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Issue 125

# Parrots

*...dealing exclusively  
with parrots & parakeets*

June 2008

**Living with  
two Macaws -  
big birds, big commitment**

**Ringling  
Psittacines -  
the hazardous  
effects**

**Hope for the  
Red-fronted Macaw  
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*On the Cover*  
A Red-fronted Macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*) (Lafresnaye, 1847)  
Photograph by Kitch Bain

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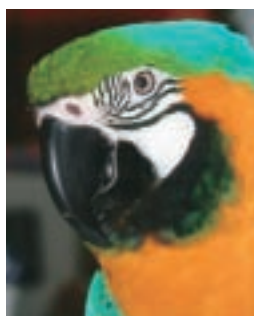
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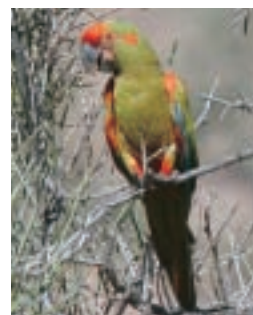


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# Editor's Desk

The Red-fronted Macaw, our cover-bird, features twice in this issue of *Parrots*. It's one of the two big birds which star in our *Living With ...* feature, in which Denise Shadduck tells us what it's like to share a home with a pair of macaws. Big birds, she says, mean big commitment.

The Red-fronted Macaw is, however, endangered in the wild, and Jörg Asmus, who is responsible for Species Conservation Projects at the Vereinigung für Zucht und Erhaltung einheimischer und fremdländischer Vögel in Germany, shares with us the VZE's plans for stabilising the population of this species in Europe. He's calling for all breeders and keepers to support the organisation's aim of establishing a stud book.

EB Cravens has compiled a list of the items which considers he are critical to have on hand in order to maintain the health and well-being of his flock - and to ensure that they're given the best opportunity for development. It's a useful list for every parrot owner to hold on to.

In our conservation section, David Waugh of the Loro Parque Fundación takes us to Margarita Island in Venezuela, where Loro Parque is funding a project to prevent the Blue-crowned Conure and the Yellow-shouldered Amazon from becoming extinct.

Peter Tossberg and Birgitta Magnusson have an unusual contribution for us this month - an account of the picnics that are

held in the Haga Park in Stockholm each summer. These are no ordinary picnics, however, they're real family affairs to which parrot-owners can take their pet birds to enjoy the sunshine, the company - and, sometimes, some unplanned freedom.

Jim Hayward has a word of warning about the hazards that can be encountered by ringing a bird. He discusses the dangers and difficulties for both breeder and bird - pointing out the drawbacks as well as benefits.

"Undeniably beautiful" is the way that Cyril Laubscher describes the Leadbeater's or Major Mitchell's Cockatoo - the subject of his monthly feature. Looking at his splendid photographs, one cannot but agree.

The Maspeth Bird Haven in New York City is this month's focus in our campaign to find a solution to the unwanted parrots in the world. Barry and Gayle Schwartz had never intended to establish a parrot adoption and rescue centre, but they're a testimony to what can be done with a combination of compassion and commitment, hard work and plenty of love for the parrots who are fortunate enough to be taken into their care - an inspiration to all of us.



*Gilly Lloyd*

## Get your story published!

We are always pleased to consider articles and photographs for publication in *Parrots* magazine. If you're not a writer, we shall edit it to read correctly. Just contact Gilly Lloyd at [editorial@imaxweb.co.uk](mailto:editorial@imaxweb.co.uk) or 01273 464777.

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# BirdAlert

By John Hayward

## A busy first quarter for bird thieves

I thought it a good idea to give an account of the bird theft activity for the first quarter of this new year. January 2008 was particularly quiet in this respect and we obviously hoped for better days.

Unfortunately this did not last for long, as at the end of the month, we suffered from the theft of two pairs of Major Mitchell's Cockatoos, two pairs of Galahs and three pairs of African Greys from Rotherham. The owners are devastated over this loss. A substantial reward is offered leading to the recovery of the birds. It is dreadful when good breeding stock such as this is stolen. Albeit none of these are Annex A, they are valuable and we need to get them back. Someone must know about them. All we need is a phone call from somebody with guilt feelings!!

Three days later a similar theft took place at Redhill in Surrey, when the wicked thieves got away with two Goffins' Cockatoos, together with Bourke's and Cockatiels. In this case the Goffins' are on CITES 1 and cannot be traded without Article 10 papers. I have often commented on the seriousness of such offences and remind those responsible for the crime for which they could go to prison for five years. Again, rewards are available for any information leading to the safe return of these birds.

Later in February we had a theft of African Greys at Ringmer, East Sussex. One of the birds was recovered by the police. In March there was similar activity when a pair of Galahs were stolen in Dunbar, African Greys from Tamworth, a further theft of Greys in Birmingham and an Orange-winged Amazon in Nottingham.

Finally, a most sad story relates to the theft of a Black-headed Caique from a motor caravan in Provence, France, owned by people from North Wales, who were touring Europe. The vehicle was left unattended one afternoon, when the thieves broke in and stole the pet parrot. Understandably this has caused deep upset to the poor holidaymakers, but is a lesson that no animal should be left alone like this. If we have readers in that part of the country, again we need information to track the bird down.

As far as the UK thefts are concerned, not all will be linked, but those larger pairs of breeding Cockatoos could well be part of organised crime to feed and satisfy some breeder/collector who is prepared to buy them and ask no questions. The great pity of all of this is that all of the thefts could have been prevented, with added vigilance and security. We must put a stop to this activity and beat the thieves. We owe it to the birds.

*For all security advice or any information re these items please call the National Theft Register on 01869 325699 e-mail: [jh@ntr.supanet.cpm](mailto:jh@ntr.supanet.cpm)*

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## Seram (Moluccan) Cockatoos and Purple-naped Lorries Released into the Wild

The illegal wild bird trade remains rampant in Indonesia, and includes a number of parrot species, some of which are considered vulnerable to future extinction. Enforcement of laws protecting parrots is critical, and has recently been stepped up in Central Maluku by officers of BKSDA (Conservation and Natural resources) and the Department of Forestry. However, the problem then remains as to what should happen to the birds captured by government authorities.

*Two of the Seram (Moluccan) Cockatoos released in February this year*



PHOTO: INDOONESIAN PARROT PROJECT

To address that problem, the Indonesian Parrot Project established the Kembali Bebas Rehabilitation Center on North Seram Island, the day-to-day care of the birds being provided by former bird trappers. Consequently, poaching of parrots on this part of the island has been virtually eliminated. Some of these birds cannot be returned to the wild for various reasons, but a select sub-population can be released if they meet criteria set forth by IUCN (the World Conservation Union) and CITES (Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species).

The Indonesian Parrot Project has now carried out three such releases. The first occurred in March, 2006, involving three Seram cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*) which had been confiscated in October of 2004 by the Department of Forestry. Birds were micro-chipped, given stainless steel leg bands, and their tails were colored to facilitate visual monitoring. The procedure was a "soft release", whereby birds are permitted to leave the cage of their own volition and at their own pace; food is provided at the release site for two

weeks as a supplement, in case the cockatoos are unable to forage successfully.

Following this first release, one cockatoo was seen flying well for several weeks, and then was lost to follow-up. The other two have been spotted over a period of at least 12 months. In March-April, 2007, at least one of the remaining two cockatoos produced a successful fledging, and in August of 2007, at least one of these two could be identified in a pair of cockatoos examining potential nest sites close to Kembali Bebas.

In January this year, an additional six Seram cockatoos were released, also with apparent very-short-term success. These birds had been confiscated from smugglers in the town of Tanah Merah on Seram - the confiscation having been made possible through information provided by a local informant. In February, an additional seven Seram cockatoos and four Purple-naped lorries (*Lorius domicella*) were released, bringing the total to date to 16 cockatoos and four lorries.

The children of nearby villages were able to witness these releases and share in the excitement. Although this number of birds by itself is not large, such releases offer a significant opportunity to increase the pride of local villages and children in their native birds, and to teach by example the principles of conservation. It is hoped that similar stringent selection and release procedures will become the standardized norm for parrots throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

## Party for the Animals starts a 'Worldlog' in 9 languages

Marianne Thieme, leader of the Dutch Party for the Animals (the first animal party in the world to be represented in a national parliament), has recently launched a 'worldlog' with the help of a team of 24 translators. Her goal is to inform kindred spirits across the globe about her work both within and outside of the Dutch parliament.

In the Worldlog, Marianne Thieme will report on the pioneering work of the Party for the Animals - the only political party in the world which does not primarily represent human interests. In the meantime, Parties for the Animals have been set up, or are in the process of establishing themselves, in numerous other countries. In the Worldlog, Marianne

Thieme will share her experiences with other proponents of animal rights. She also wants to inspire others to develop similar political activities and thereby ensure that we literally do justice to animals.

The Worldlog will appear every week, first in Dutch, German, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Turkish; other languages will soon follow. The >>



Worldlog is part of the Party for the Animals' new international website - both have having been set up in response to increasing foreign interest in the Party.

The Dutch Party for the Animals was established in 2002 and has two seats in the House of Representatives, one in the Senate and nine seats in the Provincial States parliament. It is currently the fastest growing political party in the Netherlands, and now also has its own youth organisation and a scientific bureau. This bureau recently produced Meat the Truth, a documentary on climate change. On the basis of scientific reports, it demonstrates that the livestock industry worldwide is responsible for the emission of more greenhouse gasses than all the cars, lorries, trains, ships and planes added together. Amongst the cities in which the documentary will be screened this summer are Brussels, London, Dresden, New York, Madrid, Sydney, Sao Paulo, Beijing, Singapore, and it will shortly be seen in Dutch cinemas.

The nine language Worldlog will appear every Monday around 3 pm (15.00 CET) on the website [www.partyfortheanimals.nl](http://www.partyfortheanimals.nl).

## New website runs competition for UK pet owners



**Pet-owners.co.uk** is a new and exciting website from the Pet Owners Association which celebrates the joy of owning a pet and provides the UK's 23 million pet owners with all the services and products they could wish for. From luxury dog spas to animal behaviourists, from pet groomers to pet friendly hotels, whatever your pet requires, you are just one click away from an expert or service to suit its needs.

The Pet Owners Association puts pets and their owners at the heart of everything it does.

It is committed to promoting responsible pet ownership, and is holding a competition to nominate the most deserving and caring pet owner to celebrate National Pet Month (April 5th to May 5th).

The Association's spokesman, Bob Forgan says; "The British are famous for their love of animals so finding the winning pet owner is going to be a very difficult but a rewarding task. We value what pet owners have to say on animal welfare and our website offers the perfect forum where they can express their views."

The winner will be a devoted pet owner who has a heart warming story to tell and who has helped care for a pet or a



number of animals. The winning story of will be featured on the Pet Owners Association website and the competition prize will be a weekend break at the luxurious ultra pet friendly Craig y Nos Castle Hotel in the stunning Brecon Beacons National Park.

Votes for the nation's most caring pet owner can be cast at <http://www.pet-owners.co.uk> and nominations will close on July 1st.

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## THE COMPLETE **Psittacine**

# Twelve things essential to my birdkeeping

**EB Cravens**

*Photographs by the author*

In my hobby breeding and petkeeping, I have discovered many items I consider critical to have on hand and use, in order to maintain the health, well-being and optimum development of our psittacines. Some are based on a common sense approach to aviculture; others reflect living where avian veterinary care is lacking, especially on weekends and holidays. Here are twelve prime examples of my essentials list:

### 1) Spirulina

This is a favorite nutritional supplement which we have used for over 20 years. It is an excellent source of vitamins, especially vitamin A, and serves to help molts and keep feather sheen high. It is also an immune system builder and substitutes well in flocks that do not like to eat many green vegetables. There are reports that one can feed too much spirulina, certainly with eclectus parrots and lorikeets, but I always use it sparingly - like salt and pepper--so have never experienced any problems.

### 2) Fresh Aloe Vera

This means a plant in the house! Absolutely the best immediate response to a bruised cere, abrasion or scratch, itchy skin, open toenail or foot bite, or other topical injury, including eyelids, beak, feet etc. Slit a piece of the stalk length-wise and rub the sticky gel over the hurt. Blow it dry gently. Aloe gel will stop most light bleedings, seals like a spray-on bandage and has both anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. Use it on yourself too as it quickens skin healing.



*Fresh aloe vera, citrus bioflavonoid, and short-nozzle syringes are 'must haves' for our birdkeeping*

### 3) Vitamin E gel capsules, 200 i.u. dosage

Poke gel capsule with pin and squeeze gently. This is another prime skin healer. But I use the E oil to help with dry flaky skins, brittle beak flaking, and especially for constricted toe syndrome in dry climates. This oil absorbs quickly, so apply every four to six hours. It will suffocate scaly mites on cere and has cured fungal

skin infections under wings in humid conditions. An excellent oil to use on severely plucked parrots, to encourage follicle to re-grow feathers; we have applied it twice a week for six months to heal damaged follicles in small birds with flight feather anomalies. Vitamin E can be fed internally to treat feather brittleness, though for such use I prefer wheat germ or virgin olive oil.





*Native foods are a valuable nutritional supplement to any feeding program*

#### 4) Citrus Bioflavanoid

(grapefruit seed extract) This is my number one holistic medicine. It boasts powerful antibiotic and anti-fungal properties. I use it as an effective anthelmintic to expel parasites or routinely worm my ground species of Australian parakeets. It is the first resort if a bird shows fever, upset intestines or infection, and can be used in its dilute form to mix baby formula in cases of slow crop or e-coli. It is also a topical sterilizer, mouthwash, ear bath, and my staple as a syringe and spoon soaker/utensil wash. It is much stronger than normal soap and water, and safer - yet more environmentally pleasing - than bleach solutions. GSE is often recommended as a sprouting soak, but I only use it in the final rinse if they smell musty or sour. This is a phenomenal product!

#### 5) 15cc Syringes

These small ones with a blunt-clipped nozzle are my favorites for all birds up to eclectus size. They expel baby food slower and safer into the beak rather than forcing it back down the throat, thus guarding against food aspirations. They also stimulate parrots to taste, nibble lumps and swallow, therefore moving

chicks sooner towards eating on their own. It takes four loads of food to fill a 50cc crop, but that means babies get fed slower, "round and round" in series (like parent birds do) and have time to rest, ingest formula and prepare while a sibling is getting squirted. I have to add that small 8 oz yogurt cups cut off half way are another favorite of mine for cup feeding reluctant chicks. Try 'em both!



*Natural large handled baskets without any varnishes make perfect moveable perches and fledging tools*

#### 6) Quinoi

This an optimum health food grain with complete protein amino complex. It is a wonderful regular addition to small passerines and birds' diets, but really needs to be germinated or cooked slightly before they like it. It can be ground in a blender to powder to give bulk and hull fiber to enhanced baby food once chicks are feathered out. Also, as sprouted, it will pass through a larger syringe if sprinkled into formula while mixing, giving a more whole food texture. Quinoi sprouts overnight in 8-16 hrs. Treat it gently to not bruise the tiny sprouts. 'Tis a nutritious grain that tastes nuttier than millet when cooked.

#### 7) Large-handled baskets

These are essential to all my birdkeeping. They are perfect for raising chicks in a cool, chewable, organic environment. Baskets provide three stages of chick progression to fledging — the bottom, the top edge and the handle. They are an invaluable fledging tool, as young parrots will recognize all large baskets when raised in one, and fledglings will choose to fly to them where they are placed, rather than crashing around the room. They also make perfect table perches for pets, moveable, and droppings are caught in the bottom on towels. Heavy birds may need a rock in the bottom. Baskets do not develop the harsh smells common to plastic tubs when soiled by a clutch of babies. We run a hot shower or hose over them for ten minutes and scrub with a toilet-style brush. These are the ultimate traveling perches or home-away-from home for fledglings. I wouldn't raise chicks any other way.



*Warm soft food is a great addition to most birdkeeping homes*

### 8) Zupreem Monkey Biscuits

We have used this product on and off with birds since 1980. Have never had any sicknesses due to this primate formulated food, but then we always scald them with poured boiling water to soften, then wait for them to cool. I do not feed them dry. They are used for birds who need extra weight putting on, for hens and cocks with one month or older babies in box, who eat five times a day and love soft, warm additions, for chicks who approach weaning and reject the syringe and want handheld mush foods (weaning pellets, health bread and such are also used). Most large birds like them, but note, this is not a regular food in my routine, but only a special occasion, specific use food.

### 9) Hollow logs

These are an invaluable training and play tool. It teaches timid breeder pairs about darkness and increases the enclosed nesting urge. Logs help perfect the timing before a true nestbox is given to first time novice breeders. They also will give clues to the gender of young parrots by showing which birds are drawn to "work" the log. Birds love to chew and it is true that nesting pairs with dead log material feed the cellulose occasionally to their chicks. Both open ends allow conures and other cavity nesters in captivity to sleep protected, but not to cycle eggs during those months when their box is removed in the off season. Sometimes hollow logs are hard to procure, but substitutes may be constructed out of lumber.

### 10) New Zealand perennial vine spinach

This is one of my staple greens throughout the year. Parents with young chicks

absolutely love the green bud nodules and stems. We offer it as a rich green to veggie eaters and chop up stems in morning foods. The leaves are usually discarded. It is easy to grow in a container or garden plot year round and will self seed if left when it finally dries out.

### 11) Baby Bird Fledging/ Weaning Cage

A 12'x12' is mostly sufficient for all but large macaws. The discovery of the benefits of this addition to every hobby breeder has changed my life and the lives of my parrots. Chicks are introduced shortly after indoor flying commences. They learn to fly amongst branches in a stimulating outdoor environment; and eat when you come in and syringe feed them at the elevated feeding station where they

also will perch. I add a pair of passive parakeets to show about eating. All our offspring wean faster, smoother, have more fun in the greenery which they eat and chew, drop less weight because baby fat turns to muscle, grow alert to wild birdsong, wind, rain showers and more. This item I now consider absolutely necessary at any state-of-the-art avicultural facility. And it saves the keeper time and cleaning effort, too!

### 12) Fresh Palm Fruits

This is a recent addition to my essentials list. Obviously I am living where I can find and harvest these, but the way my first wild-caught pairs voraciously dove into these oily fruits, then how the other handfeds in my flock followed suit, have convinced me that feeding palm fruit is an enhancement to most nutritional programs. Note that I do not keep macaws, so none of my psittacines have the beak strength to break the nut; they all chew off the fleshy, oily red or orange meat. I prefer Manila or Philippine palms, but most palms of age will bear fruit. During the breeding season, parents may eat 8-10 per day, though this is most apparent with chicks that have passed the first 10 to 14 day phase and hence are being fed a fattier fare by parents. As an aside, I do not consider palm oil as a suitable substitute for fresh fruit. If I wish to add oils to my African birds' diet, I use other oils.

I hope this short list has given you all some ideas. Aloha, EB. ■



*We use hollow logs to train prospective breeder birds and to learn when they are ready to nest*



# Thinkers of the Jungle – The Orangutan Report

By Gerd Schuster and Willie Smits with photographs by Jay Ullal

The orangutan is facing extinction. Displaced or slaughtered as a result of the devastation of its habitat, by logging, the establishment of palm oil plantations, by poaching and the illegal pet trade, this species - which shares 97% of its DNA with humans - will cease to exist in as few 10 years unless urgent action is taken.

*Thinkers of the Jungle* is forthright in its view of the reasons behind the merciless slaughter of the orangutan in Borneo and Sumatra, but most importantly, though, it presents hope for the future, with the publication of new scientific research into protecting the climate, the environment and this endangered species.

Although the scientific world believes that orangutans are unable to swim or fish with sticks, the book's extraordinary photographs by Jay Ullal show an orangutan doing both for the very first time, demonstrating that these highly intelligent 'People of the Forest', as their name translates, are thoughtful, inventive and cultural.

The book also tells how Willie Smits - with a doctorate in forestry - has evolved from a defender of orangutans to a protector of the climate. In 1991 he established the charity that became the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOS). *Thinkers of the Jungle* exposes what it describes as the shameless, profit-oriented deforestation of the tropical rainforest and the resulting destruction of the habitat of tens of thousands of orangutans.

A living rainforest helps the environment by absorbing massive amounts of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, and without these forests, this filter system is failing to function. In addition, by wood cutting and setting fire to the remains and the swampy ground, Borneo, with relatively little industrialisation, has become a major producer of carbon dioxide.

Seven years ago, BOS acquired destroyed forest areas near the town of Samboja in Borneo. Smits - with his invention of a special mould that contains a micro-biological growth accelerator, resembling the natural composition of rainforest soil - has been able to replant the area. Over the last four years,



an impressive rainforest has grown up on land that was considered dead forever. By working in close collaboration with locals, Willie Smits has created a safe haven for orangutans, and contributed to the improvement of the world's climate.

Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation has also established the world's largest primate rescue, Nyaru Menteng, in East Kalimantan, where 650 orangutans are being care for, rehabilitated, and will ultimately be released back into the wild. BOS is a registered international charity, committed to protecting the orangutan and its habitat, and relies solely on donations to fund its work.

*Thinkers of the Jungle* by science writer, Gerd Schuster, and Willie Smits, with photographs by Jay Ullal, is available from book stores nationwide at £29.99 with £1 from every copy sold going to the charity BOS.

For further information on the book visit [www.ullmann-publishing.com](http://www.ullmann-publishing.com) and for further information on the BOS Foundation, and how you can help, visit [www.savetheorangutan.org.uk](http://www.savetheorangutan.org.uk)

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# Living with Big Birds



*Tombo is on the floor at my feet with his pet rag*

**Denise Shadduck** tells us how she and her family discovered that big birds mean big commitment



I became introduced to the world of companion parrots about a year and a half ago. A friend of mine would go on vacation and I would baby-sit "Tombo" her Blue and Gold. Leslie never told me, but every time he went back home from staying at my home, he would be angry for a couple of weeks. Tombo came into my friend Leslie's life through her wildlife sanctuary, when Tombo was donated to the sanctuary because his daddy's new wife did not care for him. Tombo was 11 years old, and being a large bird, with a large bill, he really intimidated me. I never thought anything about what was going on in his head.

In January of 2007, Leslie got deathly ill and Tombo came to my house for several weeks. When Leslie came out of hospital a month later, she asked me if I would consider keeping Tombo, because he was so sad when he went back home. Thus my introduction to large birds. I have worked with all kinds of animals in my life, both domestic and wildlife, as a veterinarian technician and a wildlife rehabber. Little did I know that parrots were in a field all by themselves.

I soon learned that parrots have oh so many emotions running through those little pea brains of theirs. How it would be better if they could choose us, and not us choose them. I learned how they thrive on attention and want to be with you every waking moment. It is like having a terrible-two destructo

*Shamus, waiting for his handout*



*Tombo, my introduction to the world of companion parrots*

child living in your midst 24/7 for the rest of your life. How little did I know when I said "yes" to Tombo that our whole lifestyle would change. We now have a huge cage in our living room, a playpen in the kitchen, and one on our back porch for when we eat supper outside during the summer months. I learned that Tombo wants to eat what I eat. As he says, "Do you like it?" and munches away. Oh, and don't forget the perch in the shower, where we love to sing opera, and get our face dried off roughly with a towel.

Needless to say, I have lost my intimidation of Tombo. We are best buddies and I fret about him quite a bit. I have also had a Red-fronted Macaw, Shamus, given to me, because the couple had a baby. I thought with two of my children out of the house, and the other two to leave within 3 years, life would get easier. Not so. How sad it is that these wonderful animals are SO easy to acquire, without people really taking the time to think out this lifetime commitment. My not-so-messy house became a place where I am always looking for traces of the "evil bird" chewing up my house. He has chewed my stair railing, and the corners of my only three-year-old kitchen cupboards, because I am not quick enough to catch him in the act. He has chewed my 100-year-old English Oak library table, because my youngest son let him out of his cage unattended when I wasn't home. I am still learning, and hope that I can teach him to stay put. But if not, he has become a fixture at the Shaddock home. We have many animals here at the "Thistle Dew" (This'll Do). Eight dogs, most of whom have been dropped off, and various wildlife and farm animals. All of whom miraculously get along.

Every morning I am in the kitchen preparing dishes for the various animals, and Tombo and Shamus are there waiting for their handouts. Tombo is on the floor at my feet with his pet



*Each parrot has an extremely different personality*

rag, and Shamus is up on the playpen. Shamus is a good boy, and stays where he is put.

At the Genesis Wildlife Sanctuary where I work, we also take in exotic birds that need placing. Tombo was our first one. Now we have taken in 75 exotic birds, and placed close to that number. I have found that with each bird, there is an extremely different personality - and a different story as to why they are with us. We have done well with our adoptions, with a contract and a fee, and also the agreement that they come back to us if it doesn't work out. No matter what. We have people come to the sanctuary and visit the bird at least four times before we allow the bird out of the door. We want the people to have some idea what they are getting into. I did not.

I didn't know I was going to be a mommy again. I didn't know how much they bond to one person, and we are the light of their world. That they can not wait for the morning to say "Hi bird". I did not know that they were born for destruction,

but they are not doing it to be hateful. That is just who they are. I did not know that I would need a small dustbin and broom and a roll of paper towels in each room to clean up after them. They are so messy. I did not know that if you have large birds, and they are having a temper tantrum, you better hope that you do not have neighbours close by.

Would I do this again? You bet I would. In return for a forever home, Tombo and Shamus have given me their devotion in return and truly do love their life. Their antics are hilarious and they have brought many laughs. We live in a very small town, and all the businesses know Tombo and love it when I bring him in. Only animal people would understand this, but my husband and I took care of foster children for 12 years. Children of all ages. And each time a child was moved to another home, their ability to bond became more and more difficult. Now as I see this throw away society throwing these wonderful birds away, and not caring what it is doing to them emotionally, it truly breaks my heart. I would never try to talk someone into a bird. They would have to prove that they are really committed.

We are the only defence they have. We have brought them into our selfish world of "I want" and then they are discarded, victims of our discontent. I wrote this article in hope that someone will think twice before taking on the unbelievable responsibility of owning a large bird. So many times people will go into a pet shop and hear all the positives of owning a large bird, but not how much time they require, and how much work they truly are. ■

*Shamus - a permanent fixture in the Shaddock household*





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# Summer Event in Stockholm

Photographs by Peter Tössberg

*Birgitta Magnusson and Peter Tössberg write about the picnics that are held in The Haga Park in Stockholm every summer*



*This beautiful Scarlet Macaw brought his own picnic chair*

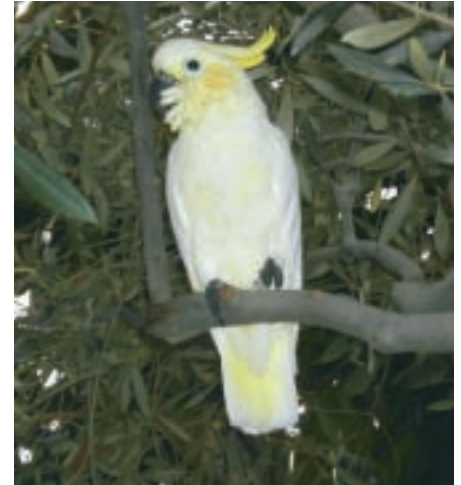
For many years there have been parrot picnics arranged in a park in the centre of Stockholm, The Haga Park. The Park is located in The National Urban Park, also called the Ecopark, established by the Swedish parliament in 1995. The Ecopark has a total area of about 2700 hectares (27 km<sup>2</sup>) and is a green oasis - it's also the world's first national urban park ([www.ekoparken.com](http://www.ekoparken.com)).

These picnics began, because parrot owners, who were members of the Stockholm Aviculture Association, wanted to meet and talk about birds - in the summer period as well, when the association had a pause in their ordinary meetings. At first, it was usually only one or two parrot picnics during the whole summer, but the picnics have increased in numbers during the last 4-5 years, and now it is no longer open just for members, but everyone who is interested may come.

The first parrot picnic for the season is usually held in late May or in the beginning of June (depending on the weather) and the last one is usually held at the beginning

of September. Normally there will be at least one parrot picnic per month, and they are held on either Saturday or Sunday between 11 am and 4 pm. For the members and other visitors, they can just drop in when they want between these hours.

### *New encounters between people and parrots*



*A Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo*

Since we are members of two aviculture associations, Stockholm Aviculture Association (Stockholms Fågelörening) and the newly started Swedish Pet Bird Association (Sveriges Tamfågelörening), we have the possibility to attend parrot picnics twice a month as both associations arrange their own picnic every month.

### *Many people, and parrots of all kinds*

We often let our Amazons accompany us to the picnics if the weather is good. We think that it is very stimulating for them. There can sometimes be up to one hundred people





*One of the runaways perched high up on a tree*

attending these picnics, together with their birds, and it is a good opportunity for our Amazons to get used to other people and birds. People from all parts of Sweden attend, especially in July, as this is the main summer holiday period in Sweden. Many parrot owners then take the opportunity to visit Stockholm and these picnics during their holiday.

The parrots that attend the picnics are of many different species and sizes. The most common parrots are Amazons, Cockatoos and Macaws, with a lot of different species represented, but African Greys, Jardine's Parrots, Senegal Parrots,

Pionus, Caiques, cockatiels and budgerigars are also rather common.

### ***Free flight without their owners' permission***

Most of the parrots sit on their owners' shoulders, as they are wing-clipped or equipped with a harness. However, sometimes there have been some incidents. Once a small Caique took the opportunity to try its wings and in a second it was perched high up in a tree. Despite the owner's attempts to call him to come down, he was too content, or perhaps too anxious, to come down. In

*Our Amazons at one of the parrot picnics this summer*



*Some of us will do almost anything to be in a picture*

the end, the owner became desperate and called the Stockholm Fire Brigade which came with a truck that had a big ladder. The owner went up together with a fireman on the ladder, and tried to persuade the bird to go into the transport cage, which he had brought with him, but in vain. Despite several tries, the bird refused to go into the cage, instead he moved further away from them. The Stockholm Fire Brigade had to give up and went away. Finally, however, this story had a happy ending. Suddenly the Caique became afraid of something and took a long flight which fortunately ended in the grass, on the ground, and the president of the Swedish Pet Bird Association, who turned out to be a good runner, managed to catch the little runaway before he took to flight again. The first thing the owner did after this was to have the little parrot wing-clipped at once. He had missed (probably liked many before him) that some feathers had grown out again and that the bird could fly perfectly with a little help from the wind.

On an other occasion, the owner of two Blue-fronted Amazons nearly got the coffee down the wrong way. The birds were sitting on their transport cages and these birds were neither wing-clipped, nor did they wear a harness. Suddenly one of them decided that it would be fun to sit in a higher place and flew straight up on a branch of a big tree. No ladder that was available was long enough to reach him and the owner could not manage to get him down with the help of food. What should he do to solve this problem? He got an idea. Since the birds were used to free flight training at the backyard of his





*Two beautiful Blue and Yellow Macaws attending an indoor meeting at The Haga Park*

house, he took the other bird, who was now sitting in his cage, with him and went away from the tree. The bird in the tree became anxious and suddenly tried to fly after his owner and mate. However, since this took place at a great grass lawn,

*Two Umbrella Cockatoos at an indoor meeting in the Butterfly House in the Haga Park*



*It's not only people who want to have their afternoon tea in the park*

there was nothing for him to land on, except for the ground, so he flew in circles until he finally was exhausted, and managed to land on a car which was parked nearby. The owner managed to

excel himself in running to catch him. Also in this case, the story ends with the birds being wing-clipped at once. Even if the owner liked to practise free flight training with his birds, he probably no longer dared take the risk of losing the birds forever.

As we have been at nearly all parrot picnics since the very beginning, we have seen a lot of birds fly away, despite the fact that they were, as the owners thought, sufficiently wing-clipped. Luckily, every bird that took the possibility to try their wings in freedom has been caught again.

Since our Amazons are neither wing-clipped, nor equipped with a harness, we never take any risks and we therefore let them sit in their transport cages during the picnic.

### ***Indoor parrot meetings in winter***

We have also, during the last winter, attended some indoor parrot meetings arranged by the Swedish Pet Bird Association, with free flight training in one of the big greenhouses (size about 35 x 10 meters and height about 5 meters) at the Butterfly House in the Haga Park. This has been a real success, both for the Butterfly House and for the Association, with a lot of visitors, who from the beginning came to visit the Butterfly House in the Haga Park, but now also have the opportunity to watch the flying parrots.

### ***Something for other parrot associations to imitate?***

Are there any other parrot associations worldwide that also arrange parrot picnics in the summer period for their members? If not, this article might inspire some of them to do so, since we think that it is a good opportunity for people interested in parrots to meet in an easy way, and it is also a good opportunity for the parrot association to recruit new members.

We suggest that any readers of *Parrots* magazine who are visiting Stockholm in the summer should try to visit a parrot picnic if this is possible. ■



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# The Captive Parrots of Margarita Island

PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO



An adult Yellow-shouldered Amazon, healthy and full of life

## The Other Face of Being Endangered - by David Waugh, Loro Parque Fundación

**Pet: a domestic or tamed animal or bird kept for companionship or pleasure.**

So says the dictionary. The brilliant colours and appealing behaviours of parrots make them popular as pets, and these characteristics give, or should give, much pleasure to their owners, over many years of companionship with such long-lived birds. Integral to the pleasure of having a pet parrot is the satisfaction of providing everything to keep it lively, vociferous and colourful. But if a parrot is treated as just another object around the house, is it really a companion? And if the basic needs of a parrot are neglected, surely this is not pleasurable, is it?

The example this article presents will show you that we still have a long way to go to give back some of what we take. Furthermore, it describes the insult added to the injury: that parrots now being kept in lamentable conditions have been removed in large numbers from the wild, causing the species to slide towards extinction. It presents the other face of being endangered – and it is no pleasure.

The situation described is on the Island of Margarita in Venezuela, but this is just an example of something that,

unfortunately, is much more widespread in the world. Thus, I am not unfairly picking on the pet owners who live on Margarita Island. If you could meet people from there who keep pet parrots in shocking conditions, you would not perceive them as being intrinsically bad or cruel, or even indifferent. The situation closely relates to tradition, established cultural norms and, of major significance, lack of awareness.

Margarita Island has an important wild population of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*), and an endemic subspecies of Blue-crowned Conure (*Aratinga acuticaudata neoxena*). Both kinds of parrot are threatened with extinction, and for their conservation in the short- and long-term, the Loro Parque Fundación (LPF) has been funding a project run by the Venezuelan NGO, Provita. The main part of the project involves using the island's threatened parrots as conservation symbols to increase awareness, and to change the attitudes and behaviour of local people towards protecting their own natural resources and the region's biodiversity.

The habitat for the amazon is the dry forest confined to the Macanao Peninsula on the west of the island, whereas the conure has an even more restricted habitat, the patches of mangrove, also on the west of the island, the largest patch occurring in La



PHOTO: PROVITA



*A healthy brood of Yellow-shouldered Amazons, with the chance to fly from the nest*

PHOTO: PROVITA



*The dry forest habitat of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon on Margarita Island*

Restinga Lagoon National Park. Despite being in a protected area, the mangroves are still subject to disturbance, as is the dry forest, which has the additional pressure of clearance and degradation.

Nevertheless, the current main threat to both parrot species, causing the steep declines in their populations and impeding their recovery, is the removal of young birds from nests to sell as pets.

Provita has responded by

making the direct protection of nests an immediate priority, so as to ensure at least some recruitment of young birds to the populations each year. The poachers, all locals who know the area like the back of the hand, remove the chicks at night. To thwart their efforts, at key sites, the Provita team has been removing the chicks at dusk, keeping them in safe custody overnight and returning them to the nests at day-break. But this can be hazardous. Last year the safe custody turned out to be not so safe, when armed men raided the overnight retreat and helped themselves to the chicks. Needless to say, the Provita team now has local police protection for keeping the chicks overnight.

Taking the parrots from the wild and keeping them is illegal, but having them as pets is deeply ingrained in the local culture, and this will take a long time to change. Boys in their late teens have traditionally been recruited into the poaching fraternity, and therefore Provita focuses its project in the longer-term on cutting the recruitment link, through its environmental education work with the children of the region. Meanwhile, other things can be done, such as conducting a census of the parrots kept locally as pets, and registering them, to provide a baseline for future censuses which perhaps can show if there is any change, hopefully a decline, in the number of new young birds appearing as pets. Also

important is to examine the conditions under which these pet parrots are kept, and to promote another strand of awareness, that of the well-being of the birds and how to keep them healthy and happy. Working in collaboration with Provita, this is what Mar Carrasco Muñoz, a Spanish veterinarian, decided to begin in 2007.

Mar conducted a census of the two species kept as pets, and also evaluated the condition of the parrots and how they were kept. Given that keeping these parrots is illegal, such a study has its limitations, because some people might be reluctant to cooperate. Mar describes scenes of people at the front of the house swearing blind that they did not have parrots, while at the same time a Yellow-shouldered Amazon was screeching its head off around the back! However, Mar managed to

obtain useful information, and had the stomach to document what this article presents to you. Since both species occur on the west side of the island, this is where the study was focused, in the communities on the Macanao Peninsula, La Restinga and Chacachacare. In seven communities, Mar found only 15 Blue-crowned Conures, but 253 Yellow-shouldered Amazons, by far the preferred species because of its colours and talking ability. Because of the reticence of some owners to declare their parrots, these are minimum figures.



*Two Yellow-shouldered Amazons in typical small cage*

PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO



PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO



*A cage far too small*

PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO



*Distressing skin and feather condition of a neglected Yellow-shouldered Amazon*

Of the amazons, 49% were in the main town of Boca del Río. Of the houses with this species as a pet, 70% of them kept only one amazon, and the maximum number found in any house was six (two houses only). The pet amazons had mainly come from the west side of Margarita Island, although another source, especially for the town of Chacachacare, was the island of La Blanquilla, where fishermen have routinely collected chicks. As another indication of the local cultural significance of keeping parrots, 64% of the pet owners had acquired them as gifts, and the remainder had purchased them, except for one case where the owner himself had taken a young amazon from the nest, and another case where an amazon flew into the house (presumably an escapee from another owner).

The owners had acquired their parrots as juveniles in 59% of the cases, and 27% had been acquired as downy chicks. The level of mortality must be significant, but more work is needed to make a reasonably accurate estimate. In most cases, therefore, it was possible to determine the ages of the pet amazons, and Mar found that 37% were between the ages of four and seven years, 34% less than three years, and only 13.7% more than 15 years. This age distribution could reflect an increase in the amount of nest-poaching in recent years, or that few pet amazons achieve their life expectancy due to sub-standard keeping conditions, or a combination of these and other factors.

A shorter than anticipated life-span can be strongly inferred from the distressing conditions in which many of the parrots are kept. Most amazons (52%) were kept free in the owner's house (with cutting of the flight feathers common practice), 10% were tethered to perches, all with attendant risks. 38% were kept in cages, of which 40% were too small, some to an indescribable extent of restriction of movement, and others where cleaning of food remains and excrement apparently never happens. Under such conditions, it is almost inevitable that the condition of the birds can deteriorate, feather and skin problems can thrive, and diseases can take hold. Although the pet amazons were given fruits (97.6%) and vegetables (75.9%), 33.6% also had meat, and 37.5% had fish included in the diet, and 85.8% had "food of the house", which could include items such as boiled rice, cooked beans and "arepas" (traditional cakes of maize-meal). All these aspects add up to an environment deficient in providing for the needs of healthy, contented pet parrots. And a shortened life-span still poses the risk that another chick will be taken from a nest to replace a recently deceased pet.

Did the owners showing an astonishing level of neglect of their parrots get less pleasure and companionship from them? This is perhaps a question that Mar should tackle in 2008. The LPF continues to support the Provita project, and will support Mar to return to Margarita Island this year to continue the study. She will provide information for the authorities to start a register, and above all, will show pet owners how to improve the lives of their parrots, with no - or very little - cost in time and money, and

PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO



*Showing signs of the strain: a Yellow-shouldered Amazon plucks its own feathers*



PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO



*Yellow-shouldered Amazon in a filthy cage*



PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO

*Fertile ground for creating awareness and changing behaviour*

in return to really understand the joy to be gained. Although this article exposes a deplorable situation of parrots lost from the wild and suffering in captivity, the intention is not to dwell on the negative, but to highlight the positive, that action is being taken for the good of our parrot companions on Margarita Island. ■

If you would like to support this effort, please get in touch with the author at [environment@loroparque-fundacion.org](mailto:environment@loroparque-fundacion.org)  
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PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO

*Well, somebody needs to turn the pages!*

PHOTO: MAR CARRASCO

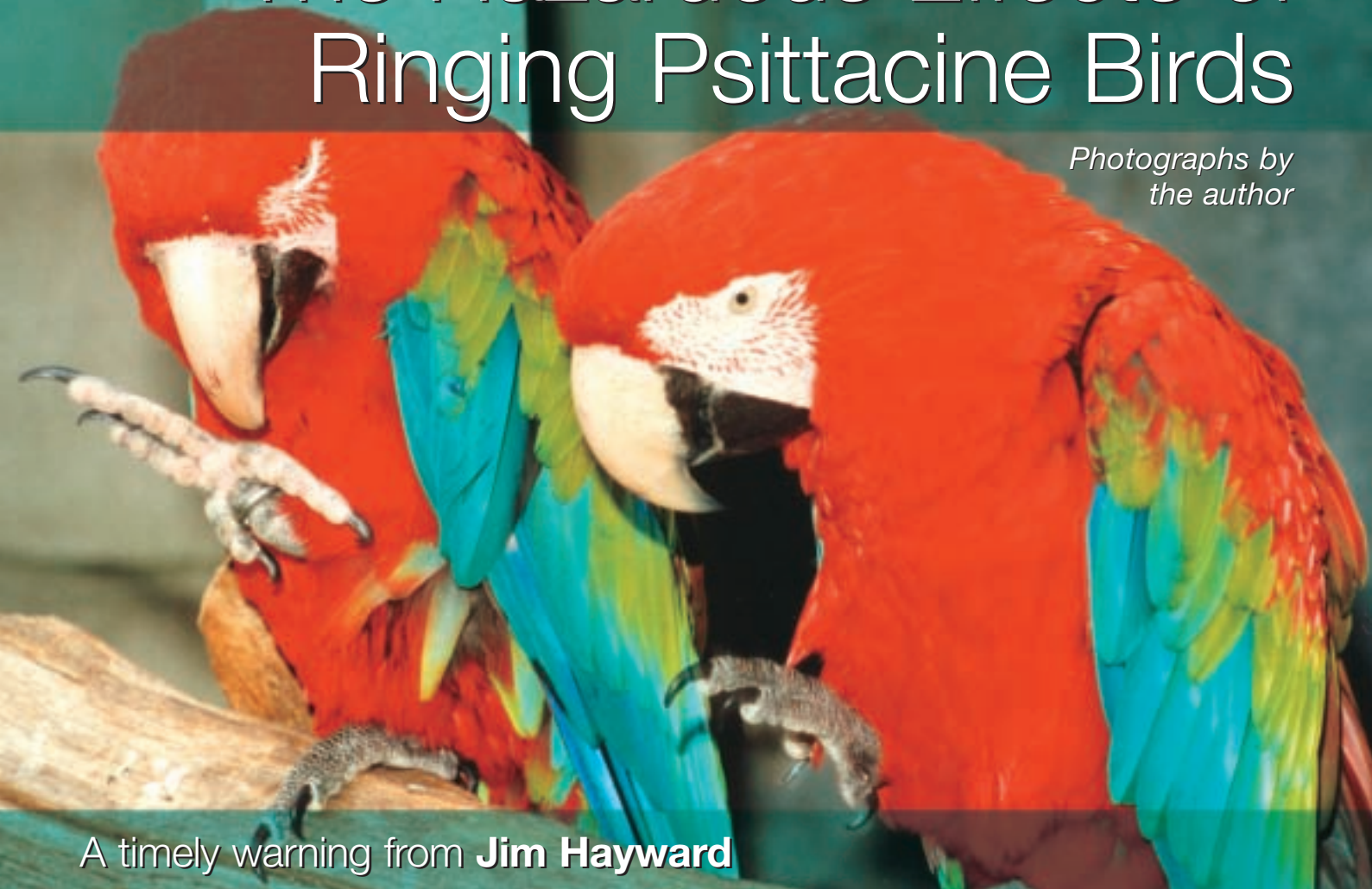


*Anyone for "arepas"? Pet parrots eating maize dough in the kitchen.*



# The Hazardous Effects of Ringing Psittacine Birds

Photographs by  
the author



A timely warning from **Jim Hayward**

*A round-wire ring on a Green-winged Macaw which seems to be showing it to its mate for considered judgement*

**T**he closed ringing of birds is a job which I have had to do since my childhood on innumerable occasions, especially with small species where large numbers of birds were being produced and identification for future breeding records was imperative. Even then - knowing what can happen by way of misfortune to ringed birds - I have carried it out with reluctance.

In the February 2008 issue (No 121) of *Parrots*, John Hayward gave his persuasive views on why he thinks that all birds should be closed ringed and/or micro chipped, but insufficient examples were given to illustrate the dangers and difficulties that the breeder and his birds can face due to this practice; as well as the benefits that go with ringing there are also serious drawbacks.

Novice breeders must be warned that where it is possible for things to go wrong when pursuing the occupation of breeding birds, at some point in their

avicultural career it most definitely will, and not just on an isolated occasion. The problems resulting from the ringing of birds should be clearly outlined so that the breeder is fully prepared to deal with

these problems - if it is possible.

However, provided it is not carried out by someone who is accident prone or naturally clumsy, and not yet too old to have lost dexterity in their fingers for



*Dexterity is needed in handling tiny wriggling creatures (Hatchling Budgerigars)*



handling tiny wriggling creatures without dropping or squashing them, the actual fitting of a ring is easy enough - but can be very fiddly.

It has been suggested recently that birds have no sense of smell, and from this it would follow that they also have a poor sense of taste, but from my own experiences in watching closely the actions and habits of my birds, I have not found either suggestion to be correct. So - firstly - it should be advised that the hands of the attendant must not carry traces of any pungent odours which can be transferred to the young birds - such as: oil, paraffin, creosote, paint, tobacco, chemicals, soap, perfume, and so on - and the hands should be rubbed in dry nest material before handling the youngster.

In general, with the smaller species of psittacine birds, ringing can begin to take place when the nestlings are from around seven days old, to almost three weeks for young of the very largest species, which develop at a slower rate. Some young (even of the same species) grow at a faster rate than others and may even be larger than normal at hatching. Unlike

that is with two toes pointing forward and two back.

The ring supplier will provide a list showing the correct size of ring for each species. Rings are imprinted with a number, year, initials of the owner, and - if obtained from a bird club - initials of the relevant bird society, with a different

nestlings. Likewise, driving hens forcefully from their nests is very dangerous; it is best to wait for an opportune moment when the adult hens can be seen out in the aviary feeding or exercising along with their mates, and then deal with the nestlings as quickly, efficiently and quietly as possible.



*It is easy enough to ring parrots that are being hand-reared, like this batch of young Queen of Bavaria's Conures*

The nest and nesting birds should not be interfered with late in the day, so the best time to do the job is in the morning, which gives the parents plenty of time through the rest of the day to settle back into their routine of feeding and brooding their young.

As a child in the early 1950s - when I bred budgies, canaries and finches - I was taught the method of ringing birds by the experienced breeders of the area in which I live. With budgies, the two front toes were first to be passed through the ring, which was then to be slid over the ball of the foot, and up the leg over the two hind toes. These were then to be flipped out with a pointed match stick. With finches and canaries, which have three toes forward and one facing back, it was different, I was to insert the three front toes through the ring, pass the ring up the leg over the hind toe and then flip that one out last. In recent years it has been noticed that this advice has been changed, and that psittacine birds - like finches - are instructed to be ringed by inserting the three longest toes through the ring first, and then flip out the remaining hind toe - which is the inner and smallest of the bird's toes. Surprisingly, I have found this method to be perhaps easier than the old way as the two hind toes are not then constricted.

The toes and foot may be moistened to allow the ring to slip over easily, but on no account should the ring be forced on when the feet have become too big; if this is



*Budgerigars are regarded as totally domesticated and generally accept their young being handled, but this is not true of all psittacines*

finches and song birds, which seem to have thin horny legs and scaly toes, the legs and feet of the parrot tribe are generally much more fleshy, the toes strong and grasping. The thick feet and toes of some parrots often remind me much more of an animal's paws, perhaps rather more simian-like than bird-like. The arrangement of toes in all psittacines (from budgies to macaws) is *zygodactyl*,

anodised colour designated for each year. The ring must be placed the right way up on the leg so the figures and letters can be read easily.

However domesticated the parent birds may seem, disturbance to the nest, the consequential interference to the breeding birds' routine, and invasion of their territory, always brings risks of desertion, maiming and deaths of



*The disturbance caused to nesting birds when ringing their young can end in nests being deserted or the young being killed (Hen Derbyan with nestlings)*

attempted, it is easy for tender flesh to be split and torn, and joints dislocated. It is better to try the ring earlier, while the nestling is smaller and - if it slips off - replace it a day or so later. Don't forget to make records of the ring number, parentage, and so on at the time of ringing.

Plastering the ring with droppings from the adult birds may help to camouflage it from the attention of the parents; young can be damaged, killed or carried out of the nest when the parents' natural curiosity and suspicion cause them to pick at the ring and try to remove it.

In my experience it is most dangerous to use aluminium split rings with psittacine birds, even as temporary markers. I have found that - on occasion - even budgies of a persistent nature can manage to work at them and squash them up into the flesh of their legs. Just think what a much larger bird could do with them.

Though the method of ringing a nestling has been described here, it does not mean that I *advise* breeders to ring their birds. As mentioned, it is of course a common practice with easily bred cage birds and serves to identify individual specimens where a breeder holds a large stock, but all breeders will have had experiences where birds have been maimed or died as a direct result of being fitted with a ring; apart from this, in many cases, the disturbance caused by the breeder to the nesting birds when fitting rings on youngsters can end in the nest being deserted or the young killed.

Of course, it is easy enough to ring parrots that are being *hand-reared* as none of the dangers of upsetting the parent birds exists, but nowadays some, if not most, breeders totally avoid producing handreared specimens, because their value as breeding stock has been brought

into question since the years when hand rearing was the up-and-coming trend. This attitude towards handreared specimens is becoming true of more and more

experienced specialist breeders who are breeding birds to conserve and maintain a particular scarce or rare species or variety, rather than produce parrots destined for the pet market.

Ringing the young of medium to large sized species of parrots and parakeets in the nest is a tricky job and not only entails the risk of desertion, and squashed and mutilated young (as also with the smaller species), but also a good chance of the attendant getting severely bitten by the irate parents. Tame parrots that have been hand-reared and totally lack fear and any wariness of their attendant, are even more likely to attack someone interfering with their nest than are parent reared birds.

Apart from the danger of getting hooked up by their rings on undetected broken wire in the aviary structure, or on other unforeseen snags, strong jawed parrots can squash even a thick ring into their legs. This will cut off the blood supply, cause swelling, inflammation, infection and necrosis. If the bird does not die from blood poisoning, at the least, the whole foot will dry up like a dead twig and either snap off over time or be gnawed off by the affected bird itself.

We are told we should use tougher metal to withstand the pressure of the birds' bills, but I wonder if the people advising this have ever tried to remove a solid steel or brass ring from a large, frightened parrot whose leg has suddenly swelled up to such an extent that the flesh covers the ring on each side? This may occur at a time when the attendant is on their own with no one else around to assist by holding the bird.

Getting hooked up is not the only cause of legs swelling up around a ring; for example parrots often attack each other and bite toes or feet, or some species may be prone to frostbite and this will cause the leg to swell. To get at the ring there is no option but to dig into the flesh of the leg. If the metal is hard enough to withstand the strongest bill, it is unlikely that it can be removed with small cutters, and the only option left may be to have the leg removed by surgery. If

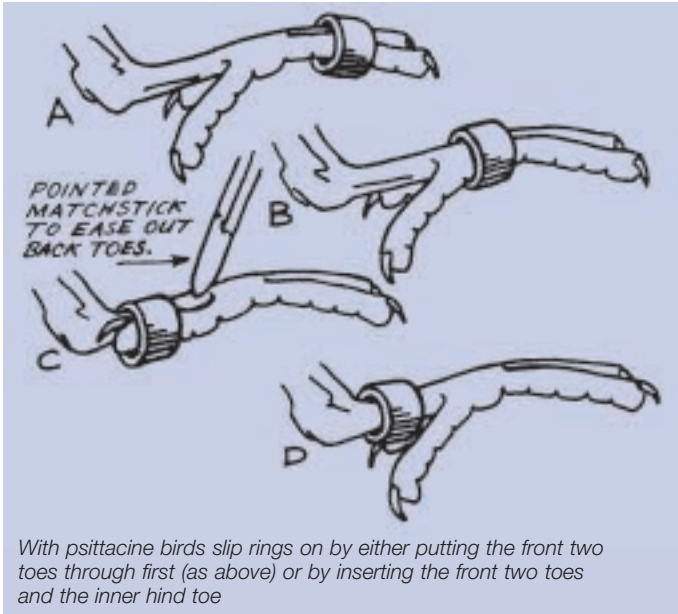


*The feet of parrots are fleshy, strong and grasping (Cinnamon Orange-winged Amazon)*

the ring is made of aluminium, there is a chance of removing it with a small pair of fingernail clippers or larger toe nail cutters, and I have had to do this many times - it is not a pleasant job, neither for the bird nor the attendant.

I always keep a small tub of 'Aureomycin' (*chlortetracycline hydrochloride*) antibiotic powder to hand





rings so their stolen haul cannot be identified so easily, and in doing this they will cause the birds even more distress and damage. It can also be imagined that a person so unscrupulous as to steal birds from an aviary would have no qualms about attempting to search out micro chips beneath the skin or embedded in breast muscle, and attempting to

the point where the ring sits between the foot and the first joint of the leg, and this can cause deformation. This has been my experience. I once tried ringing a batch of handreared Queen of Bavaria's Conures, many years ago, with strong aluminium rings. As they matured they all became irritated by the rings and began working away at them; some developed a deformation in the leg because of the rings, all of them worried at the rings continually, gnawing at them until the engraved figures were obliterated. Some crushed the metal into the flesh of the leg, while others even bit their legs with frustration because they could not remove them. In the end, I had to cut off most of the rings myself.

for such occasions, dusted onto the wounds caused by such accidents. It helps prevent bacterial infection and promotes healing.

Always check your birds daily for any behaviour which is out of character. Catch up any ringed birds seen to be continually lifting the foot off the perch, or lying across the perch, and check their legs and feet. Make sure the ring is loose enough to be moved up and down the leg with room to spare, and check for any damage which may need treatment. Early attention by an eagle-eyed attendant can save birds' lives - and their feet.

At various times I have had to deal with birds that have become hooked up by their leg ring. If not discovered quickly enough by the attendant, as they struggle to free themselves from their predicament, they will flutter and twist themselves around and around, working with a corkscrew action against the trapped leg. It can easily be imagined how this wrenches the joints asunder and pulls the leg right out of its socket. In addition, trapped birds fluttering and crying with pain can cause their aviary companions to attack them.

Trying to untangle a bird from the wire often causes even more damage. If a bird is found hanging on the aviary wire in such difficulty, rather than trying to untwist and free it on the spot, it is best to cut out the small patch of mesh on which it is trapped and deal with the patient elsewhere - first shutting any other aviary occupants into the shelter in case they escape from the hole which has been made - and repairing the opening later.

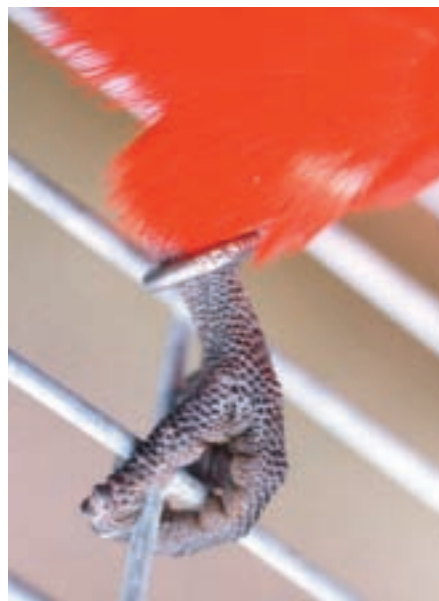
If birds are stolen, any 'professional' thieves must surely be tempted to remove

remove them with a razor or scalpel.

Some parrot species, especially South American, have extremely short bones at



The short bone between the foot and the first joint of the leg can become deformed by ringing (Nestling Queen of Bavaria's Conure)



In the January 2008 magazine of the Parrot Society, the present chairman - Colin O'Hara - also strongly promotes and advocates ringing; he encourages PS members to make sure they have a

supply of the correct rings ready for the coming breeding season. He concedes that it is not practical or possible to closed ring *all* species of birds, but goes on to assert that this is not true of *any* of the parrot family. This is his opinion, arrived at, presumably, from his own experiences, but my own personal experiences (and possibly those of other breeders as well) do not agree with this wide sweeping statement. I have found that *not* all species of psittacine bird and *not* all individual breeding pairs within a species can be expected to tolerate rings on their legs, or tolerate interference to their nests and ringing of their young.

A round-wire split-ring fixed on an Amboina King's leg is used as a temporary marker

Ringling - and the interference to the nesting birds which it entails - can and has caused loss of nestlings, and mutilations or deaths to adult birds, on several occasions.

If the practice of ringling or micro chipping *all* psittacine birds in some way were to be just accepted (even of the most commonly bred and those which are not considered highly endangered), without it being pointed out that *not* all species or individuals can or should be ringed, there is every likelihood that the relevant authority will eventually *insist* that *all* parrot species *must* be closed ringed - and enforce it by law as they did with our native British species.



A watch must be kept for birds which have become hooked up by their leg ring (Black Stella's Lory)

This is likely to lead to a situation where breeders will have to choose between breaking the law when they keep or sell birds which do not carry rings, or losing the young of species or individual pairs which are hard to breed because of attempting to ring them. As an added thought, if it became illegal to keep *any* parrots unless they were closed ringed, what would happen where birds have had to have rings removed through the causes previously explained? It can be envisaged that a state of affairs like this could lead to more aviculturists - maybe a substantial number - ceasing to breed birds altogether, and aviculture



The attendant stands the chance of getting severely bitten by the irate parents when interfering with young in the nest (Breeding pair of Roseate Cockatoos)

would become even further diminished than it is now.

Attitudes on the part of the authorities towards the marking of birds has changed greatly over the last twenty years. At a meeting to which I was invited in London recently, between a number of bird breeders, representatives of bird organizations and DOE officials, Mr R A Ford (DOE wildlife licensing) rejected a suggestion of using microchips on parrots as it was considered to be '*invasive surgery*'. Certainly, migration of microchips around the body has been of concern to many bird keepers, as well as the pain and risk involved when implanted into the breast muscle of a parrot or parakeet.

Carterton Breeding Aviaries - because we do not agree with being forced to ring or microchip birds which we believe are likely to be damaged and suffer because of it - we have ceased breeding endangered parrot species altogether and given up the CITES Registered Breeder status which we have held since the nineteen eighties. I believe the stringent regulations covering parrots, which have been so greatly intensified and ratcheted-up since the nineteen-seventies, have become utterly detrimental to the laudable aim of conserving endangered species of psittacines within aviculture.

In conclusion: it should be clear that the subject of closed ringling of



Ringling a batch of hand-reared Queen of Bavaria's Conures (c.1982) led to deformed legs and crushed rings

It should be noted that under DEFRA regulations (as far as is known at present) all Appendix 1-Annex A endangered parrot species are *already* required to be closed ringed or micro-chipped, but *not* Appendix 2-Annex B species. At

psittacine birds and its consequences are much more complex matters than they appear to be at first sight, and need a great deal more thought and judgement than brief advice and a cursory assessment provides. ■



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# Parrots in Focus

*Photographs by the author*

## *Leadbeater's Cockatoo*

*...Undeniably beautiful! says Cyril Laubscher*



*When erected, a Leadbeater's  
Cockatoo crest is a striking feature  
that is even more dramatic when  
the wings are extended*



### Introduction

Leadbeater's Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*) is the most beautiful cockatoo in the world - a bold statement indeed! I am sure that many cockatoo breeders, ornithologists, aviculturists and bird lovers would agree with me, especially if they have ever had the pleasure of seeing this species in the wild. This delicately coloured cockatoo, with its striking crest and delightful character, has been one of my personal favourites ever since I saw my first Leadbeater's Cockatoo in 1967, at Stan Sindel's magnificent collection near Sydney, Australia.

While I was living in Australia with my wife, Lyn, for a couple of years - from 1966 to 1968 - Stan kindly let me photograph his collection of parrots, finches and softbills during the last year that we spent in Australia. It was towards the end of our stay in Australia that I finally obtained a picture of one of Stan's brilliant Leadbeater's Cockatoo's, landing with its wings raised in one of his aviaries. The picture was not perfect because of the wire in the background, but it was exciting!

### Ornithological Notes

The Leadbeater's Cockatoo is protected by law in all states of Australia, where it is better known as Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, named after Sir Thomas Mitchell, an early explorer, who also wrote in glowing terms about the beauty of this cockatoo. Forshaw wrote in *Australian Parrots*: "It is understandable how Mitchell, while working and travelling under rigorous conditions in unknown arid country, would have been impressed by this bird".

Mitchell wrote in the early 1800's: "Few birds more enliven the monotonous hues of the Australian forest than this beautiful species whose pink-coloured wings and glowing crest might have embellished the air of a more voluptuous region."

Leadbeater's Cockatoos inhabit semi arid and arid country across much of Australia. They are very dependent on water. Nowadays, after much devastation of the natural woodland for grazing purposes in certain areas, and particularly in parts of South Australia where it abounded, there has been a severe decline in the population. The removal of nestlings for pet purposes,

and trapping of adults in the past, added to the declining population.

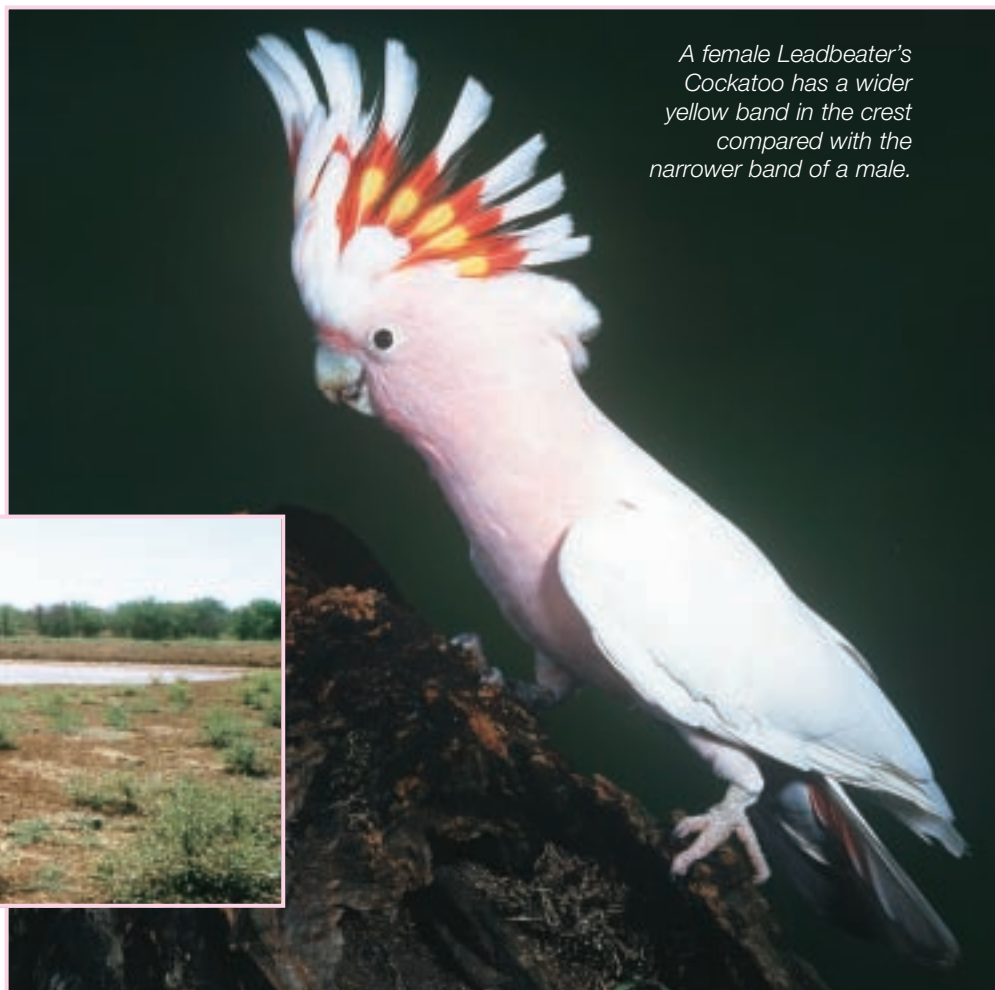
Fortunately, flocks of 50-100 birds can still be seen in parts of south-western Queensland.

### Avicultural Notes

Breeders of Leadbeater's Cockatoos outside of Australia are few and far between, as this is a rare and much sought after cockatoo.

Those who have been fortunate in obtaining them, treasure their breeding pairs. Females have reddish light brown iris and the male's iris is dark brown to blackish. The iris of an immature bird changes between nine to twelve months, and it is then possible to determine the sex of individuals. Fledgling males generally show more pink on the breast than females. Adult females also have a broader yellow band in the crest.

The parents are normally good breeders. Stan Sindel believes that this is the easiest species of cockatoo to breed. Similar comments have been received elsewhere. Three eggs form the normal clutch, but two and four are also recorded. ■



*A female Leadbeater's Cockatoo has a wider yellow band in the crest compared with the narrower band of a male.*



*Leadbeater's Cockatoos are very dependent on water, a highly prized commodity in the outback of Australia.*

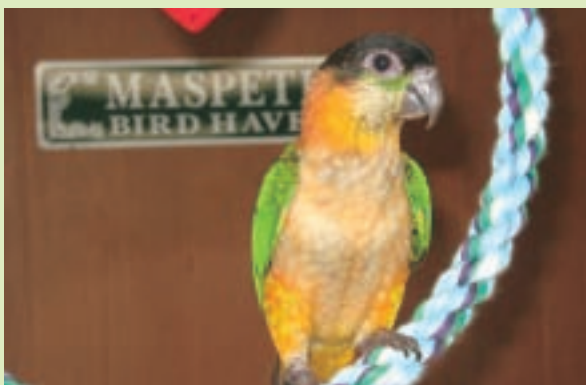
# Maspeth Bird Haven

*A labour of love (and fun) say **Barry and Gayle Schwartz** - another lovely story to illustrate the importance of our campaign to highlight the number of unwanted parrots in the world*

Photographs by the authors

The circumstance which started us on our road to establishing a parrot adoption and rescue organization was our impending marriage, and the situation which changed our lives, in January of 2004, was waiting for Barry's wedding suit to be altered.

While waiting, we decided to walk into the neighboring Petland Discount store. Petland Discount is chain of pet shops located throughout southern New York State, northern New Jersey, and western Connecticut - not the ideal place to ever purchase pets (and now, we of course advocate adoption first), but a fairly decent place to pick up supplies. Debating whether to make our apartment home to an iguana, a snake, or some other creature we could love, we determined that we could love and have fun with Budgies. So, we left the store with not one, but a pair of beautiful little Budgies, which we named Freddy and Perry.



*Scampi, a Black-headed Caique, a permanent resident of Maspeth Bird Haven*

Having quickly become used to our new feathered friends, we began to delve into the world of parrots. We knew that there were many kinds of parrots; we never knew there were some 350 species. We became hungry for more information. We joined local clubs and some national and international societies, while discovering quickly that there was a crisis.

The crisis was that there were many parrots being given up for adoption, for every reason, from abuse to a change in lifestyle or family situation. Moreover, we realized that most of the strictly parrots-only adoption organizations were not located within the confines of the City of New York. As a matter of fact, there were no incorporated parrots-only adoption organizations within New York City! How can that be? There were plenty of cat and dog rescues, even some rabbit rescues, but none for parrots.

Then came a brilliant idea and proposal, one that was about to change our lives forever. Why not start our own parrot rescue and adoption organization? Small-scale, operating out of the apartment we were living in at the time. Barry had prior experience filing paperwork to form a not-for-profit organization, having done so many years before, albeit for an entirely different type of organization. By December 2004, we started operations as Maspeth Bird Haven, Inc, filed our papers with the State of New York, were officially incorporated in January, 2005, and received our US Internal Revenue Service designation as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization in April 2005.

By the summer of 2005, we were on our way to establishing a good reputation in the parrot adoption circles, operating "quietly" out of our apartment. By mid-2005, we had increased our own feathered family to 16 birds and by the end of 2005, had received, and subsequently adopted out, through a strict adoption screening process, 30 parrots.

Our determination to fully immerse ourselves in parrot adoption and rescue (on top of our own full-time jobs, Barry being a Geologist for a City of New York



*Marco and Maya, our Orange-winged Amazons and "Spokesbirds" for Maspeth Bird Haven*

agency, and Gayle, an Administrative Associate), came when we had our first "rescue", an Orange-winged Amazon (*Amazona amazonica*) which we named Casey, a beautiful fellow in spirit and personality, that was being kept in a pathetically small cage in another local pet store in Maspeth, NY. Casey was brought home on May 5, 2005, and it was determined that he suffered from malnutrition. It was also very difficult for him to get around, as he suffered from muscular or nerve damage as a result of a poor diet for who knows how long. With the help of local avian veterinarians, we changed his feeding regimen, increased his stamina, and made him comfortable in a loving environment. Casey - and the thought of him still brings a tear to our eyes - had his good days and he had his bad days. On October 14, 2005, we were ready to bring him, the very next day, to a specialized veterinary center, where we were going to start him on a holistic medicine regimen.

That night, we had Casey in his lined basket he liked to sit in, sitting with us in



bed, before we put him back in his cage, to rest for the next day's trip to the veterinarian. Casey looked out of sorts, perhaps more so than usual that night, and he did something he never did before. He "kissed" both of us. The next morning, we knew why. To this day, we truly believe he was telling us "goodbye, thanks for taking care of me." Casey died some time in the early morning hours, a victim of a stroke or sudden heart failure, as he was found clinging to the side of his cage, in a position he often slept in. Casey was a good bird, his eyes shone with the light of the souls of a million parrots. Casey is why we do what we can to improve people's awareness of the plight of physically and mentally abused, poorly cared for, and "throw-away" parrots.

2006 and 2007 saw us being recognized as a well-established organization, and we were accorded recognition by the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, accepted as a New Hope partner with NYC Animal Care & Control, and have been listed by the ASPCA and the Avian Welfare Coalition as adoption resources. We have been interviewed by local newspapers, a local radio station, and most recently, featured in a two-page spread in the January 8, 2008 edition of the Queens News section of the New York Daily News newspaper. We have conducted two educational presentations at schools in Manhattan, conducted one session of animal-assisted therapy at a local nursing home, and have received praise and accolades from many individuals who have been involved with parrot adoption, rescue and conservation far longer than we have. In September 2006, we moved into our own home, which has since allowed us to expand our capability and capacity.

As of the end of 2007, we have successfully placed a total of over

70 parrots in new and loving homes. We have the part-time help of Barry's son, Peter, who loves handling *all* parrots, from Budgies to Moluccan Cockatoos. We have taken on-line and home-study courses on avian care and welfare, and are taking Dr Susan G Friedman's Companion LLP on-line course. We were inspected on February 3, 2008, by the American Sanctuary Association, and if certified, will be the first parrot rescue/adoption organization in the State of New York to be so certified.



*Cookie, a Lesser Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo, in for adoption*

In the course of three years, we've also had to deal with criticism and accusations. We have been accused of being "collectors", of starting Maspeth Bird Haven, Inc for our own gain and to put money in our pockets (a big laugh on our part, considering we usually operate "in the red"). We have received jibes from people who have no concept and no

feeding over 30 parrots twice a day, spending as much time with them as possible. We have two bird rooms, where they are allowed to fly and play freely and in safety. We love parrots, we love fostering them, and we love matching up qualified applicants with a new feathered friend, hopefully, for the rest of their mutual lives. ■

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# The Charnwood Parrot Club

*... as described by Bingo, a Blue and Gold Macaw*

*Photographs by Lynda Wesson*

**C**harnwood Parrot Club is a place where parrots can bring their owners to instruct them in the ways of looking after them properly, and meet other owners and have a good chinwag, because that's what humans appear to enjoy the most!

It was set up by two women, who own - or did own - two independent pet shops that specialise in the care of us, just over two years ago. During that time we (my avian family and I) have made many friends, and our owners have definitely taken on board the "Health and Wellbeing" guidance that the committee have offered over this time. We now get much better grub and have the correct amount of vitamins and minerals - just like the owners make sure they give themselves.

Once every four weeks we are transported to a divine place, well it's a change from the four walls! It's at the Co-operative Sports & Social Club in Birstall, Leicestershire. We get there about 8pm as the day is drawing to a close, and leave supposedly at 10pm, but these humans are always nattering and the poor chap (Gordon) who runs this place is always having to wait for them to leave. Funny thing is, he talks as much as the owners and causes them to be even later sometimes. There was a time when the air was not too fresh. This was due to these humans setting fire to white sticks,



*This is me!*



*Jasper giving us all a glorious tune*



*This cockatiel is a visitor to the club*

which they held, not in their hands so much as in their mouths. Quite extraordinary we thought, but they seemed to enjoy it. Anyway this appears to have stopped, but people do seem to go outside more than they did. I wonder if the two instances are connected?

During this period of delightful freedom, we meet lots of our avian relatives. Actually we have a natter too, and boy, can we out do the humans on volume!! Sometimes we go for a walk to meet other parrots and their owners and check out what their accommodation for the evening is like. Sometimes the leaders put on the TV, actually it's a really big picture that covers nearly





*Benson eating a seed cake made by Lynda*

the whole wall and then they switch the lights off. It's at this point when one gets homesick for one's own lounge and TV, but we can still climb down and sit on our beloved owner's shoulder and watch the program with them. They showed a film on how to train us not long ago, but we showed them who's boss and made them carry on for a bit before we gave in and did what they wanted - after all they do enjoy it!

Every now and then they have a 'playtime' for themselves (the humans that is). I think they call it a party. There's always lots for them to eat and drink and one of the pet shop owners (Lynda) always remembers us and bakes some sort of cake as a treat. I do wish my owner would do this at home more often - they really are rather good. I must say that they are a friendly bunch these parrot owners and they are always laughing, if not at each other, then they always find what we do amusing.

Some time ago there was a threat to the continuation of these trips out. I think someone had the flu. I know they were talking about it all the time, with lots of information and papers flying about. It was great fun to chew these up, but they (the owners) didn't seem to appreciate this.

A little dicky bird (Snowy the budgie actually) told me that soon they are going to have some important visitors who are



*Buddy in the blue harness and Fizz in the red harness*

going to answer questions about us. A lady called Rosemary is one (I think she must be short as they call her Lowe). Another is the man who makes all the vitamins etc. His name is Malcolm and his company must be good, because it's called the Birdcare Co. I think there's another one too, but I haven't managed to catch the name yet. Hope he likes parrots too!!

One thing I do remember is a time when I got a bit worried. They had an auction. I gathered this was an event when we parrot-likes change owners. I wasn't too keen on this as I quite like the ones I've got, sort of become used to their funny little



*Chester the cockatoo*

ways. Anyway, I was relieved when off they went without me. I did hear that some birds did get sold and that, as usual, the humans had a really good time. You could tell it on their little faces when they returned home.

Another thing I like about this 'club' is the fact that I get a

bit spoilt, because the lady (Lynda) who still has the pet shop in Loughborough (I think it's called Pets Paradise) always brings along toys, treats, food, vitamins etc etc, and if my claws are getting a bit too long then someone cuts them for me. Why they bother using a towel I really don't know. I only give them a little nip in fun! However, sometimes when the towel comes out, I've noticed that I have difficulty in flying afterwards. Whether they have missed my claws and caught my wing feathers by mistake I don't know, but anyway I just rely upon my owners to get me to where I want to go; they're very obliging.



*Jasper enjoys playing with his stick*

Well I think I've told you as much as I can remember and I have missed a few occasions so I might have missed something really good. So why don't you get your owner to bring you along one night. I know you will enjoy it and there's a fair chance they will too, especially when they find out you can drink brown water. Why they like it I really don't know as it's quite bitter, but drink it they do - by the pint!!! ■

[www.charnwoodparrotclub.org.uk](http://www.charnwoodparrotclub.org.uk)

# “Colour, Flavour and Excitement....”

*Photographs by the author*



## *Bob Alison tells us more about the famous parrots of San Francisco*

*The Red-masked Conure - arguably the most famous of the feral exotic parrots of California (above)*

*Favourite haunts include affluent urban residential neighbourhoods*



**S**atellite populations of several species of non-native, and mostly Neotropical, psittacids have become widely established in the United States in recent decades. California has the greatest diversity in free-flying exotic parrots,

including several thousand individuals: six members of the genus *Amazona*, three *Aratinga*, two *Brotogeris*, one *Nandayus* and one *Psittacula*.

The Red-masked Conure (*Aratinga aerythrogens*) is arguably the most famous of the feral exotic parrots of California, owing primarily to its high profile as a prominent avian resident of downtown San Francisco, where it has celebrity status. Some of its favourite haunts include the skyscraper-strewn financial district and affluent urban residential neighbourhoods. The San Francisco flock, which currently comprises over 300 birds, has been regularly publicized, because it is such a unique element in the local avifauna.

The origin of the Red-masked Conures in San Francisco is unclear. Anecdotal information suggests that smuggled escapees or released pets might have generated the current wild population. Although some individuals might have been present in the 1980's, the first confirmed reports date to October 1990. By 1999, the local flock comprised about 100 birds,



and researchers concluded that the parental stock probably derived from imported parrots from Ecuador. The birds had by then become locally very popular, and San Francisco Supervisor, Mark Leno, at that time confirmed that the birds added "colour, flavour and excitement" to the urban landscape.

Eventually, the San Francisco parrots occupied an area comprising about 7 square kilometres, often frequenting public parks and residential gardens. Recent dispersal from the core range has been documented, and flocks have relocated as far away as the suburb of Brisbane.

Recently, the parrots of San Francisco have become increasingly contentious. Attempts to remove some of their vital habitat components have been vigorously opposed by parrot enthusiasts; mainly old-growth Monterey cypresses and aged eucalypts, which are favoured roost sites. The matter of artificial feeding of the parrots has repeatedly surfaced, and in 2007, a local bylaw banning parrot feeding in all public places was put into effect. That measure was unpopular among some local residents, although it was endorsed by those who had concluded the birds would fare much better without having to depend

on human handouts to supplement their diet.

"We used to feed them every day and they would perch on our shoulders and take seeds from our hands," said one woman to whom I spoke recently in a park normally frequented by the flock. "The birds are still very tame, but we don't feed them any more."

Ferry Park, near the San Francisco waterfront, has long been one of the most reliable places to find the conure flock. According to the San Francisco Department of Recreation and Parks, the parrots congregate in Ferry Park daily, usually an hour or two before sunset.

"They are there every day, and by early the next morning, they are gone to forage at Telegraph Hill and elsewhere," said local parrot enthusiast Raphael



*I recently went to Ferry Park, where the conures showed up every day about 5 pm*

Schnitzler. "They roost in the park, and they often attract many people who like to see and photograph them."

I recently went to Ferry Park, where the conures showed up every day about 5 pm. They appeared suddenly, in one flock, swooping in high and settling in the

*Some drank from puddles*





*Typically, they clamber through foliage with great agility, searching for fruit and flowers, which comprise most of the diet*

upper branches of several old poplars. Gradually, they flew down to forage in low fruit trees. Some drank from roadside puddles.

"They are quite a tourist attraction," Schnitzeler said. "But, many local people, like me, love to see them."

The Red-masked Conure is known in aviculture by its alternative name, Cherry-headed Conure (also sometimes Red-masked Parakeet). Its native range comprises the lowland Pacific slopes of western Ecuador and northwestern Peru, up to about 700 metres altitude. Its numbers have been significantly decreased by habitat loss and by poaching of nestlings for the pet trade. It is currently listed as "near-threatened" under IUCN guidelines.

Recent studies confirm that throughout its natural range, this conure is primarily a permanent resident, although some nomadic movements occur in search of ripened fruit. Historically, the flock comprised up to 1,000 individuals, but at present, it is rare to see a flock of more than 200 birds.

They are noisy and gregarious. Their raspy screeches herald their approach and they remain vocal persistently, even while foraging. Typically, they clamber through foliage with great agility, searching for fruit and flowers, which comprise most of the diet.

Nest-sites are almost exclusively tree cavities; often, abandoned woodpecker

holes are used. In San Francisco, they prefer to nest in ornamental palms.

Red-masked Conures have been introduced, purposely or inadvertently, in California, Florida, the West Indies, Greater Antilles and Grand Cayman. Owing to their superior adaptive capabilities, they thrive under a variety of habitat conditions. In view of their tenuous status in their native range, the existence of satellite flocks elsewhere might eventually provide key population reservoirs from which to repopulate suitable sites in Ecuador or Peru.

*They might eventually provide key population reservoirs from which to repopulate suitable sites in Ecuador or Peru*



Red-masked Conures are very similar in appearance to Mitred Conures (*A. mitrata*) and Red-fronted Conures (*A. wagleri*). In Red-masked Conures, the underwing coverts are red; they are green in mitred conures. The extent of the facial red plumage differs greatly between Red-masked and Red-fronted Conures. Regardless, there is a great deal of individual variation in plumage that sometimes makes positive speciation difficult. Some feral flocks contain all three species, and where hybridization takes place, bizarre intermediates often occur.

Aviculturists confirm that these are very intelligent birds and they often acquire a large repertoire of learned vocalizations. They are

excellent mimics of human speech. Most are very affectionate, but some can be quarrelsome when foraging in groups. Most aviculturists say they are playful and amusing pets.

The usual clutch is 3-4 eggs, incubated about 24 days. Young typically fledge at about 11 weeks of age. Facial red masks are gradually acquired after the age of four months, and intensification of the red colouration occurs over a period of several years. Preliminary studies suggest females select mates largely on the intensity and extent of the red mask. ■



# Giant Christmas Crossword - Winner

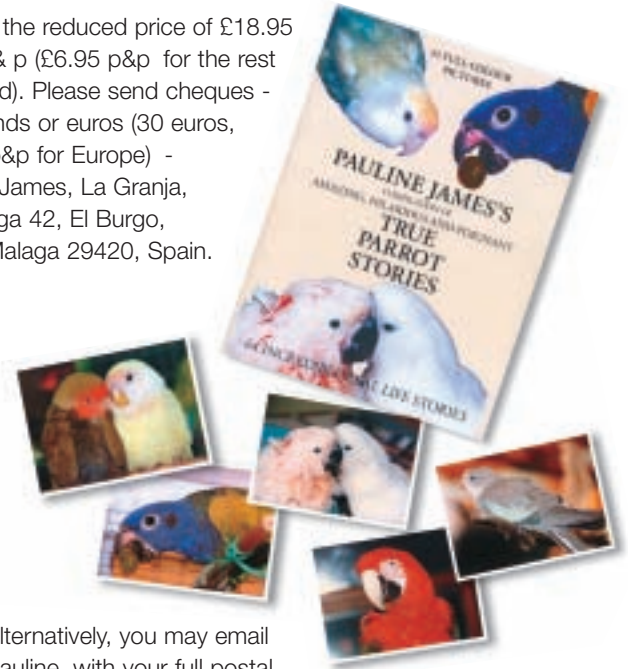
We received only one correct entry from overseas for the Crossword, so a copy of *Pauline James's Compilation of Amazing, Hilarious and Poignant True Parrot Stories* - plus five A4-sized full-colour photographs from the book - go to **Morgan Carlyon of Brunswick, Victoria, Australia**. Our congratulations to you, Morgan.

Here's the Crossword with the correct answers:

Pauline James's *Compilation of Amazing, Hilarious and Poignant True Parrot Stories* - in full-colour - tells a total of 64 incredible real life stories about parrots. This quality publication includes 42 stunning full-colour photos and 32 black and white pictures. Published by Trafford Publishing, the book is available now and retails at just £23.95.

Pauline is, however, offering her book direct to readers of *Parrots* magazine in the UK and

Europe at the reduced price of £18.95 + £4.95 p&p (£6.95 p&p for the rest of the world). Please send cheques - in UK pounds or euros (30 euros, including p&p for Europe) - to Pauline James, La Granja, Calle Malaga 42, El Burgo, Malaga 29420, Spain.



Alternatively, you may email Pauline, with your full postal address and make a secure 'Paypal' payment over the internet with a credit card. For details of this option please email Pauline at: [pmjames9@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pmjames9@yahoo.co.uk), and you will be provided with a direct link to her Paypal account.

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# Hope for the Red-fronted Macaw

Photographs courtesy of Asociacion Armonia

*Jörg Asmus is responsible for Species Conservation Projects at the Vereinigung für Zucht und Erhaltung einheimischer und fremdländischer Vögel (VZE), and a member of the organisation's scientific advisory board. Here he outlines a strategy whereby the co-operation of breeders could help to conserve this species*



*In Europe the breeding rate is insufficient*



## History

In 1847 the Red-fronted Macaw was introduced in systematic zoology under the scientific name *Ara rubro-genis* by the French ornithologist and scientific collector, Baron Noël Frederic Armand André. In the same year, De Lafresnaye described this Macaw in the 10th edition of the *Revue Zoologique*.

At that time, hardly any information about this impressive parrot existed; knowledge of its behaviour in the wild was not available and experiences in animal husbandry would only be collected by enthusiasts of this species in the following centuries. Since the first sightings of the Red-fronted Macaw, hardly any new background information on its natural habitat and behaviour in the wild was accessible. Until the early 1970s, the species was even regarded as extinct in the wild and only a few preparations could be found in some specialised museums. Finally a group of experts in the ornithological field sighted a population in a 1000 km<sup>2</sup> area in central Bolivia.

## Status in the wild

Compared with other genera of the species Macaw, the Red-fronted Macaw prefers a relatively specialised habitat - the shrub-covered dry valleys of Central Bolivia - in the regions of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Potosi and Chupuisaca - between 1,300 and 2,400 m above sea level, and stretching about 180 km from north to south and 180 km from East to West.

Latest estimates of well known institutions for nature conservation (BirdLife International, IUCN, NaturServe and CITES,



among others) place the overall population in the category Endangered, even though, locally, the species appears frequently. Experts estimate a total of 1,000 individuals, while others lean more to an average of 3,000 to 5,000. Due to the limited amount of effort being put into conservation, no assurance can be given for an improvement in the population of the Red-fronted Macaw in the wild. As long as local farmers perceive the parrots as a pest, whilst national and international trade is ongoing (especially to Brasilia, Argentina and Asia) and whilst destruction of their habitat continues, the population of the Red-fronted Macaw will decline.

The species has been able to substitute its natural habitat with agricultural areas, but this leads to more aggression from local farmers. Expanding infrastructure in Bolivia also plays a part in the destruction of parts of the endemic habitat of the Red-fronted Macaw. All these factors add up to an irreversible fragmentation of the metapopulation. Isolated subpopulations are made up of only about 250 individuals, which might lead to a long term degeneration of the genetic pool through inbreeding. Close familiar relationships between the individuals of isolated island-like subpopulations pose a problem and a threat to this species in its natural habitat.

But what about the Red-fronted Macaw populations outside Bolivia?

### The situation in Europe

In breeding stations throughout Europe, about 200 to 300 individuals of the species exist, and in some parts they are closely related. On a genetic basis this creates a big problem, but apart from this the breeding rate in captivity is insufficient as well. These two factors determine whether or not the Red-fronted Macaw can survive in stable numbers. Due to the improbability of building an exact replica of the natural environment in captivity, parrots tend towards self mutilation.

### Implications for trading to stabilize populations in Europe

It is necessary to create alliances between owners to maintain the genetic variety of the Red-fronted Macaw in Europe. Coordinated by EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) a zoological organization - the EEP (European Endangered species

*The Ecolodge is near a site which is also frequented outside the breeding season*



*It prefers a relatively specialised habitat - between 1,300 and 2,400 m above sea level*

Programme) - is supervised by John Ray of the Twycross Zoo in Great Britain. A connection between this organisation and private owners throughout Europe doesn't yet exist, which means that the overall number of 200 to 300 individuals of the species is yet again split into two subpopulations.

To establish a genetic variety large enough to ensure the survival of the species, a minimum number of individuals in the founding population is required, therefore EAZA and private owners have to collaborate. To accomplish this task, private owners would have to form a coordinated breeding project and declare their interest in the conservation of *Ara rubrogenys*.

The first steps of this project have already been taken, and many useful ideas have formed in the minds of the initiators. For example, a breeding book with all information about available individuals of the Red-



*The creation of a stud book would provide a stronger basis for the survival of this species in captivity*

fronted Macaw would be created for private owners, in collaboration with EAZA's breeding book. All individual data will be reported to the breeding book coordinator and entered in studbook software which will eventually be able to calculate an inbreeding coefficient for assortative mating. This data on individual Red-fronted Macaws is especially important, because information about former illnesses, conditions of life in captivity, daily diet and forms of collectivisation can, over the years, be key to improving life quality and nutrition.

The prototypes for the creation of a stud book are already in existence - a variety of projects being undertaken by the Vereinigung für Zucht und Erhaltung einheimischer und fremdländischer Vogelarten e. V. (VZE), which will take an active role in this project. Through collaboration between EAZA and this initiative, new data could be added to that which already exists, and in a best case scenario, mating between non related birds could be organized. This would eventually lead to a larger genetic pool and create a stronger basis for the survival of this endangered species in captivity.

In 2004, only 29 zoological organisations were part of the EEP, which means that only about 100 individual Red-fronted Macaws were listed and available for breeding. VZE will only be responsible for helping this initiative with the organization of the stud book - all other tasks will be executed by members of the initiative. If private owners and zoological organisations work together, the emerging exchange of experience will have a huge impact.

## Safety concerns

Some private owners have already approached me asking about safety measures. Their main concern is that their addresses may be published, thereby revealing the whereabouts of their parrots. The fear of theft is understandable and reasonable. Even with all possible safety measures, a small risk will exist, however, as a matter of course, all wishes and worries of participants will be taken into account. To keep the contents of the stud book data anonymous, each owner will receive a number. Any requests for personal contact between private owners will be managed by a coordinator, and both parties will have to agree to the contact. If more safety issues arise, all private owners will be welcome to approach me personally and together we will find a satisfactory solution.

## Support for local initiatives conservation in Bolivia

Efforts for the conservation of the Red-fronted Macaw in the wild have been made throughout Bolivia, most importantly by the Bolivian organisation Asociacion Armonia - BirdLife International. In 2002 the organisation Fonds für bedrohte Papageien joined the effort, with funding for a project organised by Armonia, which involved co-operation between the organisation and the inhabitants of three villages at the Rio Mizque. They built an Ecolodge for tourists near a breeding site of the Red-fronted Macaw, which is on steep cliff housing about 20 pairs of Macaws and various other bird species. It is also frequented outside the breeding season, and therefore a year-round attraction for tourists and scientists. Profits are given to the local communities, in the hope that they will realise that the protection of the parrots is more worthwhile than the short-term income derived from the hunting and trading of endangered species. Medical assistance is given to poorer local people, as well agricultural advice.

The search for nesting sites and sites which are used by the animals during the winter, as well as studies on breeding ecology, require a lot of fieldwork. Further measures in biological and ecological research are being planned.

Another field of activity of the Asociacion Armonia – BirdLife International might be the lease of peanut plantations and cornfields where the birds have been feeding in previous years, and giving financial recompense to the local farmers for crop losses. All these activities need funding, so raising money in Germany could be one of the tasks of our initiative. Other types of assistance, and collaboration with other organisations in Bolivia, are possible and desirable. For this purpose contact has been made between our initiative, the Fonds für bedrohte Papageien and the Asociacion Armonia – BirdLife International which will hopefully lead to successful cooperation. The initiators of this project will report regularly about conservation efforts outside Europe and will inform about the uses of all financial funds.

## Germany as "home base" for environmental education regarding Bolivia

Plans are being made to build a breeding station in Germany which will be based on the natural environment of the Red-fronted





*Every breeder and keeper is asked to support this project*

Macaw. This will mainly serve to bring attention to the present situation of this species due to the destruction of its habitat. In addition, an endangered bird species, in a neighbouring area, which faces a similar threat, will be presented. Both examples will be used to raise awareness of the irresponsible handling of nature by mankind, which leads to habitat change and destruction throughout South America, as well as in Germany.

## **Future Visions – determining a genetic catalogue for European birds**

It is envisaged that one day European breeders of the Red-fronted Macaw should eventually be able to find out about the pedigree of their breeding birds. From DNA-samples, special differences in their heritage would be measured, and these parameters catalogued. With these tests, it would be possible to have an orientated choice of breeding birds to save the genetic pool and variability. Also, these studies would ensure that degeneration caused by inbreeding can be reduced. These plans, however, remain a future vision as long as there is no scientific institution with the equipment and will to support these studies.

## **A registered association**

An association in Göttingen, Germany, has recently been formed to co-ordinate efforts to save the Red-fronted Macaw. Consequently, the responsibility and liability of this project rests on people who are willing to put effort into this work and to save

this Ara genus. In the past few years, many individual projects have been started. This is definitely a positive step, but having a single association for each genus would mean that breeders would have to become members of each of them. This would have a negative result on breeders of a single genus, and they might therefore be discouraged from becoming involved. The establishment of this association in Göttingen has been necessary, in order to attract sponsors and supporters, both of which are needed. If this registered association at some stage found that it no longer had the ability to progress with this project, the VZE would carry on with their work on the European breeding book. That is why the collected data from this association has been sent to the author, to ensure that this project has a future, and is not dependent on individuals.

## **Conclusion**

It is understandable that some owners of Red-fronted Macaws are still not convinced that this project can be realized. These projects live and die with the people concerned, hence support is needed. Filling out formulas or giving information about changes or developments is not very time consuming, but it is very important. If breeders of these rare Ara genus think this effort is too great, they should rethink their responsibility towards saving this species. This is the reason why I want to ask every breeder and keeper to support this project, and to give data about their Red-fronted Macaws, for a lasting way to help. ■

Jörg Asmus

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*A Reader's Story*

# Losing Daddy

*Jean Askins wins £25 and two EMP vouchers for her moving story about Elvie*



In April 2007, Elvie lost his human daddy to a massive heart attack. It took me several months before I could come to grips with writing about how the loss of my husband affected Elvie and how we have learned to deal with our grief together.

Fourteen years ago, my husband and I adopted Elvie, our precious Umbrella Cockatoo. Neither of us gave much thought to what grief could do to a companion bird. It is something you just don't read about and was far from my mind until the sadness hit home. We both loved, interacted, played, and cared for Elvie, even though I was his primary person. His daddy ran a close second. We three were a close family that shared our day to day lives together. We included Elvie in family outings, vacations, picnics, or just driving around town running errands. His socialization was important to make him feel comfortable around different people and in different environments.

Elvie slept in our bedroom at night. He was present the morning I found my husband had passed away in his sleep. The shock was so traumatic and I was so bewildered and in such



agony of my own that I forgot Elvie was there, observing me in this state of mind. My sorrow was so intense I was unable to think about how it could be affecting Elvie, who was quietly observing this sad situation. Losing his daddy was hard enough, but being present with all the immediate after effects, had to be a terrible trauma on him too.

Immediately, our happy Elvie became withdrawn, not interested in his toys, or any of his surroundings. He barely spoke a word and started chewing feathers on his chest, accompanied by loss of appetite. Seeing him go downhill so fast made me force myself to stop crying and displaying my own grief and sadness in his presence. He was losing weight for lack of appetite. My immediate thought was, I've lost my husband and I now have a traumatized cockatoo who is grieving so terribly. Seeing him like this helped me to get a grip on myself. He gave me a purpose to immediately make the best of things no matter how lost and sad I felt.

I started to hand feed him special treats, well balanced meals, along with some baby bird formula, to be sure he got enough



food. I weighed him daily to keep close track of his weight. As his emotional outlook improved, his eating improved. I made sure he had plenty of water sprayed on his chest during the day to help avoid this new stress feather chewing from becoming a habit. So far that seems to be working.

Usually in the afternoon, or early evening, he will mention his daddy. I believe he likes to be reassured his daddy is alright and loves him. A few times he has called "Mere daddy" for "Come here daddy". Watching him be so sad and grieve so much made me search for ways to deal with his grief. Telling him daddy has gone to heaven is like telling a toddler their daddy had gone to heaven. When he mentions daddy I also remind him we love daddy too. As I am writing this he is a few feet away on his perch, relaxing from a long day of play. I hear his sweet voice saying "I love daddy, love mommy". Once in a while I take him out on the patio so we can look into the sky as I tell him daddy is looking over us





from up there in heaven. I often wonder, does he understand?

I hope he does. I am so happy he has finally picked up the weight he dropped and is eating well again. He is no longer chewing his chest feathers, and beautiful new feathers are growing in. He will look at me and say "Happy Mama", as though he wants

that extra bit of reassurance. I reply "Yes, mommy is happy". Then he perks up and gives that happy cockatoo flare as he raises his beautiful umbrella crest and sometimes replies "Alright", with that self assured expression adorning his adorable face.

We decided it would be best for us to relocate from the northwest, closer to our daughter, her husband and some old friends in California. Everything fell into place and we had located our new home. I had to start downsizing and packing at a time when Elvie needed extra understanding and attention. I made arrangements to take Elvie for play care at our avian veterinarian during the day, where he spent time playing and interacting with staff or just hanging out in their back office, helping them work. I also consulted with a friend, Dr Cook DVM, in Cicero, Indiana, who shares her life with her own cockatoos and practises parrot behavior. She suggested I place a picture of my husband near Elvie's cage to help him feel closer to him. Elvie enjoyed looking and talking about his daddy.

A week after we moved, Elvie and I took a couple flights to two destinations in the eastern US to visit family and bird friends. This vacation did wonders to give us comfortable and supportive surroundings. All this has played a big part in our healing process. Special thanks to all the wonderful people that have been there for us. You've all helped in one way or another. We will always miss his daddy, but together we will keep each other strong. I am truly blessed to have such an awesome companion cockatoo. ■

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## Dandelion and Milk Thistle

- a winning combination for liver support, says Leslie Moran

**W**hen using a natural and holistic approach in caring for parrots, dandelion and milk thistle are important herbs to include in your regimen for liver support. The liver is the most important organ in the body for maintaining a well functioning metabolism and supporting the body's natural detoxification processes.



**Rainbow, male Crimson-winged Parrot, enjoying his milk thistle seeds**

Everything a parrot is exposed to must be processed by the liver. Synthetic chemicals, in the form of medications, environmental pollutants and pesticides on food all stress the liver. When this organ becomes overworked, the condition is described as having a sluggish or congested liver. As this occurs, bile flow can decrease. This significantly reduces the liver's ability to filter out and neutralize harmful substances.

When the liver becomes sluggish, the changes in body chemistry may not be severe enough to alter the laboratory values seen. Frequently there must already be significant damage done to the liver before it is seen in the blood work. Even though test results can indicate normal liver values, the liver can still be congested.

Many times symptoms can surface when the liver becomes overloaded with all the chemicals, both natural and synthetic, that it must process. Helping the liver to remain in balance can help prevent illness and disease from developing. Providing nutritional support to the liver is always a good idea in any holistic protocol. The easiest way to do this is to regularly include dandelion and milk thistle in a parrot's diet.

One of the most healing, highly nutritious, and medicinal foods that can help nourish and support the liver is the common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). The leaves of this plant have been recognized as being rich in vitamin A and vitamin C, and contain more iron and calcium than spinach. In addition, herbalists recognize that dandelion is a blood cleanser and a diuretic (promoting the production and secretion of urine). Dandelion should not be used in conjunction with

prescription diuretics. Dandelion is also a tonic herb, meaning that it strengthens the entire system, helping to restore normal tone through out the whole body. Because it is a tonic, it can be given daily for months or even years.

Fresh dandelion greens are well known for helping to improve liver function, but the entire plant is medicinal. The leaves, stems, blossoms and roots can all be fed to birds. Chop, mince or puree the plant before adding it to the food. If gathering fresh dandelion greens, do this in an area away from busy streets, other sources of pollution, or chemical weed killers.

Another way to provide your birds access to dandelion, is to use an herbal tincture. Since a majority of herbal tinctures contain alcohol, it is used as the medium for extracting the medicinal qualities from the herb. It is vital to locate a tincture that uses glycerin instead. Depending upon who is consulted, some herbalists will insist that alcohol must be used in order to extract the full spectrum of medicinal healing properties the plant contains. However, the opposing point of view recognizes that alcohol is extremely toxic - to the liver, and to birds.

Aside from being toxic, alcohol based tinctures also have a very strong, and ugly, taste. Many people add several drops of an alcohol based herbal tincture to a bird's drinking water. This would significantly dilute the percentage of alcohol present. However, the bird would receive too low a concentration of the medicinal herb for them to really receive any benefits.

One way to easily give a glycerin based dandelion tincture to hand tame parrots is to mix a few drops (depending on the bird's size and individual needs) in with the liquid DMG they are already receiving. (For more info on DMG see this column in the April 2006, #99, issue of *Parrots* magazine). The glycerin based tincture and the liquid DMG both have a naturally sweet flavor.

Other foods that are good for the liver are leafy, dark green and yellow-orange vegetables. These include collards, spinach, kale, carrots, sweet potatoes, yams and squash. They contain vitamin A carotenes that the body converts to vitamin A - the liver vitamin .

**Milk thistle seeds when compared to an unshelled almond**





Vitamin E and zinc deficiencies are common in human patients with a variety of liver diseases. Foods naturally containing vitamin E include dark green leafy vegetables, eggs, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains. Sprouting legumes, seeds or whole grains dramatically increases their nutritional content of vitamin E and other nutrients. Other foods rich in this vitamin are brown rice, kelp, soybeans, and dandelion.

The body needs zinc in order to maintain proper levels of vitamin E in the blood. Foods containing zinc are brewer's yeast, egg yolks, kelp, lima beans, pecans, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, whole grains and dandelion.

Milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*) is an incredibly powerful medicinal herb known for its ability to protect the liver from toxins, pollutants and free radical damage, while also stimulating the growth of new liver cells. The ingredient responsible for these phenomenal healing qualities is silymarin. Silymarin belongs to an especially potent class of antioxidants, called flavonoids. Milk thistle is available as an alcohol free, glycerin based, liquid tincture, a powder filled capsule, or as seeds. Parrots readily enjoy eating these plump rice sized seeds. Since a majority of parrots will naturally eat seeds, this is truly the easiest way to offer your birds the preventive and healing properties of milk thistle. About ten seeds per 100 grams of body weight is the recommended amount to feed. As a herb, milk thistle has poor water solubility qualities. This means that brewing and consuming a tea of milk thistle is an ineffective way to receive its healthful benefits.

Keeping the liver healthy through preventive health care is much easier than waiting until illness sets in to take action. Milk thistle seeds are available at many herb and natural food stores. Organic milk thistle seeds are also available on my website. I have noticed that birds who receive the milk thistle seeds readily eat and enjoy them. ■



**Rainbow devouring his nutrient rich, liver supporting foods - a blend of organic sprouted grains and legumes, egg food, diced pecan, and sliced green beans**



Leslie Moran works holistically with all animals, specialising in long distance appointments. She combines natural care knowledge, alternative healing methods and intuitive insights to help resolve health or behavioural imbalances. From Nevada (USA).

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# Feeding Habits and Nutritional Needs

*Adam Parsons explains why seed on its own is insufficient for the dietary needs of our pet birds*

As a group, parrots are naturally represented on all inhabited continents today, apart from Europe, with their distribution being centred largely on the tropics. This gives some clues into their nutritional needs, although there has been relatively little detailed research carried into the specific requirements of particular types of parrot, such as the African Grey.

The environment in which parrots occur has shaped their feeding habits and nutritional needs. Not all of them inhabit heavily wooded areas, where food of various types is plentiful through the year. It is actually no coincidence that some of the most popular parrots in aviculture actually originate from parts of the world where the environment is very harsh. The central area of Australia, home to both the budgerigar and cockatiel, is terrain of this type. Water is often in short supply, and food can be correspondingly scarce.

In aviculture, these parrots will thrive on a diet largely comprised of little more than dry seeds, even to the extent of breeding readily. It is no coincidence that the cockatiel - and Australian parakeets in general - are well-represented amongst the earliest breeding records of parrots in captivity, at a time when far less was known about the dietary needs of such birds. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that members of this group can obtain everything that they need to keep them in good health from dry seeds alone.

*Budgerigars, in particular, appear to have a specific need for iodine*



*There has been relatively little detailed research into the specific requirements of parrots such as the African Grey*

Budgerigars, in particular, appear to have a specific need for iodine, with this trace element being vital for their overall metabolism. A deficiency of iodine is a common cause of these birds becoming stuck in the moult, with spikes of new, emerging feathers remaining evident on the head, sometimes for weeks, rather than unfurling normally.

Another sign of an iodine deficiency, which can be apparent at any stage of the year, and not just during the moult, is wheezing. This is most likely to be audible in a group of birds once they are roosting at



*Fruit and greenstuff in the diet is a good source of Vitamin A*

night, and there is little background noise. It is caused by the thyroid glands, which lie in the vicinity of the neck and use the iodine to manufacture the hormones which are released into the blood stream. When there is a deficiency, the glands will become enlarged as they try to compensate for the shortage of iodine. This then causes them to press on the adjacent windpipe, constricting it and so making it harder for the affected budgerigar to breathe.

While seed is a poor source of iodine, you can prevent this problem arising by providing an iodine block. Alternatively, you



can sprinkle some seaweed powder (kelp) over greenstuff for the budgerigars, as this is rich in iodine, while mixing oystershell grit in with mineralised grit can also help to supplement their iodine intake. This can benefit all seedeaters.

Another key ingredient which is deficient in seed is calcium. This is why it is also vital to provide cuttlefish bone or a calcium block to birds throughout the year, although it may only be at the start of the breeding season that the hen starts to



*The shortcomings of seed, in nutritional terms, must be appreciated*

gnaw ferociously at it. A deficiency is likely to result in softshell eggs, and also dramatically increases the risk of egg-binding, which is a serious and often fatal condition. Calcium is required in the body, not just to form the skeleton - it has a vital role to play in muscular contractions, and if there is a deficiency, then the hen will often be unable to force the egg out of her body, resulting in egg-binding. Treatment by a vet therefore often involves giving an injection of a suitable fast-acting calcium product, which ensures the muscles start working normally, to expel the egg from the body.

There are now a number of products available to birdkeepers which act as supplements, helping to compensate for the potential dietary shortcomings linked with seed. The most comprehensive contain not just minerals, trace elements and vitamins, but also certain essential amino acids, with powdered supplements in general containing a wider range of ingredients than those which can be added to drinking water. Amino acids are the basic building blocks from which protein is made, and a number of these, such as lysine, are essential. They cannot be manufactured in the bird's body and must therefore be present in its food if a deficiency is not to occur. Amino acid deficiencies often show up as poor quality feathering.

In many cases, an inadequate diet in the case of parrots will result in poor breeding results, but there is one case where a deficiency can be quite rapidly fatal. This applies to fig parrots, one of the smaller members of the group which naturally feed on these fruits, as their name suggests. They were largely unknown in aviculture until the early 1980s, and subsequently proved to be difficult to establish. Further investigations revealed that they needed to be provided with a Vitamin K supplement. This is a key component of the blood clotting system, and a deficiency acted rather like ingesting the rodent poison warfarin - they suffered from internal haemorrhaging, and died rapidly. This led to the development of a Vitamin K supplement to meet their needs.

Even if a poor diet may not necessarily be fatal, it can make birds more susceptible to disease. This applies particularly in cases of over-reliance on dry seeds, which are especially low in terms of their Vitamin A content. This vitamin helps to protect the body against infection. One of the most common indicators of a Vitamin A deficiency in parrots is often clinical signs of the illness known as candidiasis. This is caused by a yeast-like microbe, which results in whitish inflamed areas in the mouth, and a reluctance to eat.

Parrots such as Eclectus, which normally have a high percentage of fruit and greenstuff in their diet, providing them with Vitamin A, are especially vulnerable to candidiasis if their diet is switched so that seed becomes a much more significant component. In the case of cockatiels, this infection is probably the major cause of death in young nestlings. The adults simply do not have a diet containing sufficient Vitamin A to pass this on to their offspring, who then acquire the Candida microbes when they are fed by their parents. Being more vulnerable, the young birds succumb readily to the infection. Always ensure that cockatiels, like all parrots, are given

*The provision of fresh foods, such as pomegranate, is vital*



*Always ensure that cockatiels are given greenstuff and fruit on a regular basis*

greenstuff and fruit on a regular basis, and sprinkle a nutritional supplement over the moist surfaces, to guard against this deficiency.

Keeping parrots in good health today is more straightforward than at any stage in the past. Seed is cleaner, but you need to appreciate its shortcomings, in nutritional terms, for parrots. When using a supplement, it is better to choose one which has been specially formulated for birds, rather than a general purpose product intended for all pets. Read the instructions carefully, too, so as not to overdose your birds, because in some cases, as with Vitamin A, this can actually be harmful.

Should you prefer to use a complete diet, rather than seed, no additional supplement is recommended, as this food already contains sufficient vitamins and other key ingredients for the birds. Nevertheless, the provision of fresh foods is, again, vital, partly to prevent boredom - which can be a problem in the case of larger parrots. They may get into the wasteful habit of starting to crunch up pellets rather than always eating them. Bear in mind also that pellets will need to be stored carefully, and must not be allowed to become wet. They also have a use-by date, which should not be exceeded, because otherwise, their vitamin value in particular is likely to decline, having a potentially detrimental effect on the parrots' health. ■



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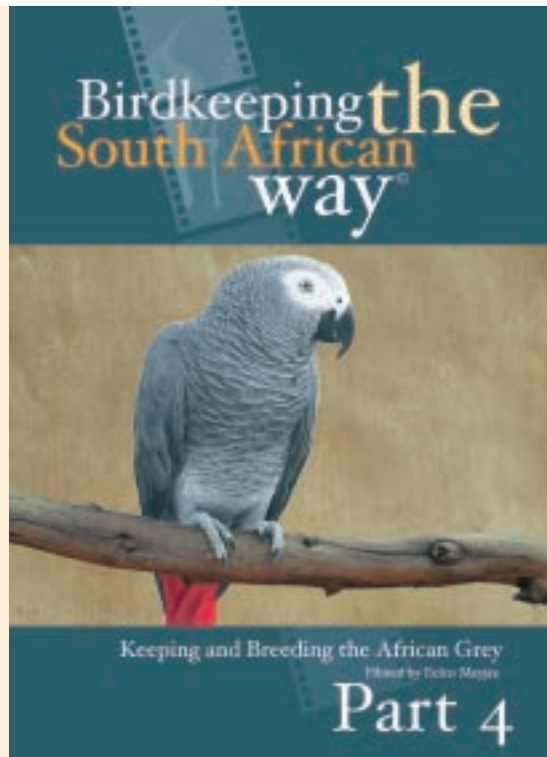
This new DVD, *Keeping and Breeding the African Grey*, will appeal to pet owners as well as to professional breeders of this most popular bird. This 92-minute DVD covers a wide range of issues when keeping as a companion or breeding for the more serious aviculturalist.



Also included is some rare footage of colour mutations and the unusual 'red' African Grey.



It has been filmed on broadcast quality material and it promises to be the world's most informative DVD on the African Grey.



Three more DVDs available from *Parrots* magazine - by popular request  
Part 1, 2 and 3 - see below

### Birdkeeping the South African way – Part 1

Elco Meyjes is chairman of South Africa's leading birdkeeping club, the Rand Avicultural Society, and during his term of office has had the opportunity to visit and film many of the country's most knowledgeable and prominent birdkeepers. 'Birdkeeping the South African Way' brings to you in a reality film format many valuable tips and experiences to help you succeed at this most fascinating hobby called aviculture.



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**Animal & Bird Health Care Centre**  
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### NORTH CAROLINA

Avian Veterinary Services  
Dr Greg Burkett DVM Diplomate ABVP,  
3039 University Drive, Durham, NC 27707, USA  
Tel: 919-490-3001,  
Fax: 919-403-0218.  
Email: birdvet@mindspring.com  
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### TEXAS

Robin Scott DVM, DABVP-Avian Practice,  
Safari Animal Care Centres, 2450 E. Main Suite D,  
League City, Texas 77573. USA.  
Tel: 281 332 5612. www.safarivet.com

Stephen Fronfield DVM, ABVP Avian Services,  
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## PARROT HELPLINE

If you have a parrot problem -  
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whatever - you can contact any  
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They will do their very best to  
point you in the right direction.

**Kathy Moore, W. Sussex**  
(01403 700214)

**Juliet Eberle, Surrey**  
(01306 884569)

**Christine Goodall, Bristol**  
(0117 950 8059)

**Vicki Hammond, Bucks**  
(01494 875641)

**Steve Hogg, Isle Of Wight**  
(01983 855355)

**Paul Latham, Monmouth**  
(Fax only - 01600 714243)

**Berna Perry, Cheshire**  
(01606 592267)

**Sylvia Rush, Spain**  
(00 34 95 2119765)

**Rowan Vanmiller, East Kent**  
(01843 229343 or 223737)

**Lynda Dobinson, London**  
(020 7537 9115)

Helpline volunteers can only offer  
advice and unfortunately are unable  
to help with acquisition of parrots.  
All the Helpliners are unpaid volunteers.  
Do make sure your call is really necessary,  
and unless it's an emergency, please  
only call at reasonable times of the day.  
**Thank you**

## Make-a-Date

*As all dates may be subject to alteration  
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**24th and 25th May 2008**

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www.cockatoodowns.com  
Email: chris@cockatoodowns.com'

**30th May to 1st June 2008**

**Parrots International Symposium**

The Queen Mary, Los Angeles, California (Long Beach)  
Further details at www.parrotsinternational.org

**4th - 7th July 2008**

**Parrot Society of Australia - PARROTS 2008 -  
'Raising the perch in avicultural education'**

Acacia Ridge Hotel, Brisbane AUSTRALIA -  
Stewart Williamson +61 7 3289 2523  
parrots2008@parrotsociety.org.au www.parrotsociety.org.au

**November 2008 - Parrot Watching trip**

**to the Atlantic Rainforest and the Pantanal in Brazil**

For full details contact Steve Brookes +44 (0)7766 303836  
steve@wildparrotsupclose.co.uk  
www.wildparrotsupclose.co.uk

*If you have a parrot show, exhibition, symposium or other event  
coming up, send us full details, including a contact telephone number,  
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