

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 7, Issue 3

March 2007

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

I would like to say 'thank you' to everyone who was able to attend the February meeting at the Humane Society. I apologize for the inconvenience and confusion of changing the room where we normally meet. That room was not very accessible nor were there any tables or chairs for us. Luckily, we were able to meet in the auditorium.

It was good to see new members and visitors at the meeting. I hope that you enjoyed the "Active Foraging" video during the educational part of the meeting will continue to come to future meetings to exchange information on bird care and bird behavior.

This year's All-American Hookbill Fair will once, again, be at the Greensfelder Recreation Complex at 550 Weidman Rd in Ballwin, Mo. The dates are Friday, Aug. 24 through Sunday, Aug. 26. We will need volunteers for soliciting donations for the raffle table and the Silent Auction. Please let one of the Club Officers know if you can help.

As was mentioned before, the March meeting will be at the Kirkwood Community Center on Geyer Rd. in Kirkwood. The General Membership Meeting will be at the same time of 2:00 PM. We will have signs out at the center to direct you to the meeting room.

Since we are not allowed to store GPC material at the Kirkwood Community Center, our GPC Librarian Christine Kinkade will be keeping the GPC library. A listing of books and videos will be available at the meetings. Also, the video "Active Foraging" that was shown at the last meeting has been donated to the GPC library by Dr. David Kersting. If anyone would like to check out this video, please contact Christine by phone (see Contact Information elsewhere in the Newsletter) or by email through the GPC website and she will bring it to the meeting.

Dave

Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

Of course the big news this month is our new meeting place, the Kirkwood Community Center. Location details, including map, are on the website, but it is pretty simple. The Community Center is in Kirkwood Park, about a half mile west of "downtown" Kirkwood, or Lindbergh. It is on Geyer Road at Adams. Same day, third Sunday, March 18, same time, 2:00 PM. Our education topic this month will be Living With Special Needs Birds.

Parrots call chicks by name, German experts say... This tidbit came by email, and I didn't get permission to reprint, but I put a link to the article on our website. The short version... researchers, at the University of Hamburg, satisfied themselves, scientifically speaking, that Parrotlets call their chicks, and mates, by name. They also must have good hearing, since the call, or name, lasts only a tenth of a second. Get details by following the link on our site, or Googling the bold text at the beginning of this paragraph.

The proposed addition to our bylaws, included in last month's newsletter, was approved at the February meeting. I have yet to update the bylaws document, but it will be available on the website soon.

Dues - Terminal Nagging

This may be your last printed newsletter... Every year around this time we deactivate members who have not paid their dues for the year. Check the outside cover of the newsletter. If it doesn't say your membership expires at the end of 2007, you are about to get dropped (and of course we don't want to drop anyone).

So pay your dues. Due it on the website. Due it by mail. Due it in person at the meeting. But as Nike says, Just Do It.

AAV Article Incubation – How To

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BASIC PSITTACINE INCUBATION AND HATCHING

Rick Jordan, Dripping Springs, TX

There are four controls for successful incubation: temperature, humidity, turning, and positioning of the eggs. Failure to monitor any of these controls can result in high mortality rates or deformities of the young. Accepted values for incubation controls have been established through repetitive use and observation.

Temperature: Unlike a setting hen, which gets off her eggs to eat and exercise, incubator temperature is constant. The heat determines how fast an egg will develop. Optimum temperatures are those that duplicate the natural rate. The first two weeks of incubation may be the most important. After that, short periods of cooling may be beneficial, but cooling periods are difficult to monitor and incorporate. The temperature at pipping (breaking through the shell) can be 1 degree cooler than for incubation, although, this is not essential.

Humidity: The humidity of the air circulating through the incubator determines the amount of water that can transpire through the eggshell during incubation. This humidity is necessary for proper embryo development. The more water in the air around the egg, the more water can transpire through the pores of the egg. Likewise, the drier the surrounding air, the more water can escape. The optimum humidity setting will result in a water loss of 16-20 percent of the original weight of the egg before incubation.

Turning: Eggs must be turned during incubation so the embryo develops normally. Commercial machines with automatic turning generally turn eggs one direction, then the other, due to the mechanical constraints. However, this will generally not cause damage to the growing embryos. Eggs must be turned on their sides with a gentle rolling motion, whenever possible, in the same direction. Ideally, eggs can be hand-turned one-quarter turn in the same direction every four hours during the day. At night, eggs may be turned by an automatic device or allowed to remain at rest for up to 6 hours.

The optimum rate of turns per day is approximately every four hours around the clock.

Next month: Egg position, hatching, and assisted hatches.

Release #2, February, 2007. The Association of Avian Veterinarians welcomes membership from veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine. Annual meetings and a quarterly journal provide a format for the latest in avian medical information. Is your veterinarian a member? Individuals wishing to subscribe to the Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery may write to: AAV - P.O. Box 811720 Boca Raton, FL 33481.

Fireworks

Cliff Patterson



On some online chat lists I've read discussions of whether birds can actually see the picture on a TV screen. Well, Toby, my pet Blue Crown Conure, cleared that up for me over the Fourth of July.

I had Toby out and was sharing some air-popped popcorn with him, one of his favorite treats. He was on my shoulder. The TV was on, and the fireworks show from Boston had just come on. It was the one with the Boston Pops playing.

Well, I soon realized that Toby wasn't watching me or the popcorn, which was highly unusual for him. He had his head turned away and was looking directly at the TV. And then I realized that he was making little noises.

He was actually making little soft "Ooooooo!" noises in my ear every time a big shell burst on the screen!

I took Toby over to a chair closer to the TV and sat down with him (and brought the popcorn too, of course). He was thoroughly enjoying himself!

Whenever a patriotic march would come on, Toby would break into his little dance, bobbing his head in time to the music. I knew the words, of course, so I sang along loudly and Toby danced even harder.

By the end of the show, Toby had really worn himself out and was ready for beddy-bye. As I put him up on his sleeping perch in his cage, he stopped and turned towards me and clearly said, "I love you!" *I love you too, Toby!*

What better way to spend the Fourth of July evening than watching fireworks with your bird over a big bowl of popcorn.

AAV Bonus Article An Echo From Our Annual Fair No Teeth - No Toothbrush!

Note: The following article was released for publication last year, and we have not printed it previously. Dr. Kersting did however present the details of this case in his seminar at our Fair in 2005 as a preliminary, and reviewed it again in 2006 after having presented it to the AAV convention. So, for those of you that missed both seminars and the convention...

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A CLINICAL CASE OF ZINC TOXICOSIS AND POTENTIAL COPPER TOXICITY FROM TOOTHBRUSHES

David Kersting, DVM St Louis, MO

Zinc toxicity is a commonly discussed topic investigated by pet owners and avian veterinarians. New sources of toxic levels of zinc have been identified in the last 20 years. Clinically, a diagnosis of zinc toxicity has not always been straightforward — there is no pathognomonic signalment for zinc toxicosis. Clinical signs are nonspecific and include lethargy, anorexia, polydipsia, polyuria, diarrhea, weight loss, and vomiting.

Case Report:

An 8-year-old male umbrella cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*) presented for feather picking of three week's duration. The feather destruction began in the areas of the crop and neck and continued to include more extensive areas.

History included a work schedule change for the owner, a new cat in the house. Physical examination was within normal limits. A crop stain revealed increased numbers of yeast with 50% bussing. A fecal gram stain was normal.

The patient re-presented four weeks later with continued feather destruction. A radiograph revealed abundant metal objects in the ventriculus. Size and shape varied, including straight wire shapes to square-edged 2-mm objects. The proventriculus was enlarged and the intestines were filled with gas.

A ventricular flush was performed through a cropotomy incision after packing off the cranial esophagus in relation to the crop. Approximately 40 20mm rectangular metal clips were flushed out.

Despite aggressive flushing, 5 metal clips were left behind. The bird was discharged with antibiotics and an antifungal.

Two weeks later the feather destruction resumed. Three days from that, the owner discovered the source of the metal clips was from toothbrushes the bird had been given as toys. On radiograph, ten more metal clips and a probable plastic object were seen. The owner declined a second ventricular flush due to cost.

A toothbrush has multiple holes to allow the seating of multiple groups of bristles. A V-shaped bundle of bristles are seated into each hole and secured with a rectangular metal clip. Five toothbrushes representing five companies; Crest; Oral-b; Reach; Bright Choice; and Butler G.U.M. (were examined). The heads contain an average of 31 metal clips. Zinc levels were from 255,000 to 306,000; Copper levels ranged from 680,000 ppm to 730,000 ppm. Lead was consistently less than 18 ppm.

The toothbrush was not recognized by this author as a potential toxic item and was often recommended as a safe toy. In fact, toothbrushes are NOT acceptable toys for parrots.

Release #9, September, 2006. The Association of Avian Veterinarians welcomes membership from veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine. Annual meetings and a quarterly journal provide a format for the latest in avian medical information. Is your veterinarian a member?

Dr. K's Clarification

Note: The article, as provided by the AAV, made it clear we shouldn't give our bird toothbrushes to play with, but it included a good bit of clinical jargon. I asked Dr. Kersting to clarify some of the terms I was not familiar with. He graciously provided the following instead of suggesting I use the dictionary.

This article is a brief synopsis of my original work. This article seems so incomplete.

Pathognomonic signalment: The disease creates symptoms which tell the doctor the bird has this specific disease and no other. The symptoms of zinc poisoning mimic many different disease processes.

Polydipsia: Excess drinking

Polyuria: Excess urination

Bussing(Budding): Reproduction in yeast.

Ventriculus: The second stomach in a bird. Also called the gizzard.

Ventricular flush: The process of passing a tube down the throat through the crop, proventriculus or first stomach, and stopping in the ventriculus. Then a large amount of warm water is flushed through the tube into the ventriculus. With the bird asleep, he is held upside down and the fluids are sucked out along with the stomach contents.

Crop: Storage sac for food on the right side of the neck.

Cropotomy: Making an incision in the storage sac for food.

Cranial esophagus: The portion of the esophagus closer to the head before it empties into the crop.

2007 Meeting Schedule

The year is just starting, and we are looking for topics of interest for our meetings. Dorene Olson is our Education and Program chair. She is looking for our input on suggestions for topics and speakers. Please let Dorene, or any Board member what interests you and what you think will make the meetings more interesting.

Date	Topic
March 18	Special needs birds
April 15	New bird! What to do... Wing/Nail trimming clinic
May 20	TBA
June 10	Toy making party. Note, this is the <i>Second</i> Sunday
July 15	Feather Distribution Project, Avian folktales
August 19	Annual Fair
September 16	Profile on Rescue in Aviculture
October 21	TBA
November 19	TBA – Nominations for offices
December 17	Elections – Holiday party

Contact Information

Officers

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679
Secretary	Dorene Olson	(314) 956-1310
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
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Education/Outreach	Dorene Olson	(314) 056-1310
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