to give the cage a good cleaning. She has always been remarkably cooperative about this. I take them out and put them into one cup when I scrub the cage. By the time I'm done with my job, Fonzie is ready to start hers again. She's just like the wild Quakers who have their nests taken down by utility companies who deem them safety hazards. Those birds start right back in building because that's what they do.

Although weaving is Fonzie's art of choice, other Quakers are known for building structures inside their cages. One of the most famous, prolific builders in the Internet Quaker community is Stanley, the first Quaker of Jon-Mark and Jo Davey of Deerfield Beach, Florida. Davey, webmaster of Quakerville which hosts over 50 web pages for Quakers of all talents, has photos of Stanely's structures, made from sticks, coat hangers, coffee stirrers, and even an occasional neck tie and underwire bra. Stanley's photo album can be seen at http://www.quakerville.net/Stanley

According to observations from Quaker owners, b oth m ale a nd f emale Q uakers build. Anna Dydyk of Montreal, has three Quakers, but only the hen is interested in building. After being frustrated by not being able to construct a nest of single sticks, Anna provided Axel with chopsticks, joined at the top. Using this two-pronged method, Axel is able to build impressive structures within her cage.

The need to build is a powerful force in the dna of some Quaker parrots. Spring and late summer into fall are prime times for nearly full time building, even with companion birds. This makes sense because spring is the time for starting families and late summer is time to prepare for the cold winter. During these peak building seasons, Fonzie spends much more time being a bird than at other times. Her use of human language is less frequent, and she spends most of her time in the cage. She is still sociable, but is clearly ready to return to her craft when I'm done fussing over her.

Living with a bird is a fascinating experience. Living with a Quaker is delightful, yet challenging. Living with a Quaker who weaves her magic inside of her cage is a gift I treasure. It brings the wild world into my house where we can watch the wonder of it all. ■

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Ellen Feinstein Krueger is a freelance writer from Acton, MA. Ellen has written for Bird Talk, Companion Parrot Quarterly, as well as regional newspapers throughout Massachusetts. She is editor of The Sentinel, The Journal of The Quaker Parakeet Society. Ellen is author of three Fonzie Picture Books for young children and Quaker lovers. Her website is http://www.a-waywithwords.net.

Children's books about Quaker Parrots

Titles include:

- Why is Fonzie Grumpy
- Eat With My Feet
- Twick or Tweet

Fonzie is a six year old parrot who lives a life of indulgence as the only bird of the Krueger family. She appears as the main character in these children's book collection.

"To those who believe in the need for stories about Quaker Parrots because they're amusing creatures with personalities that beg to be captured in words." and definitely for those who understand the need to educate our children through fun and interactive reading as they will be the future caregivers of the next generation.

Published by Ellen Feinstein Krueger

Benefits of providing weaving material for your Quaker

- Weaving is an excellent occupational therapy
- Develops independent play
- Stimulates activity and develops motor skills
- Develops dexterity and agility
- Promotes confidence and assurance by allowing the bird to build a sheltered environment
- Naturally grooms the beak and nails
- For colony housed Quakers, it stimulates participation and favors acceptance within the flock

Flocks weave their magic in colony flights

Photo by : Michelle Aubin, Zoo D'Oiseaux Exotique ICARE

1) In this Quaker breeding colony mixed outdoor flight at the Zoo D'Oiseaux Exotique ICARE, the blue mutation and green Quaker colony initially built a large multi-chamber weaved nest mound in the upper left side corner. Shortly after the construction, huge winds threatened the stability of the nest.

2) Within the following 15 hrs , the colony displaced twig by twig the building material of their nest and rebuilt a similar construction on the opposite corner of the flight. Impressively not a single twig was dropped on the floor of the flight in the process .

3 + 4) The rebuilt nest construction can be seen above the ladder. The new location offers protection from the wind. The ladder is used to inspect the cavities within the nest for the monitoring of chicks.

5) Healthy, neonate Quaker chicks (approximately 1 week old) in the nest cavity.

Providing fresh branches to the Quaker pairs is essential to ensure a successful breeding season.
Fresh wood bark also allows the nest bedding to retain the essential humidity necessary for natural incubation of the eggs and healthy chick development.

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THE GOOD CHEF

Food questions and answers by:
Annik de Brouwer

Q: Should I peel all fruits and vegetables before giving them to my bird?

A: Please don't! The skins, once thoroughly washed and rinsed, provide visual stimulation. Birds, like humans, eat with their eyes first. And, it is close to the skin that the highest concentr ation of vitamins is found. Also visually stimulating are carrot tops, beet leaves, parsley, etc. They can be used to decorate the inside of the cage. Once well rinsed, they will change the look of the cage where your bird spends the day waiting for you. What if your bird nibbles on them? Good, this is also why you put them there! I know a parrotlet that loves to hide behind the leaves of wet lettuce. I have also heard that some parakeets shower this way. A lot of advantages, at a low cost!

Q: Which fruits and vegetables should I remove the seeds or pits?

A: Actually, there are some categories which can help simplify things. For apples, pears, plums, apricots, etc., it is recommended to remove the pits and seeds. In a book by Robin Deutsch, it is recommended to also remove the part that touches the pit in fruits like plums, apricots, nectarines, etc. You should also remove the pits in citrus fruits (lemons, oranges, mandarins, mineolas, grapefruits, etc.) and cherries. I don't take any chances - I also remove the seeds in grapes. However, you can leave the seeds in melons (cantaloupes, watermelons, etc.), and in cucumbers of the same family (cucurbitaceous). The books listed as references provide complete listings of what you can give birds without any risk.

Annik de Brouwer

*1. **Aliments santé aliments danger**, Éditions Sélection du Reader's Digest, 2005, ISBN 0-88850-780-1*

*2. **Feeding your Pet Bird**, Editions Barron's, 1993, ISBN 0-8120-1521-5*

*3. Deutsch, Robin, **The Healthy Bird Cookbook**, t.f.h. Publications, 2004, ISBN 0-7938-0538-4*

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- Growing Millet Update
- Spray Millet
- Sprouting Spray Millet

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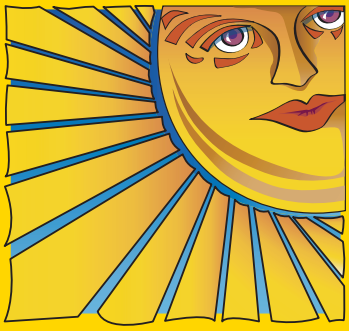
www.lostmymarblz.com/fl-nutrition-spraymill.htm



HEALTH

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT

Bird breeders and fanciers around the world have long believed in the benefits of natural sunlight and fresh air for our avian companions. In countries such as Australia, captive birds are almost always housed outdoors. Here in North America, many of us are not blessed with a climate that permits this. Still, given a little knowledge and ingenuity, we can achieve not only the visual appeal but many of the healthful advantages that come with natural or special lighting. Remember that we humans are always grumbling about office light or long dark winters -imagine, then, the justified complaints of creatures whose natural habitat isn't a lobby, a mall, or a living room!

LET THE SUN IN

Let's first take a look at the physiological impact of natural light on your bird. As a veterinarian, one of my chief concerns about light quality is in regard to Vitamin D metabolism. Vitamin D is the only vitamin that normally requires a specific type of light - ultraviolet light, which comes from the sun - to convert it into its active form. When birds in the wild ingest Vitamin D in their food, the sun's ultraviolet fraction converts it into a fundamental component of good health - the chemically active form Vitamin D3 (25-dihydroxycholecalciferol). Without this exposure to sunlight, Vitamin D deficiency problems such as rickets can develop in birds.

In theory, modern medicine has made it possible to compensate for a lack of direct sunlight by feeding the bird an artificially produced chemically active form - much like our own vitamin supplements - but this approach is not without problems. One of the key issues is correct dosage. Unfortunately, owners who are careless with prescribed doses may be endangering their pet's well-being, as Vitamin D3 may be toxic when given in excess. Frustratingly, we do not know the minimum and maximum safe level of supplements for most pet bird species. We do know that certain parrots such as the macaws seem to be particularly sensitive to Vitamin D3 overdose. In fact, when breeding macaws are housed outdoors, and given high levels of Vitamin D3 supplement in their food - at a level that might be safe for indoor housed macaws - it may be possible in those circumstances for an overdose to occur. Typical problems include renal failure, widespread tissue calcification, and breeding difficulties.

Full spectrum lights can be easily adapted to be mounted onto cages or suspended abo ve the flight using a fluoresent str ip flight. Caution: make sure your birds can not reach any electrical cords or bulbs.

The issue of Vitamin D supplements, then, demands a little thought. But in most cases you will not be able to omit supplements altogether, because without access to activated Vitamin D the 'indoors' bird cannot absorb calcium normally from its food, and the results are catastrophic. Young birds in particular may develop bent and malformed beaks, and bowed and softened leg bones, together with malformations of the ribs and spinal column. The best course of action is to use adequate, not excess, Vitamin D3 supplementation, and to provide access to natural unfiltered sunlight or full spectrum light wherever possible. We do know that full spectrum fluorescent lighting does result in adequate vitamin D activation in chickens, and almost certainly in other bird species (see "Suggested Reading"). Consult your avian health care specialist for correct use of Vitamin D supplements, especially when used in conjunction with pelleted diets, special lighting, or with outdoor housing.

CATCHING RAYS - THE ARTIFICIAL WAY

We've all seen pictures of the serious breeder and enthusiast, whose aviaries are often festooned with special lights and lamps. Many of these owners are using 'full spectrum light', which may have several benefits when used with birds. Full spectrum light consists of fluorescent tubes which imitate natural sunlight by producing a broad range of optical radiation. In this spectrum is the all-important ultraviolet radiation, vital to the processing of Vitamin D, and invisible to the human eye. It is the middle range ultraviolet called 'UVB' which activates vitamin D. Full spectrum lights also approximate the color 'palette' of outdoor light. By definition, full spectrum or broad spectrum (similar meaning) lights have a high color rendering index (CRI > 88), meaning that the color balance is similar to that of natural noon-time sunlight, and they have a color 'temperature' between 5000 and 6600 K. Higher color temperatures are more 'sun-like' than cool white office fluorescents.

How is this done? Fluorescent lights are made up of glass tubes containing inert gases such as argon, and coated with chemical 'phosphors' which emit light at various wavelengths when an electrical current causes electrons to strike them. These phosphors give the fluorescent light its special properties.

Although most full spectrum lights are targeted for the reptile market, the trend in the industry is now focusing on specifically manufactured lights for birds. However, correct use of full spectrum lighting involves a little homework. There is no information available on exactly how much ultraviolet light is needed (or is safe) for indoor birds.

Remember also that percentages of UVB listed on tube packaging are not usually much help unless you know the total output of the bulb. Your pet retailer should be able to put you in touch with a manufacturer's web site or customer service department if you have questions about the value of a particular bulb for avian species. Fluorescent lights are easy to set up and to use, but follow the manufacturer's guidelines for replacement times. Most emit useful amounts of UVB for at least one year. These lights should be replaced before we are able to see them flicker. Birds can actually see this "flickering" effect in an old tube long before we can!

HEATING UP

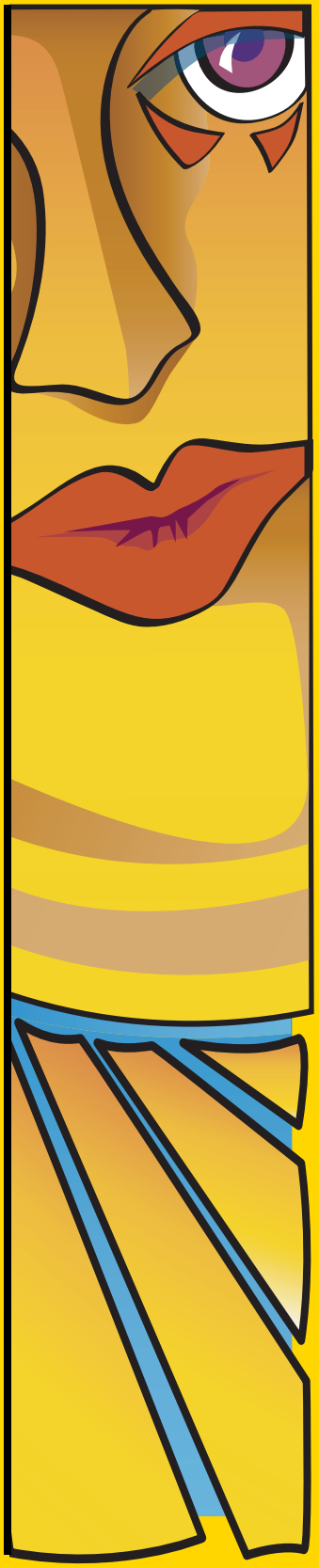
Let's not forget one of the very obvious benefits of light for our avian communities - like us, our birds enjoy a bit of sunbathing! Many of our captive bird species originate from very hot climates. Most popular Australian species, for example, are from semi-arid habitats that routinely exceed 100° F in the daytime. Conditions in captivity in North America are often very different. Infra-red light can very effectively make up for lost temperature. New small 'spotlight' infra-red bulbs are now available that can be left on 24 hrs. a day, and their pleasant red glow will not disturb the birds at night. Infra-red is a type of incandescent light radiation, much like a "regular" light bulb. Incandescent bulbs give off light and varying amounts of heat when an electrical current is passed through a metal filament in the vacuum environment of the glass bulb. Many pet stores also use these lights for their newly arrived birds, or recently weaned birds who have been moved out of temperature controlled enclosures. Birds under stress always benefit from supplemental heat. But caution should be taken to ensure that the bird has some escape from the higher heat areas of the cage. In general, 75 watt infra-red lights are best for most bird applications when used in a reflector on the cage top. And do remember: keep all cords and fixtures away from busy beaks!

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

No wonder pet-store fish look so alluring and so otherworldly - proprietors use special lighting to highlight the natural beauties of their stock. Most fluorescent light sources give dazzling effects to birds as well as to fish. The jewel-like appearance of a Lady Gouldian finch or a Splendid parakeet under full spectrum light speaks for itself. Almost any light source can highlight your pet's appeal to some extent. Start with a fresh look at your windows. Too often, worried pet owners consider windows 'drafty' or somehow inappropriate, and end up consigning our beautiful friends to a dim, corner location. Modern windows are rarely drafty, and intelligent pet birds often enjoy seeing activity going on outside of their window. Always make sure the bird has part of the cage in shade for refuge from direct sunlight, but otherwise take sensible advantage of window light.

Full spectrum light is ideal for visual effects as well as health benefits. You can arrange full spectrum lighting for your cage exactly as you might for a fish tank. An overhead strip light can either be mounted on the cage or ceiling, and should be placed on a timer for convenience. Make sure your strip fixture does not require a 'manual' start each time, or you will not be able to use a timer. Again, make sure that restless parrot-type beaks cannot reach any electrical cords. Viewing your birds will also be enhanced by dark-colored or low reflection bars, particularly when a frontal lighting source is used. Most commercial display aviaries and zoological gardens paint wire or bars black for this reason. Make sure that a zinc and lead-free, non-toxic paint or other finish is used.

Finally, a note on possibly the most important reason for you to re-assess the ways you illuminate your bird and its environment. Small changes in your birds appearance or behavior, cage damage, a dirty cage, and many other problems are easily missed in a dimly lit environment. Some changes are very subtle; an oddly colored dropping, a leg that does not grip the perch well, or an out-of-position wing are all conditions that need a little 'enlightenment' to pick up!



SUGGESTED TECHNICAL READING:

RESPONSE OF DOMESTIC POULTRY TO VARIOUS LIGHT SOURCES.
PD Lewis and TR Morris. World Poultry Science Journal 54, 1998.

This article and many more interesting avian related topics can be found at the Rolf. C. Hagen Inc. web site: **www.hagen.com** look for Birds; Advanced topics. Printer friendly versions are also available at this site.

By:
Louise Bauck,
DVM, MVSc

HEALTH
Lighting

By: Gaétan Simard T.P.,
Laval University Quebec

Photos by : l'INAF Institut d'Aliments Neutraceutique Fonctionnel, Université Laval,

Probiotics HEALTH

THE GOOD PROBIOTICS FOR YOUR BIRDS

Supplementing your birds' diet with probiotics becomes more and more attractive for bird owners.

THE BENEFICIAL HEALTH REASONS ARE VARIOUS:

- Increases immune system strength.
- Assures optimum guts microflora (essential for good digestion).
- Helps parent birds to inoculate there young when they are still in the nest.
- Restore guts microflora after antibiotic treatment.
- Potentially increases lifespan.

The use of 'friendly' bacteria to prevent infectious diseases is relatively new. It is part of the new biotechnologies called nutraceutics. The first man who discovered the benefits of the bacteria therapy was a Russian microbiologist and zoologist named Elie Metchnikoff from 1845-1916, the father of modern immunology.

Lactobacillus acidophilus (humain strain)

We can find in his bibliography this description: 'He identified a link between acidophilus-type bacteria and extended lifespan for humans. Acidophilus is a nutritional supplement product, which contains a given bacteria. He was pivotal in starting the relatively modern discipline of probiotics (dietary supplements containing potentially beneficial bacteria).

In 1928 Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin and this was a tremendous breakthrough for medical science. Bacteria therapy became less interesting since the use of antibiotics was the solution for most infections. Antibiotics were used widely and extensively. Some antibiotics were added as 'preventive treatment' in farm animals' feed. Inevitably, pathogenic bacteria did what they were naturally programmed to do, they evolved to become more and more resistant.

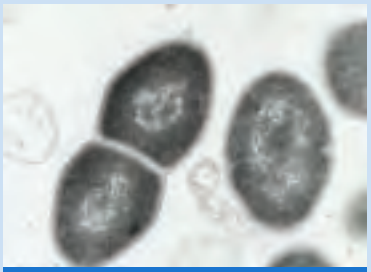
Since man was now challenged and incessantly preoccupied by highly resistant strains of super bacteria, and now antibiotics were commonly found in his meat, the use of preventive antibiotics was reduced in the 70's, especially in farm animal feed. Despite this, farmers always had the same needs, threatened by pathogenic bacteria. Breeding animals in relatively stressed environment, overcrowding in less than ideally ventilated or sanitized facilities, harmful germs were still frequently present. All the elements for an infection to occur. A wave of avant-garde naturopathy turned back to probiotics. In theory, the solution could come from the animal itself, by boosting the immune system naturally with the aid of probiotics.

Probiotics are part of Functional Foods (foods that promote health benefits) they are designer foods with effects that extend beyond basic nutrition. They can serve to prevent certain illnesses, strengthen the immune system, or promote good digestion. Such health effects are achieved by adding certain active substances. Another term for such a food can be "nutraceutical" (nutrition and pharmaceutical).

Probiotics are live bacteria, which survive but do not stay in the host digestive system for very long. When they are present, they help the development of native beneficial bacteria. Probiotics are like tourists in a city. The city manager knows that tourists are essential to the economic health of the town, so they prepare the place for them, they build hotels, restaurants and promote scenic sights to attract tourists. The more successful the tourist outcome, the higher the revenues to the residents and the town is happy and flourishing. However, unfortunately , probiotics never stay around for a very long time.

Using probiotics in the agricultural industry is advantageous, other wise no money would be spent on it. The young grow faster, producing a better meat (muscle) conversion to food ratio. That means that for the same amount of feed, animals grow faster with less fat and more muscular weight. Enhancing the digestive system to increase growth performances.

When probiotics are used they 'shift' the natural intestinal bacteria flora to the good side.
The result is a healthier digestive system with less pathogenic bacteria. Most pathogenic bacteria are known to produce toxins that are normally filtered by the internal organs such as the liver and the kidney. Élie Mechtnikoff's theory claims that when using probiotics, the digestive system has fewer toxins to clean, reducing the stress on the detoxifying organs and thus potentially



pathogenic bacteria Enterococcus

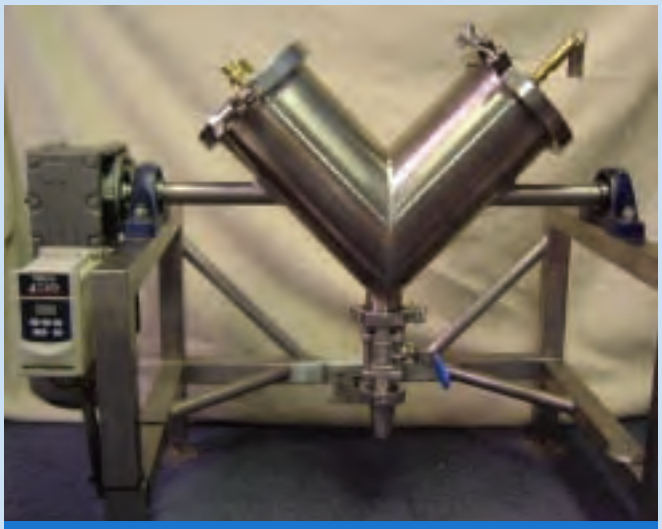
Bifidobacteria

expanding lifespan. Bacteria are the founding members of all living organisms; they were most probably the first live 'animals' on the planet. There is 10 times more living cells in the digestive system than in the complete human body. Immediately upon the arrival of a new born, instinctively the first thing that the mother will do is inoculate their young with friendly bacteria to protect them against infections and stimulate their immune system. For mammalian species these friendly bacteria are part of the milk we refer to as colostrum. In avian species the friendly bacteria are given by their parents directly regurgitated from their digestive system when they are fed. It is primordial that the parents have an excellent gut microflora, since it is the foundation of raising healthy chicks.
When a bird is stressed it will frequently have loose droppings. This is the result of the digestive system's blood flow reduction. When stressed, blood flow concentrate to vital organs such as the heart and brain. This phenomenon shows a disruption to the microflora that can lead to diarrhea, potentially dehydrating the bird, and result in weakness and predisposition to infection. When offering supplemental probiotics, since the flora is stronger, this phenomenon is much less apparent. For birds in captivity stress can arise from a change in the environment, during quarantine, the onset of the breeding season, overcrowded aviaries and other factors.

There are numerous benefits that can come with the usage of probiotics for bird keepers and breeders. But what really ensures a product to be actually effective? When using a good probiotics you should see differences in the dropping within 24 hours. They will be firmer and look healthy. This is the first sign that can give us insight to the product's effectiveness.
Probiotics for exotic birds must be specially designed for them, they must be avian specific. Since a bird's body temperature is higher than mammals the probiotic type bacteria found in the gut flora are different. They must be specifically selected for their effectiveness on exotic birds. It is a mistake to think that probiotics that work on dogs, pigs, humans or even poultry will be ideal for your parrot.

The product must be formulated following scientifically established technical criteria and proper testing. The specifically selected bacteria must stay alive in the bird's digestive system long enough to do its work. Proper microbiological analysis must be done by the manufacturer to assure that live bacteria will be found in the crop, stomach and droppings of the bird. Ideally the product should be in a powder form and properly packed to prevent humidity and contamination. Probiotic bacteria are relatively fragile and premium products are prepared without other filler like vitamins or other food supplement. They should be kept in the refrigerator.

Recent studies have shown that the concentration is a very important factor when feeding probiotics. A concentration of a few hundreds of millions of colony forming units (CFU) is insufficient. Proper concentration must be in the billions CFU/gr. Probiotics overdose is practically impossible.



Specially design 'V' Blender

Serious manufacturers will acquire the proper equipment to elaborate and fabricate their product. When mixing probiotics, special care must be taken to avoid generating heat during the mixing process. Ideally each lot must be analyse to confirm CFU concentration and purity (germ free).

In nature, birds and other animals find natural probiotics in the soil, bark or food source. In captivity natural probiotics are rarely found in the seed mixes and diets offered.

The addition of probiotics to your birds diet is a proactive decision to keep your pet or breeding colony healthy. Consult with your avian veterinarian for recommended manufacturers of high quality probiotics available in your area. Together, you can evaluate the quantities and frequency that should be offered.

The use of an avian specific probiotics is not only good for your birds' digestive and immune system. It is probably the only scientifically proven way to extend your parrot's life.

Gaétan Simard T.P. is a professional technician and works at Laval University in Québec. He has been keeping and breeding birds for many years. With the aids of microbiologists he elaborated and implemented a research protocol to test different strains of probiotic type bacteria on exotic birds. The goal was to create a product for exotic birds that could compare in effectiveness with the ones available for agriculture. Member of 'Entrepreneuriat Laval', Mr. Simard likes to share his love for birds with other breeders and bird keepers. Promoting the proactive use of probiotics instead of antibiotics in the avian community is one of Mr.Simard's main motivation.

~ IN THE NEWS ~

A Tragic Side Effect of the Bird Flu Pandemic Paranoia

People are developing an unreasonable and unfounded fear of birds-all birds

By: Susan Clubb DVM

People are becoming fearful of birds. Remember when the singing of birds was soothing to the soul. With the current worldwide paranoia about Avian Flu panic is replacing joy with fear. People are developing an unreasonable and unfounded fear of birds-all birds. A few facts need to be emphasized in order to try to help people understand what is a threat and what is not.

* The H5N1-pathogenic avian flu virus has not been found in the United States. The poultry Industry and the USDA are very vigilant to protect US poultry populations and keep our poultry free of Pathogenic avian Influenza.

• Pathogenic Avian Influenza is a disease of domestic poultry - not all birds. Effective control must focus on the poultry industry in affected countries. Stringent global monitoring programs including immediate culling and correct disposal of infected poultry flocks are necessary. Every effort must be made to limit the spread of the virus to wild waterfowl.

• Avian Flu exists in many strains and is endemic to wild waterfowl such as mallards, but nearly all other varieties of birds have a low incidence of Avian Flu. The presence of Avian Flu in wild waterfowl does not mean that the birds are diseased or that they can spread a virulent form of the virus to poultry or people. The birds that commonly harbor these viruses have developed resistance over many millennia, they rarely suffer illness from Avian Flu viruses. Avian migrations are typically North to South, not from Asia or Europe to the Americas. Insignificant migrations mostly of shorebirds occur from Russia across the Bering Strait into Alaska but these birds are highly unlikely to come into contact with poultry housed outdoors.

• The pathogenic Avian flu virus will not enter the US in legally imported birds. Since 1972 all birds imported into the United States undergo mandatory quarantine by The US Department of Agriculture and they are tested for highly pathogenic Avian Influenza virus during quarantine. During that 30-year period, with the entry of many millions of exotic birds, Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus has been found ONLY ONCE in Pekin Robins from China and it was not H5N1. Pathogenic Avian Influenza is an extremely rare disease in pet and exotic birds. Bird owners should have NO FEAR of contracting pathogenic avian influenza from pet birds.

People who are potentially interested in purchasing birds bred in the United States for pets should have no fear of contracting Avian Influenza.

• In Asia, 120 reported cases and 61 fatalities have occurred in 3 years. In this region it is common for millions of people to live in close contact with poultry, with the birds often entering their homes. If a bird becomes ill the family will often slaughter it, clean it and cook it, potentially exposing themselves to the virus. Direct heavy exposure to an infected bird's body fluids is necessary for transmission to people. A favorite Asian dish is raw duck liver. Millions of domestic birds in Asia have become infected and have been destroyed to control the spread of the virus with only 61 human fatalities in 3 years. The case fatality rate may be skewed by the fact that poor people in rural areas who are most likely to be infected are not likely to seek medical care unless their illness is grave.

As long as the H5N1 virus does not gain the ability to be transmitted from human to human, its impact on human health will continue to be minimal.

• Avian Flu viruses rarely, if ever, jump straight to becoming Human Flu viruses. Typically, Avian Influenza must undergo a series of mutations or a large genetic change to acquire the ability of human-to-human transmission. The potential for genetic mutation associated with exchange of genetic information between strains is higher when an animal or human is simultaneously infected with two different strains of influenza. Simultaneous infections of human and bird flu in a pig may be required for the viruses to interchange their genetic information and become both highly infectious to humans and highly pathogenic. This potential exists in Asia where people often keep poultry and pigs around their home. This is the potential that Public Health officials fear. However, these large changes in genetic makeup are just as likely to result genetic changes that make the virus non-pathogenic.

• Periodic outbreaks of pathogenic Avian Influenza occur in poultry around the world, including the United States. Since 1997, for example, more than 16 outbreaks of pathogenic Avian Influenza have occurred in poultry within the United States. The virus strains in each of these outbreaks were just as likely as H5N1 to become pathogenic human influenza viruses, yet none of them made the jump from avian virus to human virus. According to CDC records only 2 mild cases of flu have been reported from people in contact with infected poultry during this time.

• Influenza viruses do not persist in the environment outside of a host for long periods of time. Under ideal conditions at room temperatures, human flu viruses can remain infective for about one week. Exposure to sunlight drastically reduces the length of time flu viruses can remain infective.

• As long as the H5N1 virus does not gain the ability to be transmitted from human to human, its impact on human health will continue to be minimal. However, it is important to eliminate the virus from affected poultry populations to protect both people and birds. **Culling of uninfected avian populations will not assist in the control of Avian Influenza.**

• Because of governmental and media paranoia, wild populations of migrating birds may be culled or disrupted unnecessarily in misguided efforts to control avian influenza. These actions could result in the needless deaths of millions of birds and could endanger species.

• If pathogenic-human to human transmitted avian influenza does enter the US it will be by entry of infected humans, not by infected birds. As in the 2003 outbreak of SARS in Canada, an infected international traveler introduced the disease and subsequent cases occurred in exposed health care workers. This outbreak was brought under control by diligent Public Health response and monitoring of travelers for signs of illness (fever).

• Media reports about Bird Flu have created an unreasonable state of fear that can be detrimental to birds and the relationship of people to birds. A rational response is necessary to avoid further deterioration of public perception.

North Americans should not be afraid of:

- *Pet birds*
- *Feeding wild birds in their backyards*
- *Visiting zoos*
- *Visiting parks where they may contact wild birds*
- *Migrating birds*
- *Going to pet stores*
- *Taking their birds to a veterinarian*
- *Attending bird shows*
- *Eating poultry products*
- *Transporting birds on airplanes*
- *Legal importation of exotic birds*

AVIAN FLU INTERESTING WEB LINKS:

- Avian Flu Position Statement and Policy from NAWA:
http://www.nawabirds.org/Documents/Avian%20Flu%20Policy.pdf

NAWA, the National Avian Welfare Alliance, is the premier legislative advocacy umbrella organization for bird interest groups. Its 34 member organizations include the AFA (American Federation of Aviculture), AAV (Association of Avian Veterinarians), NFSS (National Finch & Softbill Society), The Gabriel Foundation (a rescue group), the PIJAC (Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council), the Cockatoo Society and many others.

Bird Flu Policy: Statement from AFA:
http://www.afabirds.org/pdf/11022005_Bird_Flu.pdf

- The AFA, American Federation of Aviculturists, is a national organization, established to represent all aspects of aviculture and educate the public about keeping and breeding birds in captivity.

- Key Facts About Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) and Avian Influenza A (H5N1) Virus' from the CDC:
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/pdf/avianflufacts.pdf

The federal CDC (Centers for Disease Control) is responsible for identifying, tracking, preventing and preparing medical response to Avian Influenza A (H5N1) in people in the U.S. ■

Biography

Susan L. Clubb, DVM dip ABVP, Avian Practice, (diplomat American Board of Veterinary Practitioners)

BS Zoology and DVM - Auburn University

After graduation from Veterinary School in 1978 Susan worked at Pet Farm Inc., a large animal importation company handling approximately 100,000 birds per year. In 1988 she became staff veterinarian at Parrot Jungle and Gardens, Miami and currently continues in that position at the new Parrot Jungle Island.

Susan was staff veterinarian for ABRC(Avicultural Breeding and research Center from 1979 to 1992 and during that time coauthored the book, Psittacine Aviculture, Perspectives Techniques and Research. She has served as consultant to Pretty Bird Intl., and as Instructor and Consultant to the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and other entities.

She is currently consultant to Kaytee Products Inc and serves on the board of the Kaytee Avian Foundation, consultant to Loro Parque in the Canary Islands and serves on the board of the Loro Parque Foundation.

Susan and her husband, Kevin Clubb, own and operate The rain forest Clinic for Birds and Exotics Inc, and Hurricane Aviaries, Inc in Loxahatchee, FL. They are very proud of their two sons, Jeremy 24 and Austin 20.

Susan has published over 100 scientific articles and book chapters and was co-editor of Avian Medicine and Surgery published by Saunders. Many of these publications can be found at www.cyberparrots.com.

A TRAGIC SIDE OF THE BIRD FLU

Fun & Serious web links.

www.exoticpetvet.net/avian/strange.html

The section of strange facts contains a lot of fun and interesting bits & pics about African parrots.

This site is owned and authored by: Margaret A. Wissman, D.V.M., Diplomate, ABVP, Avian Practice and Bill Parsons, M.S.

http://www.lesentreprisesjtfl.com

Beautiful custom designed flight cages featured in Parrot Life Magazine Issue 2

http://www.birdhotline.com/vetarc.htm

Vet Talk - Your Questions Answered By: Their Resident Veterinarian, Dr. Rosskopf DVM, Dipl-ABVP-Avian
Dr. Rosskopf has been a veterinarian in private exotic practice for over 29 years, and is the co-owner of the Avian and Exotic Animal Hospital located in Hawthorne, California. He has authored over 200 scientific articles; been the Speaker at over 200 veterinary cconferences.
This site offers an archive of easy to read questions and answers on health preoccupations for your parrots.

http://www.parrotscience.com/podcast

Episode 5 of the ParrotScience podcast is now online.
Download the show to your iPod, or listen to it directly online.
This episode includes the second part of our interview with **Liz Wilson**, parrot behaviour consultant.
It also features the second part of our interview with **Dr. Jamie Gilardi, PhD,** head of the World Parrot Trust.
Roelant Jonker from AraProject.nl also talks about wild parrots - in the Netherlands. Scarlet macaws have been living there for over 25 years.
The enhanced podcast gives you photos along with the show, and they also have a regular MP3 file if you can't play the enhanced one.

First Aid:

Photos and text by Josee Bermingham, AHT

RESTRAINT AND GROOMING TECHNIQUES PART 1

Mastering the art of safe and non invasive restraint technique for your companion bird is essential for proper grooming and emergency first aid procedure.

As responsible families exercise fire escape drills in their homes, every parrot guardian should practice restraint techniques for an eventual emergency.

Ideally the new captive bred generation of avian companions should be raised with a towel. Routinely they should be placed in the restraint position in this towel while being preened on the head, and reassured using positive and playful praises. This practice should give every guardian the chance to inspect the body for any abnormalities, monitor the pectoral muscles for assurance of healthy muscle and weight. With practice and experience, inspection of the wing, tail and flight feathers , as well as growing blood feathers can be monitored. Early detection of abnormalities such as follicular cysts, respiratory difficulties, clean feathers surrounding the vent, bumble foot (pododermatitis) ect.

Above - 3 month old Goffin cockatoo playing hide and seek with his towel.

Bottom-left corner-Bogart- baby picture Jan 5th 2005. 48 days old.Gail Nelson Scovil has accustomed her Blue and Gold Macaw at an early age to being cuddled in his towel. Photo: Terry La Bonte

Here is a **Step By Step towel restraint technique** that can also be applied to larger species. The technique demonstrated here is obviously with a companion bird, and therefore I do not recommend that you take this approach. **(Steps 1-4)** with an untamed or reluctant parrot. (We will highlight other techniques in future issues). You must be confident with your approach, instinctively your bird will be defensive and reluctant to cooperate if you are unsure of yourself. Ask your avian practitioner to demonstrate the technique with your bird upon your next visit.
Note: A towel size of a least 3 times the size of the bird (evaluate size with full wing expansion) should be used. Try to select a towel material that does not slip or one that does not shred or unthread easily, as nails tend to get caught in these.

Caution: Care must be taken never to apply pressure on the body of the bird. The bird's air sacs are found throughout the body, many fail to realize that compressing the lower body (above the hips) can be suffocating to the bird! If the bird shows signs of hyperventilation rapid breathing and heat then release it immediately to resume at a later time. Overweight and inactive birds have lower tolerance to restraint and stress. The towel will indirectly when wrapped around your bird restrict movement if it is tucked properly. Notice in the photos (4-10) that only the tip of the fingers are applied at various pressure points onto the towel, and not the bird's body. Your fingers should never be near the nostrils (nares) or beak of your bird .

(Steps 11-13) For nail grooming only one leg at a time should be pulled out from under the towel wrap. Nail cutters or a nail file can be used on these smaller species. Make sure to cut below the quick of the nail to avoid inflicting pain and bleeding. Have the necessary coagulating agents accessible in case of bleeding. A 1/4 of a circle is the ideal length for the nails. A rotary tool is often used for larger species.

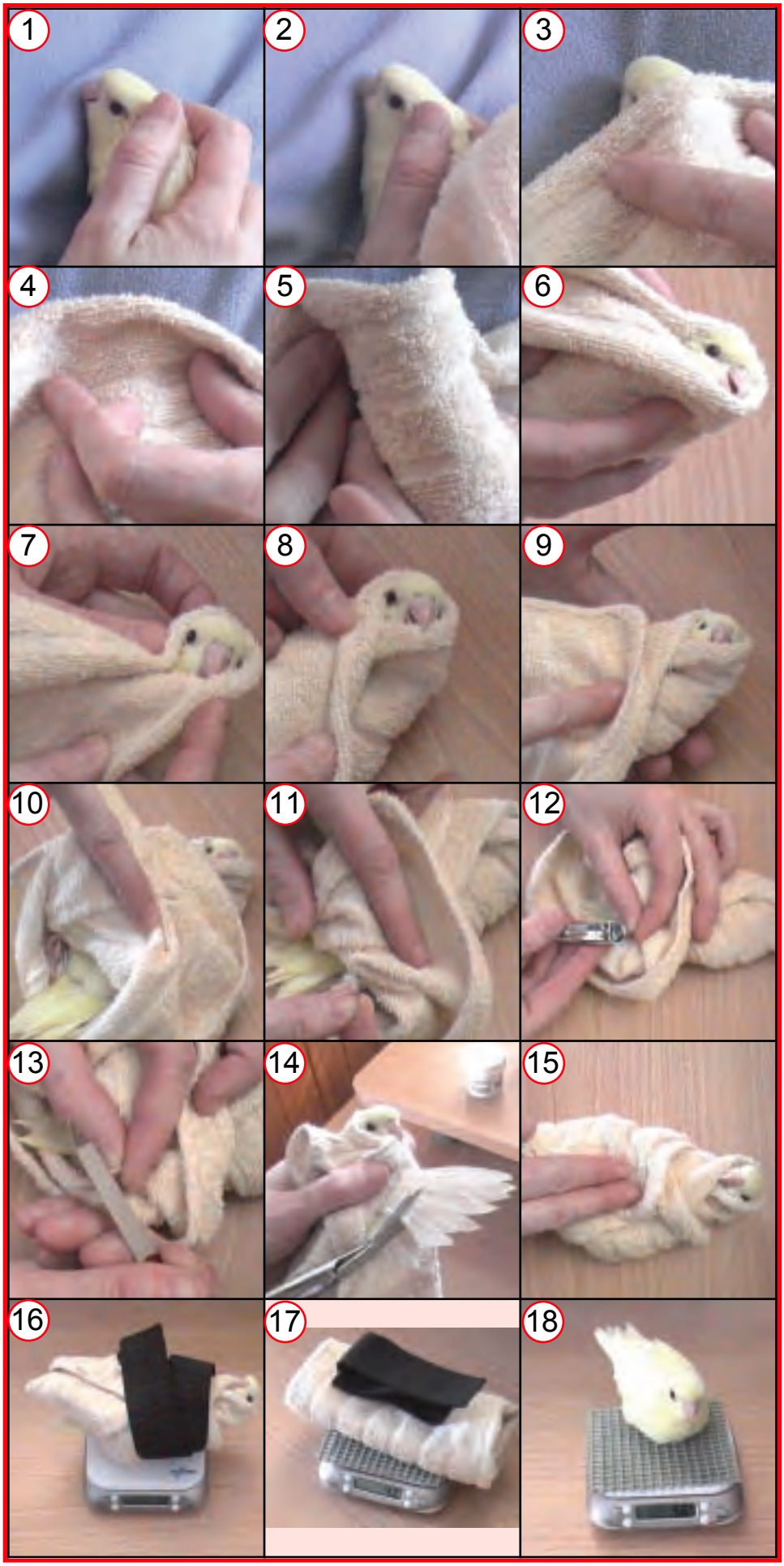
Caution: (Step 14)

- The shoulder of the wing must be always restrained when attempting to manipulate the open wing .
- Always verify on either side of the wing that no growing blood feathers are present before clipping.
- Trimming of the primary flight feathers should not be done at the same time as the nail grooming. Especially in young fledglings. This will impair their agility and stability and consequently destroy their confidence. Simultaneously removing the gripping nails and primary flight feathers can cause sever trauma to the bird if it falls . In order to ensure the bird's stability while perched on your arm it will have to rely on it's beak to hold on ! Then we wonder why so many get labeled as biters!

Leave a little gripping edge on those nails, and consult with your avian specialist for the recommended flight feather grooming for your bird's age and specific species.
(Steps 15-16) Get into the habit of weighing your bird after each grooming season.(Twice per year would be a minimum weight monitoring program).
(Step 17) Weigh and deduct the towel from the total weigth.
(Step 18) Most pets will easily sit on the scale for you without restraint. Don't forget to compile these weight records in your Pet status file!

Grooming essentials

- Towel and velcro strap for larger bird restraint
- Nail files • Nail clippers
- Rotary dremel tool
- Silver nitrate sticks for bleeding nail
- Coagulant nail powder or corn starch
- Scale



GLO

Compact Fluorescent

Recreate your bird's natural environment

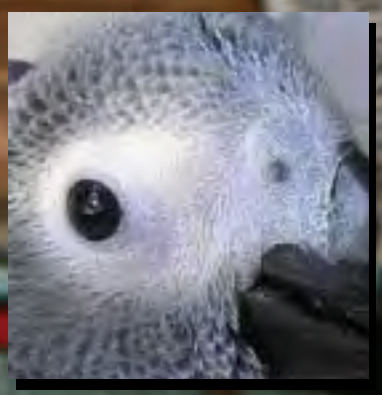
- Helps relieve psychological distress which happens with seasonal change
- Brings out the vibrant color in your bird's feathers
- Soothing heat for ideal temperature

HAGEN
www.hagen.com

African Greys

By: Jean Pattison

FOSTERING INDEPENDENT PLAY



The Aviary and Beyond: Fostering Independent Play Skills in young Parrots

A number of months ago I had occasion to overhear a conversation between two bird behaviorists concerning parrots who had become entirely dependent upon their owners for stimulation and entertainment. These unfortunate, unhappy creatures had absolutely no clue as to how to create for themselves a rewarding time of "self-satisfying play". Typically lacking in emotional security, these parrots never had the opportunity to learn (and subsequently internalize) the requisite skills so vital for instilling in them a sense of competence and degree of mastery over aspects of their own environment. This situation is especially heartbreaking in light of the fact that with proper environmental stimulation and training starting at a young age and maintained throughout young adulthood it may be easily avoided. To be sure, it is easier to teach a young dog "new tricks" than an older one. It is a sad reality that waiting too long to instill independent play skills in youngsters can have disastrous consequences for the bird in adulthood.

As an experienced breeder of Poicephalus and African Greys I know that at two and three weeks old chicks enjoy relatively little in the way of their parent's company. They are entirely preoccupied with the basics: sleeping, eating, and defecating. Some breeders choose to take chicks from the nest at the age of anywhere between ten days to three weeks in order to commence the hand feeding (weaning) process. I remove my own African Grey chicks between the ages of three to eight weeks. My contention is that bodily functions aside, there isn't much else going on in that nest box anyway. Let the naked, narcoleptic little lumps grow in peace.

Motor skill development and environmental exploration tend to surface in tandem with weaning. Once they leave the nest box, chicks usually never return. Poicephalus siblings in particular have a tendency to bicker, necessitating their removal from the parent cage. The chicks already are internalizing a concept of "self" and along with this comes an increasing need for independence and, yes, even privacy.

By the time flight feathers have begun to sprout on their wingtips the babes are able to remain awake for longer periods and explore their environment with ever-increasing vitality. Strange new objects (veggies) are merrily played with and sometimes tiny amounts are even ingested. I peek in the nursery many times during the day in order to check on them and sometimes to affectionately preen their tiny heads. As they get older, I sometimes place the container in the kitchen or living room for short periods. This temporary change of venue allows for even more exploration and play opportunities. In the evening, my husband and I will often play with them.

African species commonly attempt their maiden flight once their wing tips (flight feathers) have grown to the same length as their tail feathers. Since they are so familiar with their surroundings and feel utterly confident therein, initial flight attempts usually prove successful. At this point each individual chick has been provided with a cage. This serves as their own personal space and simultaneously functions as playground, launching pad and refuge (when privacy is desired). The opportunity to make confident choices about play in a secure and safe environment promotes independent play skills in parrots generally, and providing this youngsters only just "learning the ropes" is essential for mental health (yours and theirs).

Once fully fledged and secure in his or her identity as a parrot, the chick is ready to go to the new home. Flights are gradually trimmed back to the correct length (your avian vet will show you what this is as it does vary between species). I know of many people who prefer to keep their birds fully flighted, and there is much discussion on the issue. In any event, once in the new home an attempt should be made at least initially to follow a similar routine the chick has become used to. I advise that it is preferable to spend more frequent yet shorter, intermittent periods of time with the new family member as opposed to fewer intense and protracted periods. Once again time alone, this fosters a degree of self-reliance in the parrot and thus makes the animal less dependent upon its caregiver. Baby knows you will be returning once that sink full of dishes are done. Parrots accustomed to the attention of a variety of caregivers may acquire greater trust in humans generally. These intelligent and creative beings can and do learn to be happy on their own for periods of time whether playing on (or in) their cage, designated play area or play gym.

The importance of cage location cannot be overlooked, and I advise that placing the cage in a well traveled area near (but not directly in) the main hub of activity in the home is ideal. Make a sincere effort to make the space as colourful, inviting and stimulating as possible without, of course, being overwhelming to the animal. Parrots, regardless of age, must continue to exercise their curiosity, experience their senses, and test their bodies. To facilitate this, they need an enriched environment filled with possibilities for experimenting and learning. Provide for physical activity (boings, swings, bells, chew toys, etc), intellectual activity (acrylic puzzle toys) and foraging activity. Remember that just as with humans, there are times when a bird may just want some "down" time in privacy. If you have adequate space, a sheet of plywood hung by hooks can be used as a blind. Alternatively, fabric may be used to cover a portion of the cage. Parrots will often take advantage of such cage furnishing for "time outs" and short naps. Whatever you do, always bear in mind that even while still quite young, parrots who have severely limited opportunities for appropriate experiences, including but not limited to independent play, will inevitably become developmentally delayed. Think seriously in terms of "down the road": As in the case of human children, this situation will adversely affect their ability to learn new skills.

Because our birds are individuals with their own quirks and temperaments, if things don't turn out they way we want, or the way we have been told they should, doesn't mean the hand-feeder or the owner did anything wrong. This is not about guilt, this is about accepting a bird, for what it is……a bird, with all its wild instincts. If a behavioral problem develops, or an unfavorable trait appears consult with the breeder or respected avian behaviorist. Re-education such as Fostering Independent Play Skills of your companion could still be possible. ■

PULL OUT & KEEP

My PARROT'S

BODY & Mind CHART

By: Sylvie Aubin & Josee Bermingham

Avian species of your companion:_____

- Number of years under your guardianship: _____Acquired at what age:_____
- Prior history and origin: captive bred ☐ wild caught ☐ unknown ☐ bought from pet store ☐ directly from breeder ☐ acquired through a refuge ☐

Additional information: _____

_____

- What is the age of your avian companion: _____confirmed ☐ unknown ☐
- What is the sex of your companion: Male ☐ female ☐ confirmed ☐ unknown ☐
- When was the latest veterinarian exam: _____
- Health preoccupations noted: _____
- What is the specific behavior that would need modification:

screaming ☐ biting ☐ feather damaging activity ☐ aggressiveness ☐ territoriality ☐ reluctance to interact as before ☐ (Other) behavior:_____

- When was this behavior first noticed:_____
- What is the frequency of this behavior:_____
- Does this behavior occur when the bird is by itself:

Yes ☐ No ☐ unknown ☐

- In the presence of whom in particular does this behavior occur?:

Yourself ☐ spouse ☐ children ☐ friends ☐ strangers ☐ women ☐ men ☐ other feathered companions ☐

- Is there anyone that objects to the presence of this bird in your home:

Yes ☐ No ☐

- How many hours without human interaction does the bird spend on average per day:_____
- Has anything changed in your bird's immediate environment:

cage ☐ cage location ☐ cage set-up ☐ new cage accessories ☐ (mirrors, toys…?)

- Has anything changed exterior to the cage:

new décor ☐ paint color ☐ the addition of a new animal statue ☐ new ceiling fan ☐ new T.V ☐ or audio system ☐ ticking clock ☐ noisy dishwasher or fridge ☐ a reflection that was not present before (window, mirror, stainless steel) ☐ a new pet within the home ☐ other:_____

- Has there been an activity exterior to your home such as:

Excavation ☐ construction ☐ spraying of pesticides ☐ renovations in the apartment adjacent or above your home ☐ a stray cat sitting on the window sill beside the cage _ neighbor's new dog barking incessantly in the yard ☐ other:_____

- Has the energy within your home changed:

unusual quietness ☐ increased stress ☐ unusual conflicts ☐ quarreling ☐ medical condition affecting a member of the family ☐ a pregnancy underway ☐ a new child☐ training of a new puppy ☐ other:_____

- Has anyone's schedule changed within the home:

Yes ☐ No ☐ specify_____

- Has there been a change in the bird's nutrition:

yes ☐ no ☐ specify_____

- At what time are the treats offered (soft foods, seeds, fruits and veggies ect)

Morning ☐ meal times ☐ evening ☐ none offered ☐

- What does your bird eat (be honest and list what it really eats and not what you offer it)

Pellets: yes ☐ no ☐ what brand _____ amount of it's daily total intake _____
Seeds: yes ☐ no ☐ percentage of it's daily total intake _____ what kind _____
Nuts: yes ☐ no ☐ percentage of it's daily total intake _____ what kind _____
Fruits: yes ☐ no ☐ percentage of it's daily total intake _____ what kind _____
Vegetables: yes ☐ no ☐ percentage of it's daily total intake _____ what kind _____
Cereal, pasta, rice and bread: yes ☐ no ☐ percent of it's daily total intake _____ what kind_____
Other: yes ☐ no ☐ percentage of it's daily total intake _____ what kind _____

- Could his diet be too high in caloric energy: yes ☐ no ☐
- Are there any new members in the bird's perception of the flock:
- Any new people interacting or now integrated within the flock :spouse ☐ child ☐ new pet ☐
- Has a member of the so called flock departed

Yes ☐ no ☐ specify_____

- Has the bird experienced a traumatic event recently:
  Shock ☐ trauma ☐ boarding ☐ treatments ☐ hospitalization ☐ uncontrolled flight accident ☐
  encounter with something threatening ☐ other:_____
- Have you changed something radically different to your appearance?:
  Such as new hair color ☐ nail color ☐ glasses ☐ other:_____
- Have you noticed if your bird seems fearful or cautious toward certain colors:
  Yes ☐ no ☐ specify_____
- Have the bird's nails been groomed too short. The bird has difficulty to grip on the perch or remain stable on your arm. Overly groomed nails prevent agility, stability and confidence. Yes ☐ No ☐
- Flight feathers trimmed ☐ # primary flight feathers trimmed:_____ Fully flighted ☐
- Were the flight feathers trimmed at the same time as the nail grooming? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Are there any stress bars apparent on the feathers:
  Yes ☐ No ☐ unknown ☐ _____# app
  Preening normally ☐ bathing or showering ☐ vocalizing ☐ unusually quite ☐
  activity level normal ☐ pupils dilating normally ☐ responsive ☐ bright & alert ☐
- What kind of independent activities does it engage in.
  Explain:_____
- Does it have occupation therapy toys, destructible materials or foraging toys:
  Yes ☐ No ☐ Specify:_____
- Are basic training commands being used
  (ex. Up-down): Yes ☐ No ☐ Specify:_____ By whom:_____
- How is the bird's interactive playtime:
  Attentive ☐ reluctant ☐ nervous ☐ distracted ☐ confident ☐ playful ☐ not interested ☐
- Do you spend as much time as before playfully interacting:
  Yes ☐ No ☐ specify:_____
- Do you have the same approach, attitude, intonation as before with your bird: Yes ☐ No ☐
  Are you now impatient ☐ overwhelmed ☐ fearful ☐ frustrated ☐ confident ☐ determined ☐
  calm ☐ when approaching your bird.
- How many hours does it spend outside the cage on average per day: #_____hrs
- Does the bird have boundaries to respect within the home? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Could your pet be experiencing reproductive/mating behavior.
  Yes ☐ No ☐ unsure ☐
- Where do you usually pet him on it's body.
  everywhere ☐ neck ☐ back ☐ under the wings ☐ tail ☐
- Is panting observed when it is pet in this fashion Yes ☐ No ☐
- Could your pet be interpreting your relationship as pair bonding: Yes ☐ No ☐ perhaps ☐
- Has it demonstrated signs of eagerness to construct a nest: Yes ☐ No ☐
- Does your bird have: a nest box ☐ cardboard box ☐ tent ☐ or other resembling a nest cavity ☐
- Is it in perfect condition (threads, hole, etc.) Yes ☐ No ☐
- Is your bird exposed to natural sunlight: Yes ☐ No ☐
- Is it exposed to a full spectrum light daily: Yes ☐ No ☐ # hours_____,
- Are the fluorescents getting old(>1 yr):
  Yes ☐ No ☐ Are they flickering Yes ☐ No ☐
- Do they make a buzzing sound? Yes ☐ No ☐
- How many hours of uninterrupted sleep does your pet really get per night:_____
- Is there a turbulent adolescent playing video games till midnight near his cage, or sport fanatics watching the T.V. past bed time? Specify:_____
- Is your bird covered at night or sleeping in a dark room? Yes ☐ No ☐
- Does it have a different sleeping cage: Yes ☐ No ☐
- Does it have night frights Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown ☐
- How much time will you be able to devote to changing the behavior:_____
- Is everyone within your flock willing to aid in this behavior assessment and eventual modification program_____
  _____

- ADDITIONAL NOTE:

Should your avian companion start an undesirable or unusual behavior, use this chart as a preliminary assessment of the potential cause of the behavioral change. Before you rush to an avian consultant, be smart and proactive. Consult with the other members of your flock truthfully whilst answering this questionnaire , and take it along with you when consulting. You will probably save valuable time, energy and money remedying to your companions behavioral condition.

You might be mesmerized by certain questions; after all your bird's problem is behavioral and we are asking you questions relating to health and essentials care. The reason is quite simple, the body and the mind are intertwined so tightly that one doesn't go without the other. Just think of how you can act differently when you are not eating or sleeping properly for awhile, sometimes what you need is not a psychologist's help but a nutritionist's help or simply a new mattress!

We've tried to cover all angles but remember that nobody knows your companion as much as you do and feel free to add any other questions and comments you think are important and pertinent. It might be a good idea to consult with a behaviorist but take the time to reflect upon the situation and try to analyze it yourself first. Sometimes, just putting things on paper helps us to understand things that seemed incomprehensible before, perhaps you might find the answer to your problem relatively easily!

Avian Transporters

PLEASE NOTE: It is recommended to have a transporter / carrier adapted to your species 'needs available at all times in case of evacuation or emergency transport .Your transporter should be clean and easily accessible at all times. It is recommended to place your avian companion in this transporter periodically so that it can get accustomed to it .Many transporters can be adapted to be used as emergency care units, traveling day cages and weekend cages.
I have highlighted a few models in the chart below with a brief overview of their features.

Article by Lucy Romanoff
Aquanimo- Pet store owner

Model	1 Dog-It	2 Clipper 3	3 Stoweaway	4 Image not available Pak-o-Bird
Manufacturer	Rolf C. Hagen Inc	Marchioro	Rolf C. Hagen Inc.	Celltei® Pak-o-Bird
Material	metal	Plastic	Plastic	Various materials and mesh
Recommended for (small, medium, large birds)	Large Conures to Macaw	Small parrot to Cockatoos	Budgie to Cunure	Mostly all species Various dimensions
Can easily be modified and used as weekend & emergency care cage	Emergency care and weekend cage	Emergency care cage	Transporter cage only	no
Model approved by air line carriers	no	yes	Yes	no
Price (reasonable, moderate, expensive)	Reasonable	moderate	Reasonable	expensive
Perches , and feeding dishes easily adapted in transporter	5/5	4/5	4/5	yes
Weight	Moderately Heavy No handle Foldable for easy storage	Light weight handle and shoulder strap	Lightweight with handle	Light
Cleaning accessible when bird is inside	3/5 but tray facilitates cleaning	4/5 2 access doors	4/5 Can remove cover	no
Dangerous or not recommended for certain species	Small conures & smaller birds	large cockatoos bite through them	Not for medium sized parrot species	Still under research
Availability of Replacement parts	Yes parts unlikely need replacement	Yes	Yes	Offer damage repair at low cost
Provides adequate air exchange	5/5	4/5	5/5	5/5
Draft protection	0/5	4/5	5/5	5/5
Other comments	Easily adaptable perch on top for play gym	Easily adaptable perch on top for play gym	Small access door for accessibility, prevent bird from escaping	Shoulder strap car safety strap

comparative chart

5 Image not available	6	7	8	9	10 Image not available
SP 62311-62313 Transporter Model #	Exoterra Faunarium	Pet Voyageur 100-200-300-400	Pet Cargo Cabrio	Crystal Shuttle	Adventure Pack
Super Pet	Rolf C.Hagen Inc	Rolf C Hagen Inc	Rolf C Hagen Inc	Crystal Flight	Bird Adventures
Pastic base and and wire	Plastic	Plastic and wire door	Plastic	Acrylic	100% stainless steel cage. Backpack 100% cotton
Budgie to cockatiel	Budgie to small Conures	Cockatiel to Macaw	Budgie to medium sized parrot	Budgie to medium Macaw	Parrotlets to small cockatoo
Transport cage only	Transport cage only	Emergency care cage and transporter	Multi-functional carrier. Emergency care cage	Transporter only	Yes for smaller birds
no	no	No	Yes	Small model only	No
Reasonable	Inexpensive	Reasonable	Moderate	Expensive	Moderately
5/5	4/5 perch can be adapted	Perch can be screwed in through side panel. Dishes hung on wire.	Feeding dishes integrated - adaptable perch	5/5 dishes , perch and anti-slip carpet included	5/5 perch and dishes included
Light weight	Light weight	Light to moderate with Handle	Light to moderate with Handle & Shoulder strap	Moderate to heavy Shoulder strap	5 lbs
3/5 must remove bird	3/5 must remove bird	3/5 can be disassembled to clean	4/5 removeable without bird escaping.Top opening easy to clean	3/4 - must remove bird to clean. Plexi glass easy to clean	3/5
Not larger than cockatiel	Not larger than cockatiel	large cockatoos bite through them	Large parrots	Not dangerous	Not for large species
No	Must replace	Yes	Yes	No	
4/5	4/5	5/5	5/5	1/5	5/5
O/5 Cage cover available	5/5	4/5 covers available	5/5	5/5	5/5
	Good visability	Can be disassembled for storage	Locking device can be used. Designed for safety seat belt in cars	Rust free 360° vision Can scratch	Small day cage when removed from back pack

The Nursery

BRINGING UP BABY

Classic film buffs and insomniacs alike may be disappointed to learn that NO, this article is not a review of the famous 1938 screwball comedy starring Katherine Hepburn and Cary Grant. "Baby" in this case refers to each of the abundantly weaned and well socialized parrot chicks I raise for sale in my aviary. I strongly feel that we, as breeders, have a responsibility to provide our clients with the best, most up to date "Bringing Up Baby" information available. With this in view, I make it a point to arm each of my clients with an actual baby care kit. It is my sincere hope that in thoroughly preparing the client, their new baby will more smoothly integrate into its adoptive home and happily remain there for many years to come. The "little extra's" I provide are a reflection of my own commitment to being the best aviculturist possible and help to ensure a positive rapport with my clients. I would recommend a similar approach to chick sales to any breeder or pet store. The all-round positive results I have seen truly speak for themselves.

And now, on to the specifics of my "Bringing Up Baby" Care Kit. Contents are broken down into various subject areas including: Baby Keepsakes; Baby Basics; Veterinary/First Aid; Feeding/Nutrition; Cage Accessories; and Species-specific Information. In the event the client lives out of town this information package is mailed well in advance of the chick's actual shipping date. This way, any concerns or questions remaining unresolved can be dealt with prior to baby's arrival. Items are housed together in a sturdy zippered plastic binder allowing plenty of room for more of the same.

BABY KEEPSAKES

• Baby pictures are emailed to clients. This way, as the chick grows, the new owner can feel a part of the whole process even if they live hundreds or even thousands of miles away.
• Recently, we have been able to include a DVD featuring a slide show of their chick growing up. The show is set to music, and has been most enthusiastically received.

BABY BASICS

• The free downloadable Echo's Haven e-booklet "Bringing Baby Home"
<http://www.toolady.com/>.

• The AAV pamphlet entitled "Enriching Your Birds Life".
• An article reprinted from "The Original Flying Machine" (May, 2001 issue) Also: <www.birdsafe.com/bird_essentials.htm.>

VETERINARY/FIRST AID

• DNA sexing Certificate
• Veterinary Health Exam results. Each baby is guaranteed to be free of the following:
• Polyoma virus (vaccination certificate included). This item doubles as "Official Hatch Certificate".
2. Pacheco's disease
3. Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (PBFD)
4. Chlamydia
• A laminated Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) pamphlet entitled "First Aid for Companion Birds". I suggest to my clients that they tape this onto a kitchen cupboard door in case of emergency).
• A second AAV pamphlet, this one entitled "Injury Prevention and Emergency Care".
• The free downloadable Echo's Haven e-booklet "Guide to Parrot First Aid" <www.toolady.com/>.
• A list of avian veterinarians practicing in southern Ontario. For clients not living in the area, I explain how to obtain this information.

FEEDING/NUTRITION

• The AAV pamphlet entitled "Feeding Birds".
• A detailed list of all the foods that the baby has become familiar with including method of preparation.
• Hot meal suggestions, nutritious treat ideas.
• A chart highlighting foods particularly rich in all-important vitamin A content.
• Manufacturer sample bags of the pellets the babies have become accustomed to (this is to help assure the client will be sold the correct product).

Continued from Page 35

CAGE ACCESSORIES

• A chart detailing bird safe tree species (woods) that perches can be made from. See: <www.plannedparrothood.com/plants.html>
• An article outlining how to choose safe toys for your birds. See: < www.birdsafe.com/toys.htm>

SPECIES SPECIFIC

Because I specialize in a limited number of Poicephalus family birds (specifically, Senegal, Meyers, Red-bellied and Brown-headed Parrots), I have had abundant opportunity to learn the characteristics of these species extremely well. In fact, I can't tell you the number of clients that come to me for precisely this reason. I therefore include in my Care Kit several articles from various sources concerning the species of parrot they have chosen.

Last, but very definitely not least, I provide each client with a copy either of “Guide to the Senegal Parrot and it's Family”2 or “Guide to the Well Behaved Parrot”3. As you can see for yourselves, my adoptive “parrot parents” become formidably armed indeed. Realistically, though, I realize that my clients will still face challenges in “Bringing Up Baby”, and it is for this reason that I make myself available indefinitely to all my clients via e-mail and telephone. I am truly “tickled pink” to hear about how the little ones are doing, and enjoy staying in touch with their owners. I have always vowed that never, ever will anyone say about TikiBird Aviaries “…the breeder didn't tell me THAT…”. And they haven't!

Susan Berezuk
TikiBird Aviaries

Footnotes

1. Association of Avian Veterinarians. Boca Raton, Florida, USA.
2. Athan, Mattie S. “Guide to the Senegal Parrot and its Family.” Hauppage, NY: Barrons, 1998.
3. Athan, Mattie S. “Guide to the Well-Behaved Parrot.” Hauppage, NY: Barrons, 1999.

BREEDER AVICULTURE

A Breeder's Story

Photos and inspiration for text by:
Manon Martin Oisellerie Lolaflo

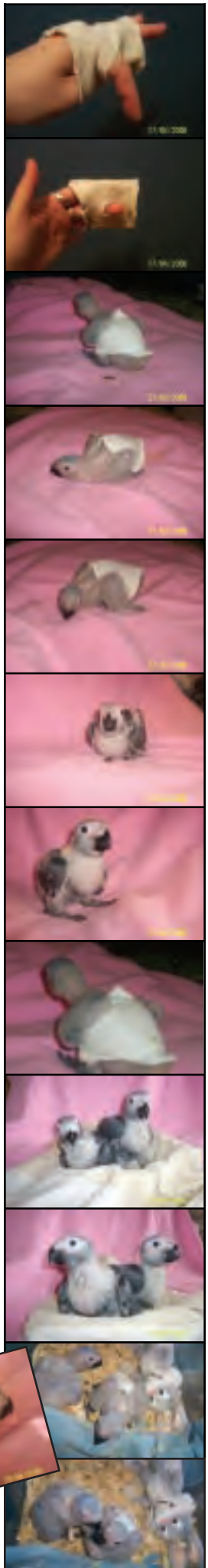
By: Josee Bermingham

Here is an innovative simple non invasive technique that was spontaneously designed to correct the splayed leg of a young African Grey chick. This young intuitive breeder contacted me one evening for advice concerning the chicks she had just pulled from the nest. Solidarity amongst breeders in my region, has over the years created a web ring of emergency assistance. We can now easily send digital photographs via internet of conditions that need emergency care, and various breeders and experienced avian specialists can each give their recommendations despite the distance, time or day.

Splayed legs need immediate attention as the chicks will grow tremendously at this age and the condition will deteriorate rapidly if the proper leg braces (vet wrap-complete leg bandages or attached at the hock, donut shaped towel comforter or foam leg inserts, anti slippery substrate or mattress are not attempted.) I have used many of these different techniques in the past years , mostly when chicks were raised crushed by their older siblings , on slippery substrate free nest bottoms and so I responded to the Manon by sending her photos of different alternatives to remedy to her chick's condition. Remarkably she intuitively designed a different leg brace using a sock , and the results were quite impressive.

These chicks hatched the 26 & 27th of February 2006. They were pulled from the nest the 23rd of March. The 24th the breeders attempted to make a leg brace with a nylon stocking. The material was too slippery. Determined to find an immediate solution to reposition the leg while inflicting the least trauma to the chick , she then used a cotton sock and made a hole in it, positioned it over the back, pulling in the splayed leg tucked close to the body allowing the other leg to remain in it's natural position. Within the next 2 days a major improvement had already taken place. By the 5th day the splayed leg was corrected. We've inserted photos below to demonstrate this therapeutic alternative to correct splayed legs.

Note: a veterinarian evaluation of all chicks displaying this condition is recommended.



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DO-IT-YOURSELF
BIRD SHOWER PERCH

Robert Papineau
Perroquets en Folie
www.perroquetsenfolie.com

We certainly understand the need of our avian companions to shower regularly, although at times, depending on our cage set-up, we are reluctant to spray them due to the mess the mist will make in and around the cage. Here is a simple Do-It-Yourself project that will require less than 1 hour to assemble and will provide countless showering activity time for your feathered friends. Custom build your own bird shower perch to install within your bath tub or shower.

Assembly time:
20 min.

Tools required:
metal cutting saw and measuring tape

Required materials
1: PCV adhesive jar
1: 8 ft PVC pipe (3/4 " width)
1: 4 " T shape PCV pipe (3/4" width)
1: roll of vet wrap or padded mattress anti-slip covering for perch

Approximate cost of materials:
$15:00 can.

Step by step…

1. Pre-cut the 8 ft PVC pipe into:
   • 4 x lengths of 9" (required for the legs)
   • 4 x lengths of 6"
   • 1 x length of 26"
   (for the central pole)
2. Assemble as demonstrated in photos
3. At the Top: assemble 2 pieces of 6 "length of PVC pipe to each end of the "T"
4. Connect the 26" length pipe to the descending end of the "T"
5. At The Base: Assemble the 26" end to an upside down "T", and insert the 2 lengths of 6" to both ends
6. Assemble the 2 remaining PCV "T" pipes using the 9" lengths
7. Glue all the pieces in place using the PCV adhesive
8. Vet wrap or anti slip material can be wrapped around the perching pole to provide additional grip during showering.

What Are These Species

Check page 40 fo see how well you know your Parrots

African Trivia

By: Sylvie Aubin

1- Parrots from Africa are not as noisy as other parrots:

A- Absolutely false, it's quite the opposite; they are the biggest screamers of them all!

B- Partly true and partly false; you have the greys and timnheys that don't have a real scream of their own so to speak (but they can make that ear splitting high pitched whistle though!), and on the other end of the spectrum you have those how-can-such-a-small-bird-make-that-much-noise lovebirds… As for Senegal parrots it can be either one… then there are Jardine and Cape Parrot that are considered to be less noisy then most parrots.

C- Quite true; since there are lots of natural predators for parrots in Africa and the vegetation is not as dense as in Central and South America, African parrots are programmed to be quiet so they can blend in with their environment.

D- This is such a absurd statement! All parrot species are noisy

2- African parrots are not as colourful as their cousins from all other parts of the world.

A- It is true for the same reason aforementioned in question-answer 1 C

B- Although it tends to be true it's not to have a better camouflage but because of their diet; there is not as much colourful fruits and flowers to eat in Africa as in other parts of the world

C- Although it's partly true the reason for the different coloring in parrots is still a bit of mystery…

D- All answers are good.

3- Lovebirds are very aggressive birds and you cannot keep them with any other kind of bird.

A- Please! Look at their size! How can a bird that small be aggressive? It would get beaten by anything a bit bigger.

B- Females tend to be more aggressive then males and are indeed often aggressive even with much bigger birds, dogs and cats! All in all lovebirds are a bit aggressive generally speaking and you have to be careful when mixing them with other species.

C- Females are pretty much subdued but males are very aggressive and could kill birds much bigger then themselves.

4- Even if Fisher Lovebirds are some of the smallest parrot, they are well capable of defending themselves against bigger predators.

A- It's true since they build their nest in cavities so deep that no predators can reach them or their clutch.

B- False: Fishers lovebirds only live in pairs and being so small it is virtually impossible for them to defence themselves against any predator?

C- You bet they can! It is quite a sight to see a large colony of Fishers attacking a much bigger predator and succeeding in chasing it!

D -True: they have the ability to freeze into place and their metabolism slows down so much that predators are fooled into thinking that they are not a live prey and retreat.

5- There is only 1 species of Grey Parrot :

A- False there are 3: the Grey, Congo grey and the Timneh

B- False there are 5: Grey, Congo grey, Kenya grey, Tanzania grey and the Timneh.

C- True: there is only one species, a monotypic genus but 3 different subspecies the Psittacus erithacus erithacus, the Psittacus erithacus princes and the Psittacus erithacus timneh

6 How many species of Senegal parrots are there?

A-9, B-8, C-10, D-1

7- One species on this list does not belong to this group, which one?

A - Black collared lovebird
B - Niam-niam parrot
C - Guaiabero
D - Vasa parrot
E - Yellow-faced parrot
F - Red headed sparrow

3- The Vasa parrot has a curious feature; what is it?

A- It's the only parrot, apart from the cockatiel, that sings.

B- The female becomes bald when she is in reproductive mode & the skin of her head becomes yellow.

C- With the exception of its cousin the Coracopsis nigra and the black Lori it's the only all black parrot.

D- All of the above.

9- African greys are known to sometimes do a very strange and unusual thing; what is it?

A- They cry a tear of an orange pigmentation when stressed or restrained.

B- They grow red feathers on their back when in reproductive mode

C- They lay brown eggs when they are getting old

D- They can swim underwater like a duck

Answers on page 40

Answers for page 38.

What are these Species

1 Blue and Gold Macaw

2 Pacific Parrotlet

3 Green-winged Macaw

4 Moluccan Cockatoo

5 Medium - Sulfur Crested Cockatoo

6 Blue - Headed Pionus

7 Yellow - Fonted Amazon

8 Vasa Parrot

9 Hahn's Macaw

10 Yellow - naped amazon

11 Triton Cockatoo

12 Parrotlet (celestial blue mutation)

Answers for page 39.

African Trivia

1 - B, 2 - C, 3 - B,
4 - C, 5 - C, 6 - A,
7 - C, 8 - D, 9 - A

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Compassionate Ethics

Liberating Wings

Rev. LoraKim Joyner, D.V.M.

Our lives are full of complex situations where we strive to make the best decisions possible. It is hard to deal with competing claims and we often regret that sometimes there are losers. In my life I juggle several ethical dilemmas. I love cats, but the feral cats who abound in our neighborhood hunt the wild birds, and our yard is a wildlife backyard sanctuary. I want to be a good neighbor, but the family next door raises roosters to fight in New Mexico. I want to be compassionate to all species at all times, but sometimes I have to choose one over the other. How do I go about this? How do you go about discerning where the greater good and the lesser harm lies?

I too have pondered and struggled mightily on how to live according to my values, especially when it comes to wild birds in captivity. One time while teaching students and residents in avian medicine, I asked, "How is it that parrot species evolved to have so many of the traits that humans desire in animals - beauty, bright colors, the ability to mimic, sociability, and tactile appreciative. In other words, they talk, look great, transfer their social instincts to humans, and like to be touched." One veterinarian, a resident in zoological medicine raised her hand and said, "Maybe they are just a gift." A gift they are indeed, but these very gifts have endangered their status in the wild and exposed millions to suffering in the pet bird trade as humans clamor for their company and presence in their homes, yards, and zoos. Parrots are a great good to humans, but at what cost to the birds? Do I, who loves parrots, accept the gift of their lives and keep them in my home, or do I refuse the gift?

As I consider my options, I recall my study of ethics that suggests ethical decisions are based on emotion, not on cognition. It seems unfair that complicated puzzles of competing interests cause such anguish in our cognitive processes, when in the end we will decide using gut instinct, intuition, and our hearts. Knowing this doesn't stop me from wanting to make ever more compassionate decisions. I am motivated to seek ways to move my heart and instinct along against the biological programming that pushes us to choose ourselves and kin over those who are different from us, especially other species.

Many people turn to religion and spirituality in search of clues on how to handle ethical decisions. In Taoism they speak of Tao - the Way. Embracing the Tao, universal harmony surrounds us so that the right way flows through you and into your life. Over time by recognizing a benevolent harmony you embody a wisdom that plays out in right relations with all in which you have contact. In Buddhism there is the concept of no-self - others make up every individual. We humans exist because of the sun, plants, water, people who grow, harvest, and transport food, etc. By contemplating this radical concept of interconnection, your compassion grows to include all beings. You make decisions based on those that suffer, and if you help others, you are helping yourself as well.

In Western culture we are perhaps more familiar with Judeo-Christian approaches to ethical decisions, of which there are many. One of my favorites is the ancient Jewish teaching device used by rabbis to intentionally disrupt an audience so as to show human limits - the qal wahomer. In the Christian gospels there is a teaching that includes - Look at the birds of the air and consider the lilies. In this case the qal wahomer shows that plants and birds are simultaneously both higher and lower than are humans. This simply cannot be and the audience, that's us, is supposed to be confused and in search for that within the text that is not contradictory. The only clear subject that is not contradicted is that which is greater than ourselves, our daily concerns, or our myopic, fearful egos. The qal wahomer through consternation leads us to consider that our gifts are not greater than those of others. This allows us to seek and consider the gifts of the world in every moment and in every situation. Complex ethical situations may not have a "right answer" as many parables suggest, but they do call us to face complexity with a sense of gratitude and compassion.

Whatever approach you take in ethical decisions, whether it is monotheistic traditions, Asian religions, earth spirituality, or humanist teachings, they all ask us to consider gifts - in plant, in animal, in bird, and in human. They ask us to live with humility, not to emphasize how great we are and what rights we have over others, but to be astounded in awe with the beauty and uniqueness of other beings. We are called to be curious about the lives of others, of how they live and how they suffer, and find in each and every situation how love and compassion may guide our decisions. This does not mean either that one "should" or "should not" have parrots, but it does suggest that we can, in awareness of the gifts of the many splendored beings, approach decisions with gracious awareness. This in turn will guide us in making choices in the most compassionate method possible.

Compassionate ethics also means that sometimes the greater gift to the captive bird is the gift of death. Due to their wildness, intelligence not suited to unstimulating environments, and the complex veterinary, nutritional, and behavioral challenges we face with parrots in captivity, parrots face tremendous suffering when they become ill or become maladapted to a captive environment. We do not want to let the gift of their lives go, but sometimes we need to for the sake of the bird. We offer them a gift when we end their suffering. For we know that the greatest gift we can offer for the unearned and precious phenomenon known as parrots, is to offer them no less than a full and flourishing life. This we can do with birds in captivity, in the wild, and in death.

Deciding whether to euthanize a bird is one of the most difficult ethical dilemmas we can face.

Deciding whether to euthanize a bird is one of the most difficult ethical dilemmas we can face. Having served as a grief counselor and chaplain in a Veterinary Teaching Hospital I witnessed hundreds of people anguished over the best course to take for their animals. What I learned in that position, and from my many years as an avian veterinarian, is that there are some guidelines that prove helpful. First, ask yourself what the bird would want. I know that there is no way to know if a bird would choose death over suffering, but we can ask ourselves about the personality of the bird. What things does the bird enjoy and is he or she still able to pursue those activities, such as flying, eating, bathing, playing, preening, etc? This question, whose answer is ultimately unknowable, does help us focus on the bird's needs. Then I would ask about the level of suffering - can the bird rest, eat, drink, defecate, and perch easily? If basic bodily functions are impaired, you can be assured that the bird is suffering at some level. Also ask yourself if the care of the bird involves invasive, uncomfortable, stressful, or painful manipulations. Is treatment worse than the illness, or increasing the risk of suffering? Finally, I suggest that it is allowable to bring into the decision the situation of the humans involved - what are the finances of the continued veterinary care and the ability of the humans to care for the bird in the way that is satisfactory to both bird and human? It is not a matter of choosing one species over another, but we do need to understand that compassionate ethics involves weighing competing claims and the high likelihood that a decision will not grant our every desire for all concerned.

It is not easy to be aware of gifts. Feral cats are beautiful although they kill my beloved feathered friends and my neighbor, though he sends his roosters into harm's way, is beautiful as well. And it is a very difficult thing to euthanize a bird that may yet have a chance for life. I really don't know much, but I do know that each time I see a bird I will remember the gifts of people and parrots, and use the abundance in my life to make ever more compassionate decisions.

May your every choice be compassionate and good for the many - a gift to life and to love.

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

READERS' STORIES

Plume of a feather

Laila -The "Special", African Grey Parrot

Being a passionate breeder myself, it is not in my nature to encourage breeders to sell unweaned chicks. However, for years I have dreamt about hand feeding an African Grey chick, since I am fascinated by them and have had a female Grey for 8 years now. As I did not have a pair of breeding Greys, I found a breeder that was selling babies and ,thought, "Better that, I should wean these little ones than someone else. I believed that I possessed the self-confidence, knowledge and respect necessary to raise these babies and prepare them to be companion birds." So I decided to get two 3-week old parrots from the same clutch from a reliable breeder.

Immediately after I acquired the chicks, soon after the first beackful, I realized that there was a problem. The youngest one's head leaned to the right. I initially suspected that this was due a lack in calcium, but after a few days, I understood that it was a malformation and that her neck was deviated. I consulted a knowledgeable avian specialist, and after an X-ray was taken by an avian veterinarian, it was determined that the little Grey had a spinal malformation at the cervical level, probably due to an abnormal positioning in the egg.

Will it survive? Will it grow and become self-sufficient one day?" Even though I questioned myself and had doubts about its state, I did my best to make the little Grey's life easier. At first, feeding was hard, but with time, I developed a special technique for this "physically challenged" bird. Daily monitoring of its weight reassured me that it's growth development was normal and even surpassed its oldest clutch mate.

After discussing it's condition with the breeder, he suggested that I bring it back for a refund. But I was not able to bring this little one back, despite its' handicap. I figured that this little chick came into my life for a reason - my willpower was challenged daily determined to work with her so that she could live a happy life in captivity.

Before it reached the age of two months, my biggest fear was that the Grey was lacking in self-confidence, which is probably typical of a handicapped bird. With softness, patience and perseverance, this precious fledgling became a curious & confident bird. Laila, was determined to be a female by DNA sexing. Fully feathered at 2 months, Laila continued to develop normally, despite her awkward posture. She does all the things that her sister does, two or three days after her: perching, flapping her wings, grasping bars and climbing ladders, etc.

At the age of two and a half months, Laila surpassed her sister in her discoveries and explorations. Granted, there is no real competition between these clutch mates. But because of Laila's handicap, her progress is truly remarkable, and I wonder what will become of her.. She holds her food with one feet and is interested in new foods much earlier than her sister.

Recently, I could see them exercising their wings and muscles in preparation for the day of their big take-off the actual fledging. I was really surprised to see that Laila was the first one to start flying! Laila can fly, perch, play, eat alone and more. She knows how to say "Coucou" and imitates the gnashing of the beak! She has completely impressed me!

She especially has the good fortune of having a nice family looking out for her, a family that will love her even though she is different, and a family that I can trust. They follow her progression with me via photos and video that I post regularly on the internet, and directly on a web cam. The internet has proven to be very useful for the family to learn about her physical state as well as enjoy the progression of her normal growth, despite her handicap.

One morning, I was in the basement and when I came back upstairs, I saw droppings everywhere. I discovered that the babies escaped from their cage via by one of the seed cup doors.. They flew all over in the house, ending their explorations by perching on the cage of my 8-year old grey parrot… "Birds of a feather flock together"

She is now 3 months old and I have no regrets. I am thankful for the opportunity to have this bird in my life and experience something new and out-of-the-ordinary.

To my beautiful little Laila - I wish you a long life, full of the same wonder and joy that you have given me!

Sincerely, Guylaine Tremblay

(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.)

editor@parrotlife.ca

Mailing address: Parrot Life Office, 53 Sunny Side, Deux Montagnes Quebec, Canada J7R 3Y9

An African Grey Rescue Story:

By: Lise Durocher
Translation and editorial notes: Sylvie Aubin

Dear Parrot Life magazine,

I would like to tell you the story of " La Grise". This story has a happy ending and so I thought you might wish to share it with other passionate bird enthusiasts
.
In order for you to better understand how this story started , I added some pictures of her in the cage she was in when we found her. My friend and I were at the restaurant having breakfast, while going out our eyes fell upon a public board posting an ad for a parrot for sale. Undoubtedly, we immediately went to see the bird. It was a female African Grey. She was outside in the cold, the sky was grey and it was windy.

The cage was on the floor of the backyard balcony easily accessible to cats and others predators without any toys and her water was in a rusty tin can

This bird was given to a lady that, obviously, did not want it and she palmed it off to her old parents. These people did their best even though they didn't know the first thing about parrot keeping ; they gave her fresh water and a commercial budgie seeds mix everyday. She was feather picking a bit and they assumed it was only a regular molt. They thought the cage was fine and that the weather was still warm enough to keep her outside, as for the predators they didn't have a clue of the potential danger. Since they didn't want the bird anymore they had placed an ad in order to get rid of the bird before the winter.

It's difficult to stay unmoved before the wretched fate of a living creature. Overwhelmed by empathy (1) since I am already living with one African grey and my friend breeds several species of psittacines , we were naturally, particularly touched and compelled to take action. That's why on that particular day we bought the little grey … She is now staying at my home in quarantine(2) and should all her health tests come back negative she will be going to live at my friend's home and perhaps bond with a male fromher breeding colony. A preliminary health exam revealed her remarkable physical condition , despite the shameful captive condition she was found in. Bright and alert, responsive, healthy weight and general plumage condition , no signs of bumble foot, nasal discharge, respiratory difficulties or nutritional deficiencies.

She is unsure and nervous a times but accepts some petting on the head, she responds to the « up » and « down » commands, mumbles and sings a lot, speaks a few clear words and others that I have yet to understand. At night as soon as it gets dark she goes inside her cage by herself. I cover her cage and when I go near her she press herself against the wire for a last caress before night. All the viral disease screening tests have returned negative and so she will soon be transferred to her new home and join other feathered companions. I feel that she was given a second chance to a good life. I suspect that she had a good start in life and that her misfortune was brief (3), for she is a sweet gentle bird who knew all the basic commands and was in very good health. If only it was possible to help them all one at a time.

She quickly adapted to her new quality of life .She spends her evenings out of her cage on her play gym, demonstrating healthy curiosity, she enjoys showering everyday, we have started a "Pluck no More" treatment in her drinking water and her misting water as well. We've converted her to a formulated diet and she has access at all times to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Notes from Parrot Life

(1) Although you have good intentions, always think twice before rescuing a bird: be sure that you will not put your own bird's health or someone else's bird at risk. Make sound choices with your bird and yourself, quality of life in mind for all.
(2) Any new bird should always be quarantined. A wise and responsible decision.
(3) Not all birds that are waiting for a new home and a second chance were badly treated. Some did have a very good start but due to people's tendency to act on impulse more than on good common sense when selecting a bird, are unfortunately receiving less than adequate care.

How can we halt it

EUROPEAN TRADE IN WILD-CAUGHT BIRDS

As of this writing, the European Union has adopted a temporary ban on the importation of all wild caught birds. With your help we can make this ban a permanent one.
Go to birdsareforwatching.com to sign the petition, purchase bands for you and your friends and voice your concern. You'll be helping to save the lives of the millions of birds trapped every year.

The squawks, shrieks and whistles ring through the air in the forest clearing. The medium-sized birds, all in a flock, take to the air and circle the area, eventually coming to rest in a ring of trees surrounding the glade. A cacophony of noise erupts as the birds, African Grey parrots, begin to feed on the fruit and seeds of Ficus, Heisteria and others.
Some birds descend to the ground to slake their thirst at a water hole. This is when they are in the most danger - when they are most vulnerable. Indeed this day many of them won't take to the air again, for they will have been trapped.

Trapped by poachers.

A net springs out, seemingly from nowhere, and catches many of the Grey parrots drinking from the water hole. The birds flail about hopelessly, some screeching, others eerily silent. One by one they are roughly gathered up and shoved into boxes, where they will stay until they reach their destination, somewhere else in Africa and then on to Europe. Overcrowding, stress and starvation will take approximately half of them before they even get part way there.
This and other processes are used to trap Orange-winged Amazon parrots, Mynah birds, Pekin robins, Senegal parrots and many other species. Some are caught using mist netting (a fine, almost invisible netting strung loosely across known flyways to trap birds), "bait" birds to attract large groups, or nooses trapping unsuspecting feet. The statistics are staggering: more than a million birds are trapped each year, with Europe importing 90% of the global market.
This, along with the loss of their habitat, increases the threat to endangered parrot populations. Bringing in birds from the wild also increases the risk of transmission of disease, either to captive populations or local wild ones. Many dangerous diseases have been brought in from the wild, including Exotic Newcastle Disease, Pacheco's Disease, and others. And lastly, many of these birds die simply from stress, rough handling and poor management during capture and transport. It all makes for a very compelling argument to stop the trade in wild-caught birds.
And stopping it is one of the World Parrot Trust's aims. Along with Defenders for Wildlife, the WPT and some 230 other worldwide animal welfare and conservation groups (the Cousteau Society and the Jane Goodall Institute, to name a few) are persisting with a campaign that has drawn widespread support for this cause.

> The statistics are staggering: more than a million birds are trapped each year, with Europe importing 90% of the global market.

The "Get Banded" campaign and petition has raised money by selling over 20,000 colourful bands with the message "Fly free" and gathering signatures aimed at convincing government officials in the European Union and the US of the seriousness of the problems caused by this trade. A supporting website, birdsareforwatching.com, encourages visitors to the site to sign the petition, which supports the proposal to ban the importation of wild caught birds into the European Union (European Trade Ban), as well as providing up-to-date information on the status of the campaign.

On May 31 of last year World Parrot Day was held in London and various other cities and towns in the UK, with many prominent parrot and zoo people on hand to show birds to the public, conduct interviews with the media and hand-deliver a 33,000-signature petition on the European Trade Ban to 10 Downing Street to Prime Minister Tony Blair. In all a lot of attention was generated by this one event, and the campaign soldiers on. And the happy result is that important work can, and is, being done.
One important project is in Argentina, one of the exporting countries, concerning current trapping practices of the Blue-fronted Amazon, one of the more heavily exploited birds. The study is focussing on the claim that this harvest is sustainable, as well as how well the Argentine government oversees these practices. It has been found that trappers are violating the rules of the management plan by using mist nets and also by trapping and sending mostly adult birds, the legal limit (set by the Argentine government) being 20% adults and 80% juveniles. The study has also shown that this harvest is not sustainable, since so many breeding adults are being taken. This information will be passed on to the Argentine government as well as the US, whom the Argentines have been pressing for five years to open up its doors to the importation of Blue-fronted Amazons, something it has not done since the 1990's with the passing of the Wild Bird Conservation Act.

It is clear that this inhumane and unsustainable trade must end. The efforts of the many concerned wildlife organizations mentioned above appear to be having an effect.

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.

Update from the World Parrot Trust: www.worldparrottrust.org

AS reported by the WPT in the latest PsittaScene magazine, The temporary ban on bird imports to the EU was extended from January through may and has now received approval that it will remain in effect until July 31st 2006.

Cleaning your house the ecological way requires commitment:

Each decision you make towards this goal must be weighed and you must be willing to compromise. For example, start by reducing the number of synthetic chemicals that you use. If you must use any, use the minimum quantity that is recommended for each one of them. Also, read the labels on the chemicals that you use. You will find, for example, that while some liquid fabric softeners make your clothes fluffier they also make them more flammable! In the end, your endeavour to make do with as few chemical cleaners as possible will be worthwhile and will pay off as you will be caring for the environment.

1

Your Eco-cleaning - Bird safe Home Cleaning Starter Kit

- **Vinegar** is an antiseptic that removes grease and mineral deposits.
- **Sodium bicarbonate** is a slightly abrasive mineral with cleansing and bleaching properties. It also deodorises.
- **Borax** is a natural mineral made up of water, oxygen, sodium and boracic acid that is toxic if swallowed. It is a fungicide, an antiseptic and an antibiotic. It also deodorises, disinfects and prevents the formation of mould.
- **Liquid soap made of vegetable oil,** preferably coconut oil (as it is more biodegradable) that can be purchased in natural food stores.
- **A spray bottle. • A shaker. • A squeeze bottle** such as a recycled shampoo bottle.

2

A word of caution must be said about cleaning products that contain crystals of sodium carbonate: avoid them! Sodium carbonate is caustic and quite corrosive. Fortunately it is now quite difficult to find household products that contains any. Make sure you read the labels of all old cleaning products you have at home, such as grease removers. Should you find some that contain sodium carbonate, it is best you bring them to the eco-centre for disposal. Should you have any questions or doubts about cleaners you have at home, inquire at your ecological product store in your neighbourhood.

3

Two Great Cleaning Recipes

Here are two "recipes" I suggest you try for a start. The first one was aired on Radio Canada on September 7, 2005 during a programme called "Indicatif Présent". The second one was published in the English magazine "UTNE" in the 2005 September-October issue.

Bathtub and shower cleaner

5 ml borax
2 ml liquid soap
45 ml vinegar
500 ml boiling water
Pour all the ingredients in a spray bottle to remove soap scum and mineral deposits.
Rinse using vinegar and water. Polish using a soft cloth.

Oven cleaner

5 ml borax
2 ml liquid soap
45 ml vinegar
500 ml boiling water
Pour all the ingredients in a spray bottle to remove soap scum and mineral deposits.
Rinse using vinegar and water.
Polish using a soft cloth.

By: Annik de Brouwer

Tips & Recipes for pesticide-free gardening: ***www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/biblio/carnet.htm***

This is the web site of the **Montreal Botanical Garden**, which is one of the best renowned in the world (make sure to visit it if you travel to Montreal!). On this page click on the button *insects, pest and diseases* and get many tips and recipes for pesticide-free gardening. A must-stop site. **Bonus:** this site is both in English and French. Plus it features beautiful pictures.

Assist Hatching: Techniques & Essentials

A STEP-BY-STEP ASSIST HATCHING INTERVENTION:

By: Josee Bermingham AHT

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1. After 34 hrs of natural piping ,visible piping markings normally progressing on the egg shell, a natural unassisted hatchling was suspected to be on the way in the nursery..

At 12:30 AM: a distressed Orange-winged Amazon chick with a weak chirp could be heard from within the egg shell. A few minutes later no more movement or sound came from the egg.
A mal-positioned exhausted and dehydrated chick in distress was soon to be revealed within the egg shell.

2. After candling the egg for visible blood vessels. Tweezers were delicately used to chip away the shell at the piping mark, immediately revealing the chick's beak and egg tooth.

3. Malpositioning can be observed. The chick must be positioned upright with it's head under the left wing to ensure successful unassisted hatching.

4. A candler is used throughout the hatching process to monitor the blood vessels. A cotton tip humidified with warm water is applied to the dried interior shell membrane to make blood vessels appear. If blood vessels appear red, the egg is returned to the high temp/ humidity Aqua brooder. The egg is monitored every 5-10 minutes using a digital timer. The chipping away of the egg shell is continued as all visible major blood vessels have receded. Note: if the chick is a wet hatch, the membranes can be left to dry.

5. Once the membrane has been rolled back over the chick's nares, rehydration can be done by applying a drop of warm

water, electrolytes, pedialyte or lactated ringers solution to the chick's beak. This will aid the chick in the rest of the hatching process, although caution must be taken not to aspirate the chick with fluid.

5-6. The intervention to reposition the chick upright is delicately done by holding onto the egg or piping tooth with the nail of my index finger, aided by the thumb under the upper beak. The chick is gently pulled out of it's dorsal position and returned to sit inside it's egg. A visual inspection of the interior of the eggs confirms that the egg yolk has been absorbed. The chick is rehydrated and demonstrates more vigor.

6. The chick is returned to theaquabrooder/ hatcher and allowed resting time.

7-9. The chick is rehydrated and closely monitored every 5-10 minutes until he has fully pushed himself out of his shell.

10. (2:45 AM)The interior shell is inspected for remnant blood vessels and possibly the first droppings.

11. A successfully assisted hatchling is inspected for visible egg yolk in his abdomen. A 1% Betadine solution is applied to the navel area. The chick is placed on soft tissue paper in a small cup and returned to the aqua brooder where he will stay for the next 10 days.

12. Monitoring of the chicks droppings and absorption of the yolk in the abdomen will indicate when the first feeding should be offered.

Note: This is a general overview of an assisted hatch that was relatively simple and did not encounter complications such as, bleeding, extreme dehydration, egg yolk mal-absorption or perforation, piping in the small end of shell etc. We highly recommend that all aviculturist read and conserve for future interventions the indispensable book, "Parrot Incubation and Procedures" by Rick Jordon.

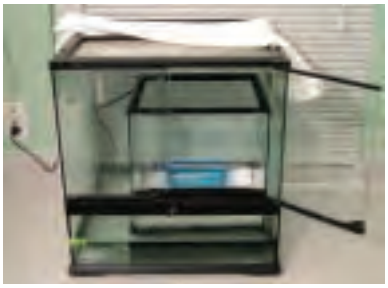
A Methodical Guide To Incubation, hatching, and problem hatches for the Aviculturist

Assist Hatching

INTERVENTION KIT

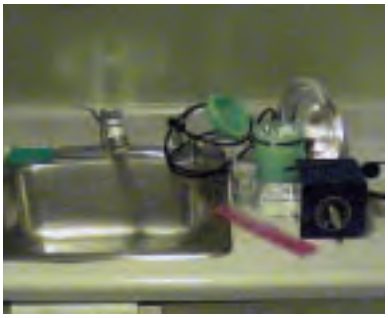
Note: Assist Hatching Intervention Kit should be separate from your Avian First Aid Kit, to minimize contamination.

- ❑ Aqua brooder or high humidity brooder
- ❑ Hatcher
- ❑ Clean towel
- ❑ Heating pad
- ❑ Heating lamp, clamp on lamp or adjustable lamp
- ❑ Lactated ringers solution , sterile water, Gastrolyte or Pedialyte
- ❑ Shot glass
- ❑ Reliable thermometer and hydrometer
- ❑ Oxyfresh Pet Gelee for disinfection of instruments and syringes
- ❑ Q-tips, sterile gauze
- ❑ Needle
- ❑ Eyebrow tweezers
- ❑ Candler or pen light
- ❑ Scale - for egg weight monitoring and chick growth parameters
- ❑ Small plastic bag or cellophane wrapping paper
- ❑ Betadine 1 % solution for umbilicus(navel) of hatchling
- ❑ Timer ideally on neck band (for monitoring, rehydration and feeding of newborn)
- ❑ Ensure or Emeraid for first feeding
- ❑ Tropican - Hand Feeding formula
- ❑ Beneficial bacteria for first feedings
- ❑ Soft Kleenex Tissues
- ❑ Small pipette or syringe
- ❑ Non toxic coagulation agent such as corn starch
- ❑ Emergency phone # or email address of knowledgeable breeder or veterinarian for assistance and guidance during the intervention
- ❑ Digital camera to photograph evolution of development and potentially email images to knowledgeable aviculturist for advice.
- ❑ A stress free environment with controlled temperature room without distractions, ideally near a sink
- ❑ Embryonic development chart



Aqua brooder

Curfew Hatcher



Pen light

Cockatiel Embryonic Development

This colorful poster shows the stages of pre-hatch cockatiel development and tells how to take care of the eggs for a successful hatch of healthy birds.

Publication Number: 21504
Author: A.K. ABBOTT

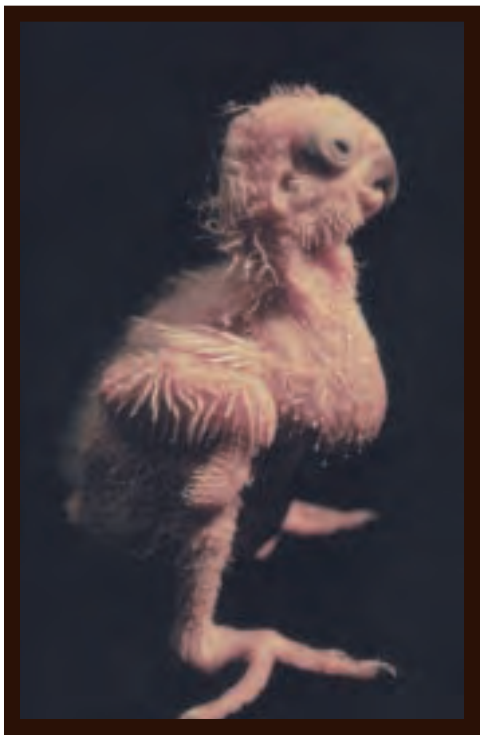
http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu.
Email danrcs@uc.davis.edu

The Nursery

by Josee Bermingham AHT

MANAGING CROP DISORDERS PART 1:

In this issue we will highlight the different causes and distinction between the different conditions seen in psittacine nurseries. This is simply an overview and as in the assisted hatching article featured in this issue, I would strongly recommend any aviculturist or hand feeder to acquire, read and conserve the reference books written on this subject. I have highlighted a few reference book and web link that are undeniably the foundation for responsible nursery management. In the following issue we will proceed with the management, supportive care, holistic and natural treatments of crop disorders and illustrate the safe technique used for crop washing.



In order to properly manage crop disorders, a distinction must be made between the different conditions that can occur.

Slow crop: crop contents empty at a slower rate: there is still motility (a wave movement ◄► across the crop) but these movements are infrequent & slow.

Slow crop can result in:

- ▼weight gain + malnourishment => stunting (retardation of growth)
- ▲ dehydration => crop stasis => death
- ▲ bacterial, yeast & fungal growth => sour crop (if untreated) => death
- ▲ hunger => ▲ aggressivity of the chick
- ▲ feeding response => crop impaction from ingested bedding material and distended crop

Crop impaction: Crop motility is present and sometimes increased, crop initially has good tonus, but foreign bodies such as bedding material has impacted the access from the crop through to the descending oesophagus. It is imperative to palpate for such foreign bodies and remove these as soon as possible , as they can be dislodged further into the ventriculus where it will be virtually impossible to remove them without the use of endoscopic intervention.

Sour crop: fermentation of the crop content. A result of crop impaction, slow crop or crop stasis. Crop contents must be cultured , supportive therapy and treatment is imperative

Crop stasis: Crop does not empty. There is no motility observed. This is the most feared condition as medicating orally will be virtually ineffective. Rehydration by subcutaneous route is imperative. Seek immediate medical advise, as the chick's condition will deteriorate rapidly.

Distended crop: the crop has lost it's tonus as it has been distended with perhaps a too large volume of food. Despite the motility of the crop, the food remains in the

SYMBOL MEANINGS	
▼	- decreases
▲	- increases
=>	- will lead to

A crop support-referred to as a crop bra in the avicultural jargon is definitely recommended for this condition.

The presence of stress bars on fledgling's feathers can be indicative of a past, persistent or reoccurring slow crop.

The commissures should be touched to verify the feeding response of the chick at every feeding. Should a slow crop be detected, immediately evaluate the presence of a feeding response to help in the diagnosis process.

caudal portion of the distended crop and has difficulty emptying into the lower oesophagus.

When is the crop considered slow?

Experience, observation, close monitoring and data collection through daily weight and feeding charts are essential to detect the onset of a slow crop. Most hand feeders will notice a slow crop when they are about to feed the chick, and there is still an unusual amount of food in the crop. Although the actual onset of a slow crop could be detected prior to this by noticing an abnormal drop in the chicks growth curve, an increased feeding response and begging vocalizing (even when the chicks crop is full), an aggressive behaviour onto other clutch mates, dehydration of the chick which can be noticed by the skin's color and texture (absence of plumpness at the wing tips in younger chicks) and a decreased amount of feces in the droppings or the onset of gastrointestinal problem.. All nursery personnel should learn to smell the chicks' mouths (routinely) as a sour crop can be detected by an experienced hand feeder, before it is confirmed by a cultured sample. Take the extra few minutes to write down the feeding schedule, with the exact feeding times and quantity fed as well as consistency of formula , feeding response, empty crop weight, presence of motility etc… This will be valuable information for future diagnosing and treatment efficiency should your chick get sick.

Note:

Aviculturists have different views on whether or not to feed a chick that has not completely emptied their crop content ,whether we should feed through the night , the # of feeding and quantity fed …So many factors need to be considered but we'll leave that for a future article!. In my experience I believe that chicks over 1 week old usually will empty after 3-4 hrs. I believe that chicks should not be allowed to empty completely during the day, If the crop is 15 % empty then it should be refilled, thus favouring optimum weight gain and maintaining crop tonus. Allow them to empty completely overnight. Although I must admit that a 1- 4 day old chick can benefit from additional feeding and rehydration during the night. Not necessarily every hour throughout the night like many of us have done for so many years but nonetheless if you suffer from interrupted sleep like I do then I would not hesitate to give the newborns an extra feeding.

In any circumstance should you deliberately feed over a sour crop, or hope that a sour crop will be digested! Learn to empty the crop safely and with confidence using safe gavage tubes (catheters or flexible tubing) and technique. There is no doubt about it, if you are hand feeding chicks then you should have in your nursery's first aid arsenal a feeding tube for crop emptying and crop washing.

Caution: Do not try to push the food out or have the chick regurgitate while being held upside down!!!! Still, in this day and age I hear aviculturist recommending others to do this when they are faced with a crop disorder . This is part of the reason we have difficulty gaining the respect from the avian medical practitioners! Your aviculture mentors & avian specialists can teach you how.

Should you regrettably have a chick die in your nursery, learn from it, ask to assist the vet to perform the necropsy and practice tube feeding and crop washes, sq fluid administration, IM injection on the deceased chick. Establish a professional relationship with an avian veterinarian that will support & encourage you to perform basic supportive and emergency care in your nursery.

• See chart next page.

An excellent reference web link:
http://www.exoticpetvet.net
Featuring articles by Margaret A. Wissman, D.V.M.

I definitely agree with Margaret A. Wissman's Recommended reading list:

1. Clubb SL, et al. Psittacine Pediatric Medicine in Shubot, RM, Clubb KJ, and Clubb SL (eds.) Psittacine Aviculture: Perspectives, Techniques and Research, ABRC, Loxahatchee, Fla. 1992

2. Flammer K, and Clubb SL. Neonatology in Ritchie BW, Harrison GI, Harrison LR (eds). Avian Medicine: Principles and Application. Lake Worth, FL: Wingers Publishing Inc. 1994, pp 805-840.

WHAT ARE THE main CAUSES OF Crop Disorders

- **Dehydration:** is one of the major causes of crop disorders: Motility▼, feeding response ±
- **Hypothermia:** a shivering chick that sits in a tight ball position, could indicate that it is too cold. Verify temperature fluctuations in the brooder and nursery and excessive ventilation
- **Cold feeding formula** if the optimum temperature of the formula ▼ more than 2° C, the motility could be afected and cause the crop to empty at a slower rate.
- **Bacterial, yeast or fungal infection:** predominantly candida & mega bacteria .bacterial contamination of feeding utensils and syringes is quite common.
- **Viral disease** (the fearful P'S) Polyoma, virus, Pacheco's virus, PBFD virus, PDD etc. Motility▼, feeding response ▼. Chicks suspected should be isolated immediately.
- **Crop impaction** (ex: substrate ingested) usually crop motility and feeding response is ▲. If the material ingested is not removed it could continue it's path down the descending oesophagus: at which point surgery or an endoscopic intervention could be the only chance to remove it. Often the obstructing matter inhibits the progression of the crop contents into the descending oesophagus. If crop washes prove unsuccessful, a slight surgical intervention into the crop could be performed by your avian veterinarian to remove the foreign body. Note: a slow crop will often lead to a crop impaction if the chick is left on bedding.
- Home made hand feeding recipes and low quality commercial hand feeding formulas can also cake up if they absorb too much water.
- **Burnt crop:** whereby the integrity of the crop's epithelial and nerve tissue is damaged thus impairing motility. Motility ▼, feeding response ▼ Remember that aloe vera is an excellent treatment for burnt crops!
- **Crop distension:** often due to overfeeding. Motility ▼, feeding response ±
- **Contaminated feeding mash:** Do not store or reheat.
- **Contaminated water source** Do not use to dilute feeding formula.
- **During & following antibiotic treatment:** beneficial bacterial in the normal gut flora are also destroyed. Probiotics and anti-fungal treatment are usually used in conjunction with antibacterial drug administration in neonates.
- **Hypovitaminosis A and E & other nutritional imbalancement**

In summary poor husbandry techniques and observation skills, inexperienced nursery management and hand feeding techniques or most often to blame for crop disorders although a crop disorder can often be the first apparent symptom of an underlying medical condition, and should never be taken lightly. Supportive therapy is essential although the cause must be diagnosed and treated.

Parrots in shakespear

Illegal Parrots in Miami

Bird Brained

By: Jessica Speart from Avon twilight

This book is a real eye opener about exotic animal's illegal trade and the people involved. You will learn some tricks of the trade and be appalled at how little an animal's life is worth to some… Although the novel is a fiction, factual events inspire the author and once again her famous character Rachel Porter, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife agent, works in Miami investigating the immoral and corrupt !

Although the main focus in this novel is on parrots ; specifically the Cuban Amazon and Hyacinth macaw. In every book you will learn the sad and shocking stories of various environmental problems & illegal trade: From monkeys to secret uranium toxic site, caviar, alligator, tortoise and even women slavery!
Like me your stomach will probably do a backside flip for those Hyacinth fertile eggs that are flush in the toilet!

The author's portrays of these feathered creatures convey a sense of reality and truth. When Rachel is left with a cockatoo to care for, the bird's antic sounds quite realistic. The only detail that made me squint was his physical description: totally white except for it's magnificent pink crest… Pink crest and an all white plumage, is this a new mutation?

Jessica Speart, the author, is an investigative journalist whose focus is on wildlife law enforcement, endangered species issues, and the environment. Speart created her sleuth, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agent Rachel Porter, after years of investigating wildlife and drug trafficking crimes for publications such as the New York Sunday Times Magazine, Omni, Travel & Leisure, Audubon, National Wildlife, Mother Jones, Wildlife Conservation, Earth Journal and Animals Magazine, among others.

Her heroine, Rachel Porter is funny, stubborn, snarling and outspoken yet her devotion to her work is exemplary.

These novels are not "Agatha Christie" type mysteries, but the intrigues are none the less complex. Plus the writing's light, fun and bold. Rachel does grow on you after a book or two as do the many characters that evolve around her. Bird Brained is the third novel in a series of nine all of which I recommend.

Sylvie Aubin

Except from the novel Bird Brained

The raucous screech of a parrot filled the air, informing me that something new had been added to Bambi's menagerie.
"When did you get a bird Bambi?"

"That's another thing Willy unloaded on me," she snorted. Bambi pointed in to the kitchen.
A parrot paced methodically back and forth on the perch in it's cage. The bird was predominantly green, with rose-red feathers covering its cheeks and throat. I heard a sharp intake of breath and realized it was my own. Sitting in Bambi's kitchen was a highly prized Cuban Amazon.

"Willy tried to convince me this thing is worth a coupla months' alimony. Can you believe it?" She shook her head in disgust…

Dual Environment Isolated Breeding Enclosures

HARI®
HAGEN AVICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Hagen Avicultural Research Institute recently remodeled its macaw breeding installations.
Here is an overview of the factors that influenced the conceptual design and construction .

Factors which influenced the conceptual design of the Dual environment isolated breeding enclosures:

- Isolated breeding rooms to prevent disease propagation within the colony. Independent drainage and ventilation for each enclosure.
- Increased intimacy for breeding pairs, thus potentially increasing reproduction success for macaws.
- Minimize breeding pair disturbance. The interior design decreases disturbance from caregivers during feeding, maintenance and pair observation including other breeding pairs (visual and sound barrier).
- Energy and maintenance efficiency to provide favorable environmental conditions.
- Eliminates the need to capture individuals for transfer to and from winter/summer installations.
- Sheltered nests from disease vectors such as mosquito for West Nile virus and vermin for a multitude of pathogens carried through their feces.
- Sheltering during storms, cold temperatures and threatening surveying birds of prey.
- Outdoor enclosure access easily closed; facilitating emergency termination of access to outdoor flights, eg. storm or migrating bird season (potential risk for influenza).
- Safe, fire-resistant materials and water sprinkling systems increase protection of indoor colony in case of fire in the facility.
- Immediate temporary or long term transformation of enclosure into isolation ward.
- Physiologically beneficial to offer birds the independence to chose either indoor or outdoor environment.
- Selection of construction materials were made based on their resistance, waterproof, sanitary, non-porous, indestructible and sound-proof properties.

Facility before construction of the individual isolated breeding rooms with connected outdoor flights.

Overview of the design properties

Main corridor with ventilation system force clean air to enter the individual rooms.

Each room receives fresh air flow from the corridor, thus eliminating contamination from adjacent isolated breeding rooms.

There are two heating systems that thermo-regulate the incoming air from outside the facility during the winter season. This heated fresh air then enters the breeding rooms naturally via positive air flow ventilation. Heating the air in the corridor directly heats the cement blocks that conduct the heat to the indoor enclosures. The same advantageous thermo-regulating properties are effective in the hot summer months, where the cement blocks aid to maintain the environment cool. The rooms are usually maintained at 18 ºC in the winter months, and vary up to 23º C in the summer months.

access corridor with automatic drinking water system

The construction materials

They were selected for their resistance, waterproof, sanitary, non-porous, indestructible and sound-proof properties. All materials, metal doors, cement blocks and ceramics are “pressure-water resistant”. Several layers of hydro-sealant paint were applied to the concrete block walls to modify their porous surface. A polymer was added to the grout used in the ceramic floor to increase its resistance properties.

Monitoring window

Each ***enclosures access door*** is equipped with a one-way window to allow visual monitoring of the pairs with minimal disturbance.

The port hole allowing passage to and from the outdoor flight (visible in the back, camouflaged by branches) does not allow for air to enter, due to the positive air flow within the indoor enclosure.

The bowl feeding system integrated within each door is mounted on a stainless steel fixture, allowing caregivers to easily access the feeding dishes without

Rotating feeding station

disturbing the breeding pairs, by simply rotating the access feeding door incorporated within the main breeding room door. This ad libitum system is offered to our macaws .We offer one bowl of Tropican biscuits and fresh water, and occasionally the third bowl is used to offer Tropimix. All food offered to the pairs is strictly in the indoor enclosure. This was purposely designed to limit the attraction of predators, vermin and wild birds near our outdoor connecting flights and to decrease the risk of disease propagation from wild birds and rodent feces, predator attacks, and stress on our breeding colony.

Perch anchorage fixtures

Two anchorage fixtures are mounted onto the concrete block wall, facilitating the positioning and stability of the natural wood branches that must be frequently replaced. These dual fixtures are positioned side-by-side, to allow two perches to be securely fixed close to one another, facilitating positioning for successful mating. The perches are positioned as high as possible within the room, as preferred by the mating pairs.

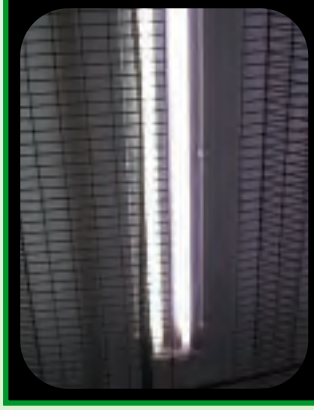
Wire back panel

The back wall of the interior breeding room is armed with a 12 or 14-gage wire panel, surrounding the access tunnel to the outdoor enclosure. This allows the bird to exercise its natural ability to climb, as observed on the clay licks in the wild. The wire panel also facilitates the descent to the bottom of the enclosure to retrieve dropped objects.

Intricacies in the construction design of the existing facility influenced specific parameters of the enclosures. The exterior shell of the facility is framed by a wooden structure made out of 2' x 8's, every 16 inches. A second 2'x 8' structured frame wall was added inside for additional support. These two support walls were interspaced by only a few inches, thus allowing us only this limited possibility to insert a passage porthole without damaging the structural support of the facility.

An 8 inch chimney pipe was physically altered (compressed) to the dimensions of 6"x 9" for a length of 16" to be used as the entry porthole for the enclosures. Initially, prior to the final design plans of these enclosures, we attempted to install the porthole with two suspended cages on either side, as a test trial to see whether or not the largest macaw species would be able to cross over with ease. The macaws confirmed that the porthole size was adequate, so we undertook the completion of the breeding enclosures.

Fluorescent light fixture



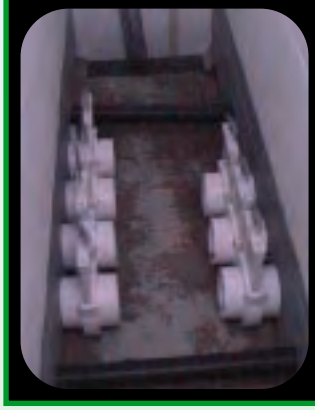
Similarly, a wire panel was installed on the ceiling to facilitate displacement (hanging upside-down) favored by macaws. This also protects the fluorescent ballasts incorporating two full spectrum lighting fluorescents (Hagen Life Glo's, 48") installed in each interior breeding enclosure. The lights are controlled by a timer in the electrical room. An access wire door is integrated within the panel to allow for repair and replacements of fluorescents.

Ceramic floor

The ceramic covered floor was designed with a slope and large drainage port, facilitating easy maintenance and optimum sanitizing potential. The slope prevents accumulation of water when the automatic sprinkler devices are used. This prevents moisture from thriving. Algaecide is used once weekly to flush out the drainage system. Designed within the drainage port is a removable grill that accumulated debris such as feathers and wood, that must be manually removed and prevented from entering the drainage evacuation pipes. The drainage evacuation pipes from each breeding enclosure are separate from each other. Furthermore, each drainage pipe is equipped with a closing valve to prevent the bacterial and viral contamination of the air from an adjacent enclosure that could potentially enter via this drainage system.

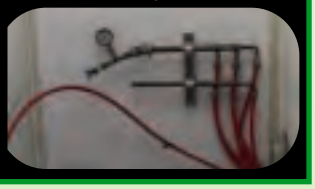
The valves, Valtera 4", were selectively chosen to guarantee quick-release and reliable sealant properties. The evacuation of each drain is made by opening the valve and allowing the flow to follow the slope and empty at the back into the old drainage

Drainage port



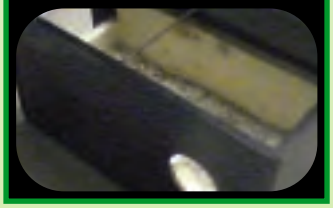
Indoor breeding quarters

Water heating sub floor and sprinkler system for each breeding room



Automatic drinking water nipple

Refurnished metal nest box



Connecting outdoor flight

system leading into the septic tank. This existing drainage system was previously used while the birds were housed in individual flights in this main room.

A metal nest-box is mounted on a fixed frame at the highest position in the indoor enclosure. This offers maximum privacy between each breeding pair near the nest area and provides additional security for the breeding pair and chicks. The nesting site is protected from harsh and extreme temperatures and winds, predators, vermin, mosquitoes and noise. The breeding pairs are also sheltered from aggressive, jealous, intimidating individuals within the colony.

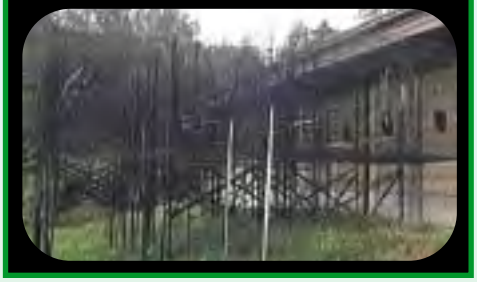
The interior of the metal nest is tightly fitted with pieces of 2"x 10" Spruce-wood. Metal nest boxes are preferred as they are reusable and easily cleaned and disinfected. Installing a wooded lining makes the artificial nest more natural and encourages the pairs to mark their territory and chew the wood into comfortable bedding. This prevents the chicks from laying on a slippery metal surface, which often contributes to splayed legs.

HARI is now researching and experimenting with the use of Hemp shavings for bedding substrate, an alternative to cedar shavings. The macaw pairs quickly adopt their nest box and will usually grind out the doughnut shape crevice needed to comfortably brood the eggs.

The connecting outdoor flight is the interaction and socialization playground. The flights are furnished with various natural perches, branches and a few toys. Food is never offered outdoors to keep predators and rodents away.

The flight dimensions are approximately 5'x 15' long, providing some space for our breeding pairs to exercise. Macaws enjoy the natural rain and, on a rainy day, will often spend the whole day in the outdoor flight. The roof of the facility overlaps slightly over the flights providing shade and a refuge from the rain, as macaws do not like to be exposed to excessive direct heat and sunrays. The flights are built as high as possible, connecting to the roof of the facility. The slope in the terrain is favorable, as it prevents the birds from having access to the ground, preventing, once again, their exposure to pathogens found in soiled earth. This

Outdoor connecting flights



elevation seems to provide our birds with a sense of higher perching security that is beneficial for their well-being and mating success. The flight area is completely fenced in and our dogs are free to roam within the area to guard our colony, mainly from raccoons. Our birds can benefit from the natural sunrays, fresh air and social flock interaction, as they wish.

For the winter season preparations, (around Oct 31st) these portholes are closed off with a dryer energy saver adaptor from the outside and a piece of wire patch from the inside. The positive air pressure flow expulsing the air outwards can be witnessed via the continuous movements of the escape flaps.

Since the construction of these new breeding quarters and connecting outdoor flights, HARI has recorded a higher breeding success within the macaw colony.

We attempted to house some cockatoo pairs in these same enclosures without the success observed with the macaws. They were most fearful to exit the porthole and did not adopt the breeding quarters with the same enthusiasm.

A few adaptations to our design will be made shortly, as is usually the case with new flight designs. We will add a fixed anchorage to adapt a Pedi-Perch inside all our enclosures. This will allow for self-grooming of the nails and beak conditioning of our pairs, and therefore minimize the need to physically restrain them for grooming.

Additional anchorage will be added to the concrete below the next boxes to fix small climbing feet rests. This will, in turn, facilitate nest box inspection, as this presently requires acrobatic skills from our care takers.

Until next time,
Benoit Guilbeault, Facility Manager
Hagen Avicultural Research Institute

Technical file:

WISE CHOICE IN LIGHTING

By Roch Lefebvre, Lighting Expert in Québec (Canada) For commercial, institutional and industrial uses. Companion of 2 small parrots for the past 10 years.

Definition of Terms Used in Lighting Technology

Color Rendering
Expression for the effect that the light has on the color appearance of objects.

Color Rendering Index (CRI) of a light source. A scale from 0-100 that describes how natural the color of objects will appear as compared to a standard light source (100 CRI). The standard light sources are Incandescent/Halogen bulbs (100 CRI) for warm sources and Natural Daylight (100 CRI) for cool sources.

Color Temperature A term used to describe the "whiteness" of light. It is the temperature of a piece of metal (or black body) that emits the same color light as the compared light source. Unit Kelvin, K.

Foot-candle (FC)
The amount of lumens falling on an area measured in square feet. One lumen falling on one square foot is equal to one foot-candle.

Full Spectrum Lighting
There is no official definition of the term "full spectrum" but most agree that it is a source that has a cool temperature and a high color rendering that mimics natural daylight.

Lumen
The unit of measure for the total amount of light from a light source, regardless of direction. Unit lumen, L.

Watt (W)
The unit for measuring power. W= V x A

Ultraviolet (UV)
Radiation Radiant energy in the range of about 100-380 nanometers (nm). For practical applications, the UV band is broken down further as follows:

Ozone - producing 180-220 nm
Bactericidal (germicidal) 220-300 nm
Erythermal (skin reddening) 280-320 nm
"Black" Light 320-400 nm

When the time comes to set up new lighting, deciding on which type to use is not always obvious. Should I choose a bulb, a fluorescent, a halogen? What about the amount of watts? Do I need a reflector? So many questions…

I am not a bird specialist but my years of experience working in the field of lighting have allowed me to shed some light (no pun intended) on the practical side of lighting. After working for 20 years in the field, I am now a specialist in the design of lighting systems for commercial, institutional and industrial everyday applications. I am therefore in a position to suggest interesting choices in terms of lighting products available on the market, at the best quality possible.

The Effect of Lighting

Many studies conducted by experts working with animals or in hospitals have shown some interesting facts regarding the effect of lighting. For example, in the medical field, for the treatment of Alzheimer disease, it is possible to help patients keep a regular schedule by simulating a sunrise. Patients are brought to a room where a very high intensity of light is produced (1,000 to 1,500 foot-candles) so that their brains will register: "Oh! I see light! It must be morning then!" This way the body is fooled into thinking that the day is just starting and it allows people to live according to a more normal schedule.

Lighting sells. Proper lighting, for example in a fast food restaurant, will produce an intense light so that people will eat rapidly and leave to make room for other customers. A four star restaurant will use a soft and subdued lighting so that people will take their time to enjoy the food and stay for a drink after their meal, creating a comfort level similar to what is found at home.

Proper lighting increases production. Take the example of laying hens. A certain light intensity will stimulate the hens to lay more eggs. On the other hand, a low intensity light will help calm down chickens raised for their meat so that they gain weight more rapidly by exercising less.

Reproducing Natural Light

Nowadays, there are many ways to create lighting according to everyone's needs. Lighting manufacturers can make artificial light that reproduces sunlight as closely as possible.

In order to create a similar lighting to what a parrot might find in its natural environment, we try to reproduce the sunlight that not only gives out the colors red, orange and yellow, but also green, blue and purple, which are often non-existent in the light spectrum of commercial fluorescent lamps.

Kelvin (K) is the unit used to measure the color temperature produced by a lamp. By using lamps with 5,000 Kelvin or more, it is possible to allow a bird to detect, according to its sight, part of the color normally missing from conventional lighting.

The ability of a light source to reproduce colors on objects is called the "Color Rendering Index" (CRI). Based on a scale from 0 to 100, the higher the number, the more colors can be seen clearly. The CRI is critical when we want to reproduce a light that is as natural as possible. A CRI which is too low will produce a generally uncomfortable lighting while a high CRI allows a better definition of the lighted space and as such, becomes even more comfortable. It allows us to feel better and therefore, become more productive.

We now know that the ability that birds have to detect colors is different from our own. **It seems that human beings can detect 3 main colors while birds detect 4, including UVA rays.** In this case, a CRI that is high and well-adapted is of a major importance. The chosen lighting must also allow ultraviolets (UV) to pass through for the well-being of the birds. Additionally, we have learned that some types of lights block UV rays.

There are different types of fluorescent lamps

Compact fluorescent, "threaded" (120 volts)	Compact fluorescent, "threaded" (120 volts)	"Linear" fluorescent
Existing light --- Not for use with a dimmer	Existing light - Do not use since it cuts UV from the lamp --- Not for use with a dimmer	Requires lights with ballast --- Can be used with a dimmer, with special ballast

Suspended or extra fixture where a threaded compact fluorescent lamp can be used

Choice of Lights

Note that all fluorescent lamps produce UVA and UVB rays within a safe range. UVA can be reduced in intensity according to the use of the lamp. Changing the light annually will help maintain the maximum level of UV required for breeding birds. On the other hand, replacing the light every 18 to 24 months for our pet birds will be greatly appreciated.

"Threaded compact fluorescent" bulbs will produce the proper light for our pets, at a low cost, as long as you can find a bulb with 5,000 Kelvin or more. This type of bulb can be installed in existing lighting fixtures. This means that you can simply screw them in to replace the usual bulbs. We are referring to the "Tornado" type shown on the table above. This alternative would be the most cost effective way.

Do not use the type of bulb that looks like a cartridge since it prevents UV from escaping from the lamp.

"Linear" fluorescent lamps require a lighting fixture equipped with a ballast. Thus, the costs are higher. Current government standards are strict as to the efficiency of available sources on the market. An electronic ballast will provide good energy savings and offers a longer-lasting lamp.

Types of Lighting Fixtures

In the case of lighting specifically for birds, I recommend the type of lamp that uses a **linear fluorescent.** It requires a specific lighting fixture that can be installed in different ways. Here are two:

I recommend the use of a fixture with a **wire guard** to ensure that our parrot friends do not have access to the lamps or other electrical components. A fixture with a lens would be perfectly safe but should not be used since the **lens blocks most of the ultraviolets (UV)** which are beneficial in the type of lighting that we are trying to achieve. Please note that to feel the benefits of UV rays, the source has to be visible, which means that the parrot must be able to see the lamp and that it should not be covered.

In the case of **"threaded compact fluorescent"** lamps, they can simply be used in our existing fixture to replace the usual bulbs. You can also install fixtures such as these top right.

Fluorescent Lamps

The table below shows how to choose a lamp according to the information provided by the number found on a linear lamp (in relation to the number written on your lamp). Each number or letter means something. For example, "F" means "fluorescent lamp", "32" means "32 watt capacity". Thus, a lamp indicating F32 would be a 32 watt fluorescent which is automatically 48" long. F17 would indicate a 17 watt fluorescent which automatically measures 24".

F 32 T8 TL 8 50
| | | | | | 50 = 5000 Kelvin
| | | | | Color Rendering Index (CRI)
8 = 80% 9 = 90%+
| | | | Linear tube
| | | Dimension of the lamp 8 = 8x 1/8"
thus 1" diameter
| | 32 watt capacity = 48", 17 watt
capacity = 24"
| Fluorescent lamp

At present, lamps marked T8 and T10 meet the current standards on the market. They represent the best choice.

Here are some choices for linear lamps, made by known manufacturers and easily available from electrical distributors around the world and pet supply retailers.

Product	Kelvin	Color Rendering Index	Hours	Cost
Vita-lite	5500	91%	28 000 hours	$$$$
F32T8/TL950 Philips	5000	98%	20000 hours	$$$
FO32/850XP/ ECO Osram	5000	80%+	18000 hours	$$
F32T8/SPX50/ECO GE	5000	86%	20000 hours	$$
Glo Life-Glo- 48"- 40 Watt (Rolf C. Hagen Inc.)	6700	88%	20000 hours	$$

Technical file cont.:

KELVIN VERSUS COLOR RENDERING INDEX (CRI)

It is important to note here that a good choice in a lamp lies with a **high Kelvin, but it must be combined with the highest Color Rendering Index (CRI) possible.** It is a must to combine both.

Remember that to reproduce sunlight, we need 5,000 Kelvin or more. It is possible to find lamps on the market with higher Kelvin such as for example, a light previously called Daylight with 6,500 K and with a CRI normally between 60 and 75% (less acceptable) which will create a blue effect instead of white. A low CRI is not adequate to reproduce a comfortable natural light. Lamps available on the market with the proper CRI are those that have between 5,000 K and 5,500 K. Therefore, if you find lamps with a higher Kelvin rating than 5,500 K, you must make sure that the CRI is high enough.

Unless the information regarding the Kelvin and the Color Rendering Index is listed on the lamps then our choice would be left to chance. A lamp that gives out a purple light or too much blue can indicate that the Color Rendering Index is not satisfactory.

To my knowledge and until now, most fluorescent lamps found in pet shops had been developed to meet the needs of aquariums or reptiles and are usually low in CRI. Therefore, a parrot with bright yellow feathers such as the sun parakeet would loose the nice yellow coloration under a light with too much blue. This could result in the bird looking green.

The human brain can always compensate in the presence of an uncomfortable color. But the environment is still uncomfortable. Thus, CRI and K (Kelvin) go together.

Good companionship with your feathered sweethearts in a sunny environment!

THREADED COMPACT FLUORESCENTS

You can notice here that these lamps offer a CRI of 82% and not the ideal 90%. There could be others on the market. It is therefore important to read the labels.

The number of watts chosen really will depend on the intensity level required. To replace your 60 watt bulb, you need to choose a threaded compact fluorescent lamp of 15 watts.

Which Intensity and for How Long?

Choice of threaded lamps to transform existing fixtures into compact fluorescents:

Lamp	Watts	Remplaces an incandescent of	Kelvin	Color Rendering
CF15/50K/Spiral/E26/STD Standard product	15	60 watts	5000	82%
CF20/50K/Spiral/E26/STD Standard Product	20	75 watts	5000	82%
CF23/50K/Spiral/E26/STD Standard Product	23	100 watts	5000	82%
CF26/50K/Spiral/E26/STD Standard Product	26	125 watts	5000	82%
Glo Life-Glo (Rolf C. Hagen Inc.)	15	75 watts	6500	80%

People often ask me: “How many watts do I need to light my room?” So let's start at the beginning.

In human beings, our metabolism reacts not only to color temperature but also to the intensity. Simply said: more light = more activity; less light = less activity. We are more productive under high intensity lighting.

A fluorescent lamp has this particular feature: the longer a lamp is, the more power is being produced. The unit used in lighting to measure **the power of a light is called “footcandle”.** It indicates the results or the amount of light produced. This result mostly relies on the power used (in watts) and the length of the tube. This measure unit is very complex because it also depends on the room being lighted, the size of the room and many other aspects. Simply said, you only need to deal with the amount of watts and the length of the fluorescent tube.

If you wanted the lighting required to look like a clear mid-afternoon day in July, the natural sunlight would be around 2,000 footcandles (measure unit). It is not recommended to try reproducing this level inside a room because the lighted environment with artificial light is much more aggressive than that of the sun. If you compare a commercial office building, the average footcandles would be around 50 while it would be around 80 to 100 footcandles in a shopping centre or a store.

To mention an example relating to the birds: if we look at the light produced by a fixture equipped with a reflector, 2 tubes of 48” (32 watt T8), and located at about 4 feet from the bird cage, we could get about 60 footcandles which would light a 7 to 8 ft diameter around the fixture.

The needs in terms of lighting vary according to the intended use. A breeder may choose the type of lighting with a higher intensity to provide better conditions required for breeding. But the owner of a pet parrot may choose a lower intensity lighting that will offer the same benefits as long as the Kelvin and the CRI are respected and without permanently exciting the bird. The choice of lighting is always related to the space to be lighted and the effect that you expect. You have to use common sense. It is impossible to propose a general type of lighting since too many factors depend on the final results. However, a lighting system located too close to the cage or even on the cage is to be avoided, in my opinion, so that the bird won't be continuously excited. Imagine yourself with a light permanently stuck to you. A good **distance** would be to install the light at about **4' above the cage**.

It is important that the parrot have some sort of shelter from the light. The cage should not be completely or evenly lit since our pets enjoy taking a nap during the day. **Think about adding a shaded area.**

As for the time recommended for such a lighting system in **daily use**, I believe that it should not exceed **10 hours**. Our brains need to relax before going to bed. Humans need about 4 hours of low intensity light (5 footcandles or less) to gradually relax before going to bed. We should respect the same period of relaxation for our pets. I don't know too many people who can go from a high intensity light to a relaxation period, and fall sleep quickly. Our bodies would not get enough rest since our endocrine glands would continue to produce the energy required to move for a while longer.

Dimmers

After a bad experience a few years ago with our mitred parakeet, I have come to realize a certain fact about lighting: the dimming effect. We had taken our bird

outside but a small incident allowed to bird to escape. We were in a panic to have lost this beloved pet. But our friend, with his great intelligence, stayed near our house. We could tell where he was by his call alone. However, time was flying by without any sign of being able to catch him. At sunset, our Coco also got ready for the night; he settled down and moved slowly to the top of the tree where he had been. The same thing happened at the first light: at daybreak he quietly ate the stems of some leaves (beginning of activity) then once the sun was up, he began to call (gradual increase in his activity) which attracted many wild birds curious to find out where that mysterious call was coming from. Crows, among others, came for a visit. The bird activity was then at its peak, in full sun. Fortunately, this adventure ended when Coco returned safely home after 24 hours spent in the wild.

So, the gradual increase of light seen in the natural brightness of day and the reduction seen at nightfall has an effect on the behavior of birds. This is referred to as **"dimming"**.

It is possible to find some dimmers on the market that can reduce the light from 100% to 0% (called "fade out") in a variable preset time, preferably over a 1 hour period, to simulate the sunset. This allows us to get our pet birds ready for sleep without rushing them.

However, a dimmer with a "fade out" can cost around $250 (CAN). A dimmer can work with regular bulbs only and not with threaded fluorescents.

You can also use a **timer** and the costs will be a lot lower. It all depends on the intended use. A timer automatically shuts off the light at the preset time, with an on/off switch but it doesn't have the capacity to gradually lower the light. Only a system with a dimmer can do that.

A dimmer can also work with a linear fluorescent which makes it possible to have the dimmer as well as the Kelvin and the CRI. Then, the cost can climb to between $400 and $600 (CAN) because of the dimmer and special ballast required. An electrical appliances distributor can help you design such a sophisticated system.

To continue with the explanation about the dimmer lamps shown on the previous table: halogen lamps or PAR halogen lamps provide a really white light, around 3,200 K. This light is whiter and more concentrated that a standard incandescent lamp (a regular bulb provides 2,700 K). Halogen lamps with 3,200 K produce a lot of heat. About 80% to 90% of the energy produced by the lamp is infrared heat, the remaining 10% is used for lighting. This can be useful when you want to provide a bit of heat to your sick birds, temporarily, but not at night.

For a prolonged use in the case of a **sick bird**, there are special **heating lamps with infrareds**. Infrareds allow for a deeper, more beneficial sleep to help our pets heal better and get back to health. Infrareds are better suited, when needed, for both daytime and nighttime applications.

Summary

Below is a summary of lighting choices (many possibilities available) listed from the least expensive to the most expensive.

• Install a **dimmer** with a "fade out" on an existing fixture. It has the advantage of simulating the sunset. However, it does not reproduce daylight.

• Use a **threaded fluorescent lamp** of 5,000 K or more (with high CRI), such as the "Tornado" threaded compact fluorescent as a replacement for regular bulbs. The only cost involved is the cost of the lamp. However, it is not possible to install a dimmer.

• Use a **threaded fluorescent lamp** but keep the **regular light** as well. Add a dimmer equipped with a "fade out" on the regular light. Then at night, shut off the fluorescent lamp and activate the "fade out" to simulate the sunset over a 1 hour period.

• Install a **"linear" fluorescent lamp**. These require a ballast and fixture. The costs are much higher. It is even possible to install a dimmer on these types of fixtures. These fluorescents can simply be added to the room or replace existing fixtures.

• **Keep the existing lighting but add a dimmer** with the "fade out" option on the existing bulb. Then add another fixture to the room such as a linear fluorescent. Thus at the end of the day, it is possible to shut off the fluorescent and at the same time reduce the intensity of the light in the room. First, the effect will be to calm down our pet birds and then, by using the dimmer with the "fade out" option, it will gradually reduce the brightness over a 1 hour period, just like the sunset. While this option is the most expensive, it provides the most adequate lighting for our companions on a day to day basis.

I must add that most fixtures are not necessarily designed for birds and they will require some work to protect the electrical components (light and electrical cords) from the birds. If the birds are loose, they will find it pleasant to sit on top of the fixture, especially if it produces some heat. The fixture can represent all the comfort of a new toy and should be avoided.

You can find the items mentioned at electrical distributors listed in the yellow pages. The items mentioned above are now the best on the market based on the quality/cost ratio. Other products are also

Continued on page 60

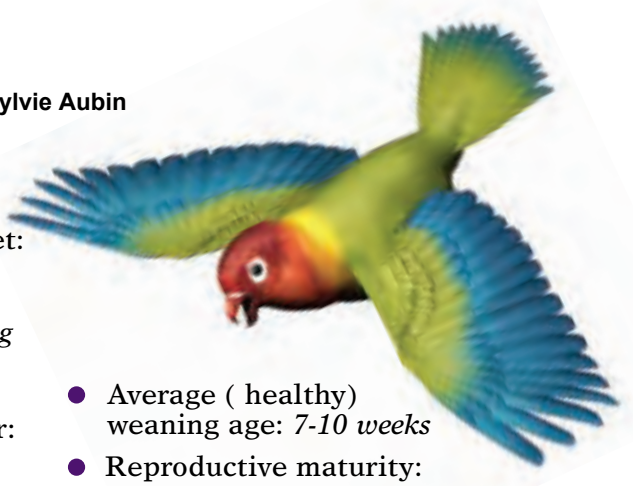
Here are some existing bulbs that can be used with a dimmer (compatible with a dimmer equipped with a "fade out" or not). However, not available in 5,000 Kelvin:

Incandescent	Incandescent BR or R	Halogen PAR	Halogen MR16	Halogen T3

These bulbs do not have the 5,000 K or the CRI but can be used with a dimmer.

LOVE BIRDS

By: Sylvie Aubin



- Tribe: *Psittaculini*
- Species name: *Lovebirds*
- Latin Name: *Agapornis*
- Country of origin: *Mainly Africa and adjacent Islands*
- Size: *14-16.5 cms in length*
- Weight: *30-50 grams*
- Availability in the pet market: *Extremely popular parrot, widely available & several generations of captive breeding*
- Clutch size: *4-7*
- Number of Clutches per year: *2-3*
- Incubation of eggs: *18-20 days*
- Fledging age in the wild: *(feathers fully grown) 5-6 weeks*
- Average (healthy) weaning age: *7-10 weeks*
- Reproductive maturity: *1-1 1/2 yrs old.*
- Expected life span in captivity: *5-15 yrs - Reproductively active until 6 yrs old*

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

Personality:	Very playful, stubborn and active, tremendous character.
Sociability:	Gregarious by nature; they are exceptionally social if raised interactively. Many people should raise and train at once when young, otherwise they tend to become possessive and bond with only 1 person.
Easily tamed and gentle:	(3 to 9) depending a lot on the individual and the se x
Family companion bird:	(3 to 9) same as aforementioned
Playfulness:	(8 to 10 depending on the species) enjo ys swinging, chasing toys, destruction of toys, hiding and are amazingly talented to open cages.
Biting behavior:	Unfortunately quite common with the female although one can easily learn how to recognize the signs and therefore avoiding the biting.
Physical contact & demonstration for affection:	Thrive on being perched on their human companion and some do like to be pet and stroked but usually they get bored quite rapidly.
Caution:	Avoid always having the bird on you! Let them develop their independence.
Singing ability:	None
Screaming strength:	(4) **Frequency:** (8)
Screaming pitch:	high pitch scream or chattering
Talking or mimicking ability:	Almost non existent. A few learn to say short simple words like hi, hello and “up” but that's usually the extent of it. Although they can learn to mimic the beep of the micro wave!
Quality of pronunciation:	poor
Destructive behavior:	(2) as its' beak is quite sturdy and agile , relative to the species' small size **Chewing activity:** (7)
What degree of independence can this species develop?	(3 to 9) it depends a lot on the individual, it's education, if y ou are keeping one or two. Should you decide to keep more than one, most probably they will become very independent.
How much time will the bird require to be handled per day?	Lovebirds are very playful and imaginative birds. You could easily spend time withthem by just being in the same room while it plays on it's play gym, interacts with you vocally, and appreciates getting pet once in a while . It will thrive on sharing your daily activities: showering, preparing food, opening the mail, reading the newspaper, etc.
Eating flingers and messy droppings:	(6) if it can be unscrewed, open, thrown, emptied on the floor, and tipped upside down,… it will be! Their droppings are quite normal though, no special messiness there .
Tendency to engage in feather damaging behavior?	Unfortunately mostly females pluck their feathers when building their nest. Although this particular behavior seems more frequent in the Masked and the Peach- Faced. Rarely will we see this behavior in Fisher's species.
How expensive is the bird to buy?	50$ to 300$ Can. Depending on the color mutation and age.

Peach-faced Lutino Lovebird
Photo by: Monique Roy Darche

Description:

Small, stocky parrots with very short rounded tails. Their beak is very strong despite its size since it is sturdily built more in width than in length. Many years of selective breeding and hybridization has developed a range of colorful mutations.

Sexual dimorphism ?

There is no apparent sexual dimorphism except in the Agapornis pullaria-taranta species[1]. Some behavioral traits and posture can be indicative for the trained aviculturist. The female Peach-Faced Lovebird (Agapornis roseicollis) usually carries her nesting material entangled in her rump and lower back feathers. Female Masked Lovebirds carry most of the nesting mater ial in their beaks[1]. Most females build elaborately designed nests. Some say that females have a tendency to perch with their legs more open then the male and that consequently their tail appears more rounded that that of the male . The pelvic bones are slightly more distended to allo w the passage of the egg, although these observations require a skilled and experienced eye and could be misleading so therefore DNA sexing is strongly advised to confirm sex.

Fledgling lovebird chicks of various color mutations
Photo: Monique Roy Darche

over one hundred coloured mutations

The first documented mutation in lovebirds was blue Masked Lovebird in 1927. It was captured in Africa and sent to England with green birds. Since then numerous color mutations have appeared in captivity[2].

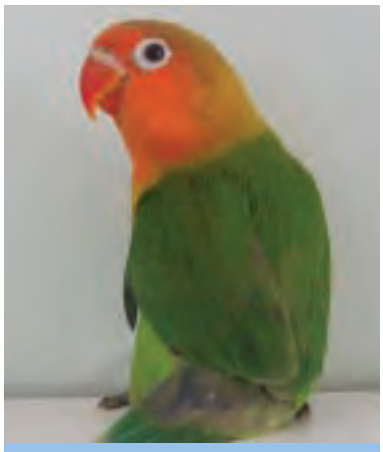
Agapornis Personata- Masked Lovebird and Masked Lovebird blue mutation.
Photo: Monique Roy Darche

In captivity the most common species are:

Agapornis Roseicollis
(Peach-Faced Lovebird)
Agapornis Fischeri
(Fisher Lovebird)
Agapornis Personata
(Masked Lovebird)

The Masked Lovebird tend to be more aggressive as a companion and as a breeder: it is not that rare that the a female kills her mate, and both male and female sometimes kill their chicks.

CAUTION:
Do not introduce Masked Lovebirds into a mixed aviary or as a companion to another species of lovebirds



Fisher (agapornis fischeri)
Photo: Monique Roy Darche

Fisher

The Fisher is the least aggressive and is usually less noisy than the other 2.
But as a companion it tends to be more shy and needs to be manipulated more than the others, almost every day in it's first 2 to 5 months of life, otherwise they will be reluctant to remain tame.
As for the Peach-face Lovebird (the most common companion lovebird) he is kind of in the middle; can be slightly aggressive yet it is more sociable then the Fisher.

Lovebirds are amazing little parrots; they are funny, spunky, witty and full of spirit. Transposed into a human figure they would be that of an adolescent invading the entire house while playing basketball in your living room, TV blasting MTV, chatting on the phone while emptying the fridge. If you are not to be rebuffed by it's piercing and frequent screams, you will find in a lovebird one of the most mischievous intelligent bird. All that in a 50 gram package! They seem to be born to be happy and cheerful. But none the less they too can suffer from neglect, especially if you didn't take the precaution to raise them to be independent.

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1. Forshaw J.M. ,1989. Parrots Of The World, Lansdowne Editions

2. Wailly, Prin & Prin ,2004. Perruches et Perroquets Atlas de L'ornithologie Vol.1,Animalia Éditions

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 inches, but larger is better ! A play-gym or activity center is also recommended to promote activity and exercise.

CAUTION:
Spacing of the cage wire must be safe to prevent strangulation. Round bell cages are especially dangerous, as frequent accidents occur at the top where the wire g rows narrower.
• Be sure to have a cage with secure latches as lo vebirds are famous for their escaping talent.
• Keep bird cage in a safe location, away from dangers such as direct sunlight, kitchen fumes, cold temperature and predators

Sleeping cage size requirements: Could be as small as 12 X 12 inches. Can also be used as hospital, transport or weekend cage .

Stimulate activity: Preference for horizontal bars to encourage climbing for all hooked bill species. An open access door to the roof of the cage , access to a play gym and supervised indoor flight is essential for exercise. Secure your homes from any potential dangers before letting your bird fly around freely; always monitor its flight. (eg. Mirrors, open windows, hot stoves cooking pans ,water in sink for dishwashing, toilet bowl, ceiling fans)

What perch sizes should be offered: Minimum 3 sizes of different shapes & texture. Ideally 5/8 inches and 3/4 inches, a manzanita perch type a therapeutic perch and grooming perch.

Additional in cage: Swings, toys, ladders and bells, twigs, paper towel rolls & other safe destructible material, bath and suspended tent.

Water Despenser: Ideally drinking water should be changed twice daily. Lovebirds can be trained to drink from a water bottle as well as a water bowl .This facilitate transportation when displaced in a carrier

How susceptible is this species to disease: Lovebirds are very strong healthy birds although females are prone to chronic eggs laying , egg retention and egg related peritonitis. Both male and female can be affected by stress - mutilation and polyfolliculitis. They should be screened for avian Polyoma virus & PBFD virus especially. In a nursery they are a charm to raise since they are generally in good health ,very robust chicks. Avoid drastic changes of temperature and keep them away from danger as they are prone to explore.

What are it's dietary requirements? Offer a balanced nutritional diet. A minimum of 70-90 % formulated diet.5-20 % of a high quality seed diet, 5 % fr uits and veggies and 5-10 % rice, pasta…healthy home cuisine . A plain seed mix can lead to obesity as well as deficiencies in calcium and vitamins.

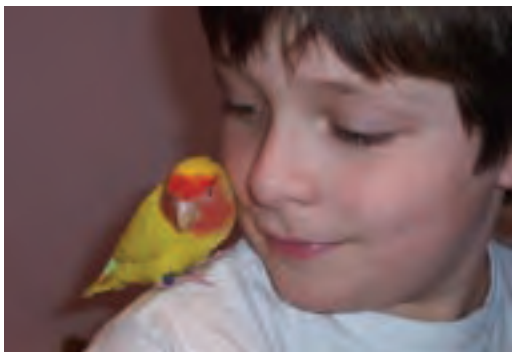
Light requirements: 4 to 7 hours of exposure to a full spectrum light and of course as much natural lighting as possible. Caution , never expose cage to direct sunlight. 12 hours of none interrupted sleep is recommended, especially for females. Some like to sleep in a tent or a car ton box.

CAUTION:
Make sure that there are no shreds exposed from the tent, worn toys or rope perches as they are especially prone to get entangled in these.

Species PROFILE
LOVE BIRDS

Alexandrine parakeet, in spacious mixed flight with lutino and pied lovebirds
Photo Michèle Aubin, Zoo D'oiseaux Exotique Icare

Lovebird chicks parent raised with brotogeris celestial blue parrotlet.
Photo Michèle Aubin, Zoo D'oiseaux Exotique Icare



Connor MacKay ,10 years old,(Parrot Life magazine's youngest reader!) with his companion lovebird, “Peaches”. Connor has had peaches since Sept. 2005 and has done extremely well at handling and training his wonderful feathered companion . Peaches, loves to ride around on Connor's shoulder or inside his shirt with her head peeking out. She makes kissing noises and growls like a dog so far and he hopes that she will someday learn to say word or two or maybe her name.
Belleville, Ontario, Canada

Everybirdie's a critic!

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Then we critique and praise.

DVD REVIEW

• Dr Lupu has achieved to transmit concise, pertinent information that is undisputable. The DVD is well orchestrated & structured. Her fundamental respect for these creatures promotes a positive approach that is universal to all parrot guardians.
• Dr Lupu 's professional and experienced recommendations concerning behavioral analysis is clearly founded and reflects 25 yrs of experience, consulting parrot owners. The DVD features an overview of instinctive behavior- learnt behavior to step- by- step behavior modification. The importance of providing an enriching, safe, and healthy stimulating environments is absolutely crucial to promote a lasting relationship.
• Our lifestyles are in constant change, and long lived parrot companions will inevitably react to unforeseen events, lifestyle and environment changes to their captive universe. These will trigger undesirable, misunderstood behavior such as (screaming, biting, territoriality ect.). Practical keynotes are emphasized to help them to adapt to changes in their routine, environment and relationships.
• Behavioral modification requires a realistic approach, log entries of behavioral concerns, objectives have to be clear and small steps must be endeavored, participation from all members of the flock are essential in the process of behavior modification (individuals that are part of the birds environments and interactions)
• The parrot companions themselves will also go through stages of adolescence, and reach sexual maturity.These stages will be the blue print of their intellectual development. Dr. Lupu explains the dangers of allowing your companion to bond with one person & understanding the hierarchy of the individuals of the flock
• It features responsible parrot owner's relationship demonstrating that it is possible to develop and maintain a healthy relationship with your feathered companion
I especially liked the African Grey scene, an African Grey playing the potato, with his guardians. The couple are passing the parrot back and forth (hot potato game) and there is an obvious complicity and complete trustworthy relationship between these flock members. Peanut the Umbrella cockatoo is stimulated by skill enrichment games with his caregiver. His participation is motivated by positive reinforcement. His cognitive ability to recognize objects, interpret commands and retrieve specific objects has been positively reinforced with drama reward , mutual respect and interactive playtime.
• A bilingual resource such as this was long overdue in the avian community.
I recommend this DVD for guardians of a newly acquired feathered companion and established feathered flocks.

Josee Bermingham

Technical file continued from page 57

available on the market. It is important to choose a color temperature of at least 5,000 K combined with the highest possible CRI, preferably above 90%, to provide the maximum ultraviolet light allowed and offer the proper help our cherished companions need.

You have to remember one thing, our companions are not machines intended to produce, they are above all else our friends. It is important not to continuously subject them to a lighting that is too intense. The proper lighting, good activity periods combined with rest time, a healthy nutrition and time spent with them will contribute to the happiness and well-being of our friends.

Roch Lefebvre
recflood@hotmail.com

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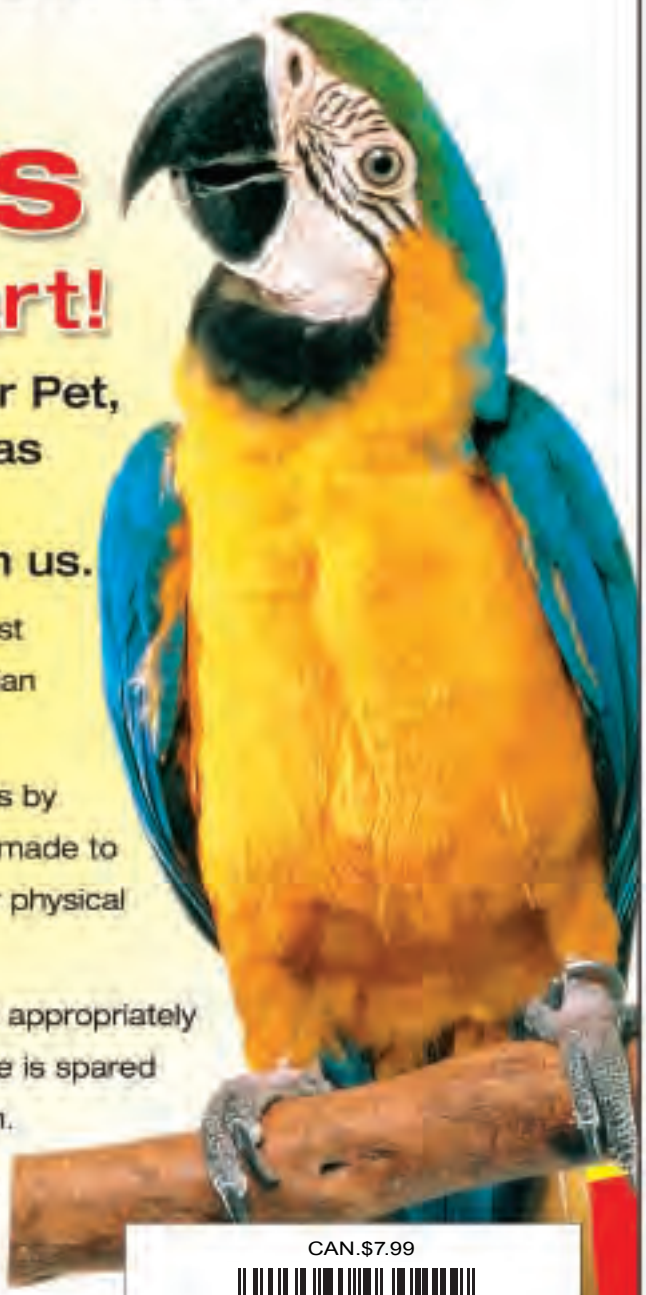

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