

EPPA GAZETTE

Newsletter of the Edmonton Pet Parrot Association

March/April 2007

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Meetings:

Held the last Thursday of each month, except December, June and July at the City Arts Center, 10943 84th Avenue.

Above Photo: A juvenile Military Macaw at the Pet Expo, bred by Marie & Dwayne.

New Meeting Location

Please note that all of our meetings will now be held at the City Arts Center, which is at 10943 84th Avenue. They will be on the last Thursdays of the month.

Past Meetings

January's Meeting: The parrot of the month for January's meeting was Spike, the Goffin's Cockatoo, who belongs to the Gruenenburg family. Our speaker was Ian Ross, who spoke about parrot nutrition. Spike is pictured below with Mary-Ellen G.



February's Meeting: The parrot of the month was Murphy, the Umbrella Cockatoo, who belongs to Richard P. Our speaker was Dr. Kwantes from the Park Veterinary Clinic (101 Broadway Blvd, Sherwood Park, 417-1119.)

March's Meeting: The parrot of the month for March's meeting was Jasper, the Quaker Parrot, who belongs to Kai V. Jason C. from Hagen Inc. was our guest speaker.

The Hagen avicultural research institute's page is at <http://www.hagen.com/hari/welcome.html>

Thank you to the Gruenenburg family, Richard, and Kai for bringing your parrots to the meetings and speaking about them, and to Ian, Dr. Kwantes, and Jason for coming to speak!

Other Past Activities

Our club participated in the annual Edmonton Pet Expo on January 26th and 27th, 2007. Our exhibit was a big hit, as it usually is, and many people stopped by to have their photo taken with one of our friendly parrots.

Thanks to Louise & David W., Dwayne & Marie, Nancy N., Alice B., Christel B., Melanie, Jessie & Quentin, Gloria & Alex M., Karen & Hugh, Marie, Ian R., and Richard P. for bringing parrots and helping out at our table.

We also had an information table at PJ's pet store in West Edmonton Mall, March 24th and 25th. Thanks to Pete S., Louise and David W, Marie and Dwayne, Janie R., Brian and Irene G., & Richard K, Jody G., and Nancy & Don for bringing their parrots.

Upcoming Meetings

Our next two meetings will be on April 25th and May 30th. Instead of a meeting in June, we will have a picnic, and the date and time will be announced later on.

Have ideas for a meeting activity? Is there a parrot related topic you'd like to hear about? Please let one of the members of the executive know!

Library

Don't forget that we have a large library of parrot-related books, DVDs and videos. If you would like to borrow something, please come to the meeting and let Petra know.

We also just added three more books to our library: *Guide to Companion Parrot Behavior*, and *Parrots*, both by Mattie Sue Athan, and *Parrot Training: A Guide to Taming and Gentling Your Avian Companion* by Bonnie Munro Doane.

Upcoming Events – Not EPPA Related

There will be an FREE Avian Symposium from 5 to 9:30 pm on April 24 at the Ramada Inn (5359 Calgary Trail) here in Edmonton.

The speakers will be Mark Hagen and Josee Bermingham, who is an avian animal health technician for HARI.

Topics will be:

- Avicultural Advancements at the Hagen Avicultural Research Institute (HARI)
- Nutrition and Feeding Considerations for Captive Parrots
- Parrot Conservation Projects
- A Holistic Approach to Avian First Aid

Please RSVP to Canada.seminars@rchagen.com or by fax to 866-467-3806.

Parrot Behaviour Course:

Parrot Behaviour and Learning: A Step Up and Beyond will be held June 23-24, 2007 at the Best Western Port O'Call Hotel near the Calgary Airport. This two day seminar featuring Susan Friedman, PhD and Barbara Heidenreich is designed to help

caregivers improve their relationship with their companion Parrots. This dynamic duo will provide you with the tools to understand and change problem behaviour through applied behaviour analysis and practical training experiences. Understanding your Parrot's behaviour will give you a more rewarding relationship.

For more information on signing up for this seminar, please visit <http://www.parrotisperch.ca> or call them at 888-243-2194.

The cost for both days of the course is \$250. Lunch and snacks are included.

Canadian Parrot Symposium

The next Canadian parrot symposium (West) will be held at the Dunsmuir Lodge in Victoria, BC, from May 18th to 20th, 2007.

For more information, please visit <http://www.parrotsymposium.com/> or call Doreen Albion at 250-477-9982



Above: Rocky, the Moluccan Cockatoo, rests for a moment at the Edmonton Pet Expo. The photos on the next page were all taken at the Expo.



Skylar, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. He belongs to Nancy & Don.



Left: Christel and her cockatiel.

Bottom: Molly, Melanie's Indian Ringneck.



Belle, Alice B's Umbrella Cockatoo, perches in her preferred place (on top of someone's head).



A Blue and Gold Macaw, who belongs to Ryan.



A young Quaker, bred by Marie & Dwayne, enjoys a head scratch.

The Nature of Greys

By:

Bobbi Brinker &
S. G. Friedman, Ph.D.

Published in Bird Talk, Nov. 1999

Ask a room full of parrot owners to describe the personalities of their beloved African Grey parrots and you will hear nearly every adjective in the dictionary. The fact is, describing the typical *Psittacus erithacus* is like describing the average *Homo sapiens*. For every generalization, there are many exceptions. Still, for those of you who are thinking about owning a Grey, and those of you who have never thought about owning a Grey (yet), there is one trait you can count on: Greys are sensitive to our most private feelings and reflect back to us our most poignant emotions. It is their nature.

Though better known for their talking ability, it is this deeply empathic nature that makes African Greys so beloved. Noah, Annette Hodge's Grey, sensitively reflects her feelings and a few secrets too: "Noah can tell if I'm in a bad mood before I even realize it myself! He doesn't want to come to me if I'm not happy. When he repeats something I've said, he uses the exact same tone of voice. Everyone who hears him can tell if I've been upset or excited."

This empathic nature is so widespread among African Greys that many believe it is a genetic trait. In their natural habitat of tropical Africa, Greys are prey animals who increase their chance of survival by sensing the environment around them. Although the genetic pathways for such behavior remains a mystery, the Grey's ability to share our deepest feelings gives them a special and

unique place among companion parrots, indeed among all pets.

Species & Subspecies

African Grey Parrots belong to the genus *Psittacus* which has one species, *erithacus*. *P. erithacus* comprises two subspecies: First is *P. e. erithacus*, commonly known as the Congo African Grey; and second is *P. e. timneh*, the Timneh African Grey. At one time it was thought that there was a third subspecies, *P. e. princeps*, but this bird is now thought to belong to the nominate species.

The Timneh's natural habitat includes southern Guinea, Liberia, the western region of the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone. Congo African Greys occupy the broad equatorial band from central Africa to the western coast. As explained by Jean "The African Queen" Pattison, many people refer to Congo African Greys by their region of origin. These names have become a sort of common street lingo to describe Greys but are not recognized subspecies. These "street names" can be quite misleading when the birds' region of origin is not the same as the country from which they were exported. For example, what some people refer to as Cameroon Greys, distinguished by their large size and silver color, are really from the Congo (formerly Zaire). But, Pattison says, "When all is said and done, they are the same subspecies: *P. e. erithacus*."

Physical Characteristics

In a beauty contest between Congos and Timnehs there would surely be two winners. Both subspecies have inquisitive black eyes until five or six months of age. At that time a very gradual and variable change in eye color begins including gradations of light

gray, yellow-white and yellow. After two or three years, depending on the individual, the final adult color emerges, typically a penetrating shade of pale yellow.

Both Congos (generally about 475 grams) and Timnehs (around 300 grams) qualify as medium sized birds but, as with most characteristics, there are huge variations around the average description. For instance, there are petite Congos and monster Timnehs, but lately there have been a lot more monster Congos. This is most likely a result of improved breeding and nutrition practices of some breeders and owners. Scott Lewis, a breeder from Texas, has a Grey breeding male aptly named Big Boy who weighs well over 600 grams. Len Charette, a breeder from Pennsylvania, recently reported the weight of a 9 ½-week-old baby Grey at 600 grams. It may be time to name a third subspecies after all: *P. e. elephantacus*!



Above: This is a Timneh African Grey who lives with David & Louise W.

Both Congos and Timnehs have black feet and a bare white facial patch around each eye. Congos have smooth, solid black beaks and body plumage that varies from dark slate to light silver gray. Their head and

neck feathers are delicately edged with white-gray, giving a lovely, lacey look. Young Congos have dark red tail feathers with brown-black margins. These feathers won't be replaced with the striking red feathers of an adult bird until the completion of the first molt, which occurs gradually over the course of the first two years.

Aside from their smaller size, Timnehs are easily distinguished from Congos by their beak and plumage color. Their beaks gradually change from a solid brownish black to the typical bi-color starting at around ten weeks of age. Adults have peach to reddish beaks that are tipped with black and black mandibles. The Timneh's feathers are generally dark slate gray with a subtle hint of taupe. The abdomen and rump are various shades of light gray with some darker edging. The babies' tail feathers are typically maroon-brown but can be very dark gray with no hint of maroon, or light gray tinged with the adult shades of dark red wine.

African Grey Myths

Many myths surround this intelligent companion bird. Some of these myths have assumed the status of fact by virtue of repetition, but repetition does not make them true. One common myth is that Greys are clumsy birds. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Greys are innately graceful birds in the wild and there is absolutely no reason to believe that this characteristic has disappeared in our domestically bred birds. Clumsiness is typically the result of three common practices: premature trimming of baby birds' flight feathers; excessive wing trimming; and severe toenail clipping.

The routine features of even the safest homes, such as mirrors, windows, open toilets and spaghetti pots present life

threatening hazards to flighted birds. However, trimming babies' wing feathers before they have learned to fly can have profound negative impacts on the bird's physical and psychological well being. The process of learning to fly is nature's kindergarten. It provides the essential experience from which babies learn lifelong body awareness, control and confidence. Body awareness and control prevent clumsiness. Confidence averts uncertainty and distrust. Once learned, this knowledge is never forgotten and is critical to the personality development of a well-adjusted companion Grey. Given that their other needs are well met, the confidence and agility gained from mastering flight will inform and support our properly trimmed companion birds for the rest of their lives.

A second major cause for clumsiness in Greys is incorrect wing-feather trimming. Even birds that have mastered flying can be seriously injured and traumatized as a result of a severe or improper clip. An appropriate clip allows birds to land on their feet by gliding gracefully to the floor with balance and control. Custom clipping is necessary to adjust for the strength and determination of each individual bird. If too many feathers are clipped, a bird will have no lift and will hit the floor like a brick. Clip one feather at a time on each wing until a fifteen-foot glide path, with no gain in altitude, is achieved.

Improper toenail clips also contribute to a perception that Greys are clumsy. When one examines the foot size of birds with similar weights, it is apparent that Greys have smaller feet and more slender toes. To compensate for this, pet Greys should be allowed to have slightly longer toenails than other species. Only the very tips of the nails should be clipped. Toenails that are too short hamper Greys' natural balance and footing when perching and climbing.

Another common myth is that African Greys are one-person birds. However, in the wild, Greys have many relationships and many different kinds of relationships. Any given individual bird may be a mate, a parent, a sibling, a fellow juvenile, a clutch mate or a flock member. Likewise, Greys have the capacity to coexist peaceably with the various relationships within their human flock. This is not to say that Greys don't play favorites. There is a favored person in the lives of many pets. However, favoritism to the total exclusion of all others is the very opposite of flock behavior and results in a tragically narrow life. Surely, Greys that relate well to only one individual have been unwittingly taught to do so by their human flock.

Typically, Greys do not enjoy a huge range of human interaction styles. They interact best with people who make them feel safe and secure at all times. With an African Grey, trust is something that is learned and earned. People who are usually well received by Greys are consistently gentle (slow, steady hands and a quiet, soothing voice), accepting (expect the behavior of a bird and not a dog, cat or gerbil) and patient (recognize and respect the pace set by the bird). If there is more than one person in your home who possesses these qualities, your Grey will not be a one-person bird.

A favored person should not squander this honored status (even though it does prove this person is the most lovable, trustworthy and humble person in the house...maybe the universe). The favored person bears the primary responsibility for facilitating a happy, secure, well-behaved bird--this includes facilitating rewarding relationships with others in the home. The favored person may need to examine his own motives for wanting a one-person bird if his Grey does

not have the confidence to interact politely with other family members.

The wider the circle of acquaintances a Grey has the better. If possible, a companion bird should be exposed to friends and neighbors. This allows the bird to learn from experience that humans are kind and gentle allies. We must remember that Greys can live a very long time and may have more than one home in their lifetimes. Trusting, confident, well-behaved birds will have an easy time adjusting to new homes and will have no problem finding someone to love them back.



A Congo African Grey Parrot. From: *Parrots of the World*, by Joseph Forshaw & illustrated by William T. Cooper.

Accommodations

There are many things to consider when housing a companion parrot in your home, and a handful of special considerations for

African Greys in particular. Bird behaviorist Layne Dicker¹ forewarns in his book, “A \$1,000 budget does not buy a \$1,000 bird. It buys a \$500 bird, \$250 cage, \$150 in toys, bowls, perches, food and accessories, and a \$100 vet visit.” These figures may underestimate actual costs, depending on where you live.

A good cage for a Grey is rectangular in shape and at least 3 feet wide and 2 feet deep. Avoid cages with converging bars and scrollwork that can trap toes or feet. Overall cage height is not a critical consideration; there are few dominance issues with Greys. One-inch spacing, measured as the free space between bars, is best for Congos and Timnehs.

Take special care to investigate the materials used in cages manufactured outside the U.S. where lead is still used in paints because lead is toxic to birds when ingested. Never use a cage (or anything...toys, bells, links) with zinc in the metal or paint because zinc is toxic when certain levels are ingested. Insist that cage manufactures provide detailed information about cage materials. Together, we can make zinc poisoning a threat of the past. Modern inks are non-toxic and will not hurt your bird if ingested. Newspaper is the safest bedding for the bottom of your bird's cage.

The best location for the cage is against a wall. This allows your bird to see when someone is approaching and provides a sense of security. Try to find a spot with a long-range view of the household activities where your Grey can choose to actively watch the goings-on or fade into the background for a quiet moment. Typically, Greys need more quiet time than other species of birds and the cage location should allow for this. The cage should not

be placed beside an exterior or interior door, drafty window, or heating or air-conditioning vent.

The more variety in perching surfaces and sizes the better. The perches, depending on the size of the bird's foot, should vary from 1½ inches in diameter to approximately 2½ inches. These larger diameters are more comfortable for Greys' long, slender toes.

Avoid smooth, slippery manzanita for young Greys. Injuries occur from falling off slippery perches, especially in the dark, and stability is important to maintaining the emotional confidence of a Grey. Cement, seashell and sand perches are helpful for blunting sharp toenails but should not be the perch where the bird sleeps. Always supervise your bird's access to fabric perches as sharp toenails can become dangerously entangled. All in all, natural branches are the best choice as they safely afford necessary traction, irregular surfaces for foot and toe exercise and a soft perch for chewing. Some bird-safe woods include citrus, ash, magnolia, willow, apple, crabapple, elm, dogwood, madrona, guava, birch and sassafras. Make sure that any perch given to your bird is clean and free from any sprays or insecticides.

Playtime

As with all parrots, playtime is crucial to the physical and emotional health of African Greys. Play stimulates thinking and coordination, and provides a productive energy outlet. With assorted toys and varied perch locations, you can encourage your Greys to experience the full range of bird behaviors that are their birthright. Provide activities that stimulate flapping, climbing, chewing, tossing, holding, preening, singing and talking. In addition to colorful hanging toys, include foot toys for chewing and

manipulating, and puzzle toys for problem solving.

Take care to select toys that are made of safe materials and are well constructed. Also, consider the manner in which toys are attached to cages and possible ways in which an active bird could become perilously entangled. No loops and no snap hooks! Use only short, thick rawhide strips or short chains with safe links to avoid trapping heads, necks, wings, beaks and toes. Above all remember that toys should be used, abused and destroyed. Keep a good selection on hand and rotate them often to make the most of playtime.

The Grey Gourmet

Diet profoundly affects Greys' health, disposition and longevity. As new information is uncovered regarding both general parrot and species-specific nutritional requirements, we are faced with many decisions about how to best feed our companion birds. Currently, the best way to provide an interesting, healthful diet is to offer a wide variety of foods. Greys seem to do best with a diet that is one half pellets and one half soft foods. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Greys may be sensitive to high protein levels in their diet. So, until more information is available, try to keep their protein consumption to around 15 percent of their total diet.

Favorite foods to offer daily include Bobbi's Birdie Bread (see side bar), sprouts or soaked seeds, yellow-orange and dark green vegetables (see sidebar), brown rice, beans and pasta. These foods can be mixed or served separately. Squeezing fresh orange juice over the soft foods will keep them fresh for many hours. Fruits should be considered treat foods because they contain so much sugar. As with all birds, never feed

avocado, chocolate, caffeine in any form, alcohol or excess sugar, salt or fat. While we're in the kitchen, heed this warning: Products with a nonstick coating release PTFE fumes when heated above 530 degrees Fahrenheit or are used for an extended period of time. These fumes are toxic to birds. Non-stick coatings are everywhere including space heaters, irons, ironing board covers, bread machines, ovens and oven racks.

Water Works

Daily bathing is fundamental to maintaining a healthy African Grey. Unfortunately, people often overlook or underestimate this need. Greys must have frequent opportunities to hydrate their feathers especially during heavy molts and when you are heating or air conditioning your home. Truly, when it comes to bathing, more is better. Most Greys learn to enjoy bath time with consistent, gentle persuasion especially if the breeder has offered baths from a very early age. For older birds, it's a matter of discovering which method they prefer. Some birds prefer cool water, while others prefer warm. Creative approaches may be needed to entice birds to bathe. Successful strategies include spray misting, showering with a favorite person or placing floating toys, ice cubes or leaves in a shallow pan of water. Some Greys respond to bathing with characteristic caution or utter disgust. As always, do not move faster than your Grey is willing to go. Remain patient, but don't give up.

Meaningful Time

Similar to children, both quality and quantity matter when a trusting, loving relationship is the goal. Dicker² developed an excellent model for managing time with our birds based on three kinds of attention:

direct, shared, and ambient. Direct attention is "one to one" time with lots of eye contact and touching and no distractions. Indirect attention is the shared time when you're playing with the bird but you're also reading, watching TV or talking on the phone. Ambient attention is when the bird is out of his cage in the midst of the family hubbub. At a minimum, birds need 30 to 45 minutes each day of combined direct and indirect attention, and about 3 hours per day of ambient attention.

Mentoring Greys

Grey birds respond eagerly to facilitation and do not respond well to domination. Facilitation refers to a teaching style that eases the bird into the positive behaviors necessary for living with humans. If the goal is a well adjusted, loving pet, there will be little success with power strategies. Forcing birds to do what they don't want to may result in the desired behavior but it will not produce the relationship you hoped to have when you acquired them. Trust is the basis of a loving, healthy relationship with a Grey. Therefore, anything that threatens a Grey's trust in you or others must be avoided. A Grey cannot trust a person who shouts, glares, sprays, isolates, shakes, ladders, hits, beak taps, drops or cage slaps. A Grey must feel safe and secure at all times. Positive behavior is easily facilitated when you have a trusting relationship with your Grey.

A good way to start building a trusting relationship with your Greys is to teach your birds to step up and down when asked to do so. Up and down are easy behaviors to teach a young bird and once mastered, they are tangible displays of communication and mutual respect. A reliable up/down response can be also used to facilitate compliance with other requests. In this way,

it is a “learning to learn” behavior, a gateway behavior that gives access to positive interactions and increased freedom in your shared home.

Whenever your birds comply with your request, enthusiastically and lavishly praise them. By stepping up, they are demonstrating that they understand what you want and that they want to give it to you. This is a very positive process that affirms communication and promotes a trusting relationship.

There are two other important benefits to teaching your birds to respond automatically to the up/down prompt. First, your birds will always have something they can do to please you, something they can do right. This is a powerful strategy for relationship building. No bird needs to be sent to the proverbial “dog house” and no interaction needs to be left unsuccessful when a well-timed “Up” request results in immediate compliance.

Second, with a well-developed up/down response, you will have an effective tool to redirect any negative behavior your bird may exhibit into a positive interaction. Whatever the misbehavior, a cheerful “Up” request triggers a positive chain of events: The bird complies and you respond with smiles and praise. You and your bird are now “facing the right direction” and can continue to interact positively from there. This is called behavioral momentum. You break the negative momentum with a request that the bird can do easily and automatically to facilitate a new, positive momentum.

This perspective is very different from the popular “flock leader” theory in which the up/down response is used to assert dominance over your bird. This notion has

no place in the raising of Greys. With either approach, facilitating or dominating, your bird will likely learn the up/down response. However, when facilitation is used, it offers a requesting, respectful, appreciative tone--in other words, it sets the stage for relationship building. When domination is used, the tone is commanding, challenging and insistent. These are very negative, adversarial tones that are picked up by birds and are likely to make them fearful and suspicious. The desired short-term outcome is the same--the bird steps up--but one way fosters a trusting relationship between you and your bird, the other way threatens to diminish it.

It is mutually beneficial to birds and their people to adapt to one another. Greys have long memories, and their personalities are deeply influenced by their experiences. Each and every interaction between a bird and a human is a lesson that teaches something to the bird about people. Each lesson either builds or diminishes trust. Thus, you must arrange all your interactions to be peaceful, respectful, patient and understanding. Trust is the basis for all successful relationships between Greys and their people. To build a lifelong relationship based on trust, begin by imposing yourself less and facilitating more.

Raising a well-behaved companion bird is a commitment to a life-long role of teacher, supervisor and patient guide—a mentor. It is your job to generalize the gentle techniques discussed above in new ways and to new situations to facilitate well-adapted behavior in your Grey. But always remember: Your Greys are wild creatures whose inward-directed eye and instincts are in conflict with their dependence on us. Above all else, their struggle must be viewed with kindness, compassion and patience. The willingness of Greys to press the curve of their beaks

against our cheeks and lower their heads for our human touch is not owed us; it is an extraordinary gift to be treasured.

1, 2 Dicker, Layne David,
Parrots...Parrots...Parrots!, 1999 Edition.

Bobbi Brinker, author of For the Love of Greys, has been breeding and raising exotic birds for over 10 years. Her empathy for African Grey Parrots evolved into a theory of management based on gentle, unimposing guidance and acceptance. She is committed to ongoing education as the key to improving the lives of companion birds and is the site owner of <http://www.ParrotTalk.com>, The Grey Connection, and co-owner of Bird911. Her articles are widely distributed nationally and internationally.

S. G .Friedman, Ph.D., is a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Utah State University. Her expertise in the areas of child behavior management, parent training and behavioral research has led her to study and enjoy companion parrots. Her conviction that instruction and behavior change is best accomplished with facilitation rather than force guides her work with companion parrots and children alike.

(editor's note: Dr. Friedman has generously given me permission to reprint her articles in our newsletter).

Environmental Enrichment for your Parrot. by: Jessie Zgurski

While surfing the web recently, I came across an e-book on parrot enrichment activities. It is available here:

<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art48929.asp>

Be sure to have a look at it. "Environmental enrichment" refers to any modification or addition to an animal's captive environment that allows it to display its natural behaviors and gives it an outlet for its energy.

Parrots need an enriched environment to be happy, as many recent studies have shown that parrots in a barren environment with only food and water and no toys are more likely to feather pluck than parrots with access to toys. Parrots living in dull cages with nothing to do often become bored and frustrated and may exhibit a variety of maladaptive behaviors.

Luckily, providing a parrot with suitable toys need not be difficult, time-consuming or expensive. Here are some of my own ideas for parrot toys:

~ Non-toxic branches make an excellent chew toy for parrots. Be sure that they have not been sprayed with pesticides. Aspen, apple, cottonwood, elm, hickory, hazelnut, and willow are all safe woods for parrots to chew on.

~ Some parrots love to chew on pine cones. If you are concerned about insects, sterilize the pine cones by dipping them in boiling water or baking them for 20 minutes in the oven.

~ Some parrots love to shred and destroy old phone books.

~ Plain cardboard is fine for parrots to chew on. Better yet, hide some goodies in a box for your parrot to find. Treats can also be placed in a paper bag for your parrot to "forage" for.

~ Two of my parrots love to shred and preen peacock feathers. I wash these after buying them.

Additionally, many pet stores sell acrylic “foraging” toys that can easily be refilled with seeds or nuts.

Further Resources:

An article on the importance of environmental enrichment for pet parrots:

<http://www.parrotchronicles.com/julyaugust2004/research.htm>

Lots of ideas for home-made parrot toys:

<http://www.birdsnways.com/birds/ideas.htm>

Cleaning Tip: submitted by Linda L.

I have been using grapefruit seed extract (1 tablespoon to 16 oz of clean water) and this solution is useful to clean and disinfect cages, toys, etc. You can buy in the health food stores or order it on line. The saying a few drops goes a long way and in this case just a few drops in a small container is great for those small jobs.

Parrots in the News

The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill become Official.

SAN FRANCISCO – The wild parrots of Telegraph Hill became official San Francisco residents Tuesday as city lawmakers assumed responsibility for the aging trees where the world-famous flock roosts.

The Board of Supervisors voted 9-1 to have the last of the privately-owned Monterey cypresses that the colorful birds call home pruned and kept alive for the next three years, or long enough for the owner to plant and grow six new trees.

The deal resulted from more than a year of negotiations between San Francisco officials and John Cowen, who owns the property where the cypresses stand.

In late 2005, Cowen had one of the ailing trees cut down and he wanted to fell the rest because he worried he would be liable for property damage if they came down on their own. Under the agreement approved Tuesday, the city will protect him from possible legal claims or damage costs.

“We know that the parrots of Telegraph Hill have been one of the most unique, natural attractions for locals and visitors alike,” said Supervisor Bevan Dufty, who promoted the plan. “I think this is an issue that has captivated the hearts of people around the world and in San Francisco.”

The parrots, which number about 200, earned favored bird status in San Francisco due to the efforts of Mark Bittner, who became the birds' self-appointed caretaker in the 1990s. Bittner wrote a best-selling book that was later made into a documentary about his experience feeding and observing them.

“I am quite astonished that this is happening, and I'm really grateful,” Bittner said of the city's interest in harboring the parrots.

The Northeast San Francisco Conservancy donated \$5,000 toward the cost of hiring an arborist to trim and care for the trees.

Information from: San Francisco Chronicle, www.sfgate.com/chronicle

Man, Cockatoo rescued from tree.

From: Knoxville News Sentinel.

A man who scaled a tree some 60 feet in the air to rescue his prized cockatoo and got stuck up there is safe back on the ground.

After several hours and several attempts by police and firefighters, it was the Coast Guard that finally got the man to safety. The rescue happened in a wooded area of southeast Montgomery County, Texas. William Hart is glad to be back on the ground.

For almost four hours, he stood perched 60 feet near the top of a pine tree. He wasn't alone, his beloved Umbrella Cockatoo, Geronimo, was there with him.

"It's my companion, my friend, my pet, you name it," laughed Hart.

It's said that Hart will do anything for that bird and today he did. When Geronimo flew out of a house window and landed in a tree, Hart went right after him.

"He decided to climb a smaller pine tree right next to it," said an unidentified emergency worker. "He got up there and got stuck."

Fire department ladder trucks were of no use because the ground was so soft. Fire department helicopters couldn't get to him either. Hart just waited for help.

"I talked to [the bird], played with him and smoked a cigarette," Hart said.

Then above the tree tops came the answer. A Coast Guard helicopter dropped a line to Hart.

Now that all is safe, Hart says he is going home and clipping Geronimo's wings. Hart has owned Geronimo since he was six months old and the bird is now six-years-old.

Porter fire officials say the rescue effort cost that department \$5-10,000. The Houston

and Woodlands fire departments were also there along with the Coast Guard. No word on the price tag for those agencies.

Bad news for one night parrot, good for species

Greg Roberts

February 16, 2007

From: The Australian

ONE "dead" parrot in Queensland has risen phoenix-like from the ashes, as another has been given its last rites.

The Australian has learned that National Parks and Wildlife Service officers have found a dead night parrot in the state's far west, confirming the survival of Australia's rarest bird.

In a discovery of international significance, the parrot was found in November in the Diamantina Lakes region after it flew into a barbed-wire fence. The Government has kept the find secret to avoid birdwatchers searching for night parrots while it does a survey to find more.

A road-killed night parrot found in 1990 near Boulia, in northwest Queensland, by Australian Museum scientists was the first confirmed record of the species since 1912. That find forced millionaire businessman Dick Smith to part with a \$50,000 reward he had offered for evidence that it existed.

Both the Boulia parrot and the latest bird were headless.

An unsubstantiated report of night parrots in Western Australia's Pilbara in 2005 held up a planned \$2 billion iron ore mine.

The night parrot is Australia's only nocturnal parrot.

It feeds and nests on the ground and once widely inhabited the outback.

Its population crashed in the 19th century for reasons that remain obscure.

News of the discovery emerged as doubts mounted over claims that a previously unknown parrot had been found in the rainforests of southern Queensland. Naturalist John Young claimed to have photographed the so-called blue-browed fig-parrot at an undisclosed location.

The Australian revealed this week that the Queensland Government had dissociated itself from Mr Young after a leading authority on forensic photography, Gale Spring, cast doubt on his photograph.

Mr Young has also claimed his find would be proved by DNA analysis of feathers he had collected from baby parrots.

However, The Australian has learned that no feathers have been sent to the CSIRO or to any Australian museum. Mr Young would not comment.



A Night Parrot. From: *Parrots of the World*, by Joseph Forshaw & illustrated by William T. Cooper.

Classifieds

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The advertisement for ParrotDISE PERCH has a bright orange background. At the top, the words "PARROTDISE PERCH" are written in large, bold, yellow, block letters. Below this, the text "YOUR best source for toys supplies and more ..." is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. In the center, there is a cartoon illustration of a green parrot with a yellow beak and feet, perched on a brown branch. To the right of the parrot, the text "Catalogue Now Available!" is written in a dark red, serif font. At the bottom left, the phone number "1 - 888 - 243 - 2194" and the website "www.parrotdiseperch.com" are listed in yellow, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, there is a small, realistic photograph of a cockatiel's head and neck.

Member Discounts:

The following merchants offer a discount to EPPA members. If you do not have a card, contact Jessie at jzgurski@ualberta.ca

10 % Discounts on Parrot Supplies

- **Baker's Aviaries Feed & Seed**
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- **Tiffany's Décor On Whyte:** 10135 Whyte avenue 434-2414
- **Champion's Feed & Farm Supply:** 13723 Manning Drive 406-2233
(5% off 25 lb bags and 10% off 50 lb bags of parrot food.)

10 % Discount on bird food

The Wild Bird Store: 4712 – 99 St
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• **P J's Pet Centre** (Four locations): #150
– 3803 Gateway Blvd 436-7387, Phase III
West Edmonton Mall 444-7387, 742
Kingsway Mall, 474-1700, L66
Londonderry Mall 472-7387

• **Superpet** (Three locations): Building H1,
18423 Stony Plain Road; 294 Mayfield
Common; 14211 – 23rd Ave., Bldg E
Edmonton, AB T6R 3E7



Emily the Green-winged Macaw at the Edmonton Pet Expo.



Above: Randy, the Quaker Parrot. He was surrendered to a local parrot rescue (<http://www.parrotrescue.ca>), fostered by Jessie Z and now lives with Christel B. & family.

Parrot Websites

<http://www.parrotscience.com/>

-This site has news about parrots, some podcasts to listen to and parrot videos.

<http://www3.upatsix.com/liz/articles/index.html>

-Articles about parrot behavior from parrot behavior consultant and veterinary technician Liz Wilson.

<http://www.parrothouse.com/behavior.html>

-Articles about parrot behavior, African greys, cockatoos, and Amazons.

<http://www.parrotsonline.homestead.com/articlesrescue.html>

-Lots of interesting articles on the ethics of parrot keeping.