

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 8, Issue 1

January 2008

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

Well, here we are in January. I hope everyone enjoyed the December holidays. And, as predicted, along with December came the cold and snow of winter. Unfortunately, the snow had to fall the day before our December meeting and party, and I decided Sunday morning that, since there are several members who have to travel greater distances and under bad road conditions, it would be prudent to cancel the December Meeting. However, there is no easy way to notify club members of any last-minute meeting cancellations. Trey did a good job of getting the notice on the website, and some of us made phone calls to others.

I apologize for anyone who may not have gotten the cancellation notice. When there are similar weather conditions in the future, please check the website and/or call me by phone (636-343-8097) to see if the meeting has been cancelled. Again, I apologize for any inconvenience that it may have caused anyone.

Because the December meeting was cancelled, our elections for club officers and the Christmas Party were postponed until the January meeting. As a reminder, the elections for the upcoming GPC officers and board members for 2008 will take place at the January 20th meeting, at 2:00 PM, before the Holiday Party (weather permitting). Please make an effort to attend the meeting for the voting and then join in the party that will follow.

Niki Shaffer will be planning the games including a special gift exchange game called "Rob Your Neighbor".

If you wish to participate in this game, please bring an exchange gift in the \$10 range.

We will also have plenty of food to eat, although the menu has changed. Christine Kinkade will be bringing a ham and Au Gratin potatoes. You are welcome to bring a side dish or desert of your choice.

Also, Dawn Breer of Sweet Peas will be at the meeting with some of her bird toys. She will be offering her bird toys at a discount for GPC members. This would be a good time to pick up some toys for your birds for a belated Christmas gift.

Please join us as we begin and look forward to another exciting new year.

See you at the Meeting. ---- Dave

Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

December Meeting – The big news about the December meeting is that it didn't happen. As luck would have it, we had our first "big" snow the night before. Apologies to anyone who showed up. As Dave mentioned, in the future check the website or call an Officer/Board member.

Email Address Updates – Following up on email notification, please be sure we have your correct/current email address. If you didn't get the notification of the meeting cancellation, we don't have your address. Each time I send out a mailing, I remove a few names from the list because the message comes back indicating the recipient does not exist. The easiest way to update your email address is using the Email Update link on the front page of the website. If you would like to update other contact info, address, phone, etc. just go to the membership area and fill out the applica-

tion form, indicating it is an update in the memo area at the bottom of the form.

Dues – What a segue from the website application form. Another great way to update your contact info is to fill out the application form and pay your membership renewal... On the front page of the website, there is an annoying scrolling marquee to catch your attention. Click it to get to the application.

Elections – Elections will be held at the January meeting. See separate article about the election. Related to the elections, and the cancelled December meeting, the Board voted to do the obvious. All existing positions were extended until the election occurs and new offices will be effective as of the election. We will get something in the bylaws to that effect.

Holiday Party – The January meeting is our rescheduled Holiday Party. So as soon as we get the serious business out of the way, it is time to celebrate! The Club will provide beverages. Please bring a “dish” to share; you know, the pot-luck thing, and your appetite.

2007 Nominations

At the November meeting, as is our tradition, we nominated candidates for offices and Board of Director positions due for election in December. As a quick review, all terms are two years. The Board has six positions. Three are elected each year. There are five officers:

- President
- Vice President
- General Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary

The President and Vice President are elected in even-numbered years, the others in odd-numbered years.

We had only one nomination for each office.

General Secretary – Cathy Wendler

Treasurer – Nancy Marron

Membership Secretary – Niki Shaffer

So there is not much suspense with that part of the election. Three members of the Board of Directors will be selected from the following four nominees,

- Jim Berk
- Dawn Breer
- Suzanne Dohack
- Christine Kinkade

BTW, in presenting these names, in various places, I elected to use alphabetical, by last name, order.

So there is some competition for the Board. Please vote! Come to the January meeting.

Ouch - *%(#@&%! - He Bit Me!

Sue Owens

As you might have guessed, this article will be about parrot bite first aid. You can thank Tooie, our Mollucan cockatoo, for the inspiration to write it. I walked in the kitchen the other day to find Boy Bird Toy (BBT) sitting on the floor with Tooie on his thigh. BBT informed me: “He kind of nipped me but I don’t think it was very bad.” Apparently he didn’t see the blood dripping on the floor. Luckily, as veteran of many bird-inflicted wounds, I knew just what to do. I removed the bird - who was looking rather proud of himself - then proceeded to triage. (A nursing tip: saying “Oh, THAT’S interesting” doesn’t make your patient feel calmer.)

So what to do when they turn on us? Even the “nicest” bird bites. Even if he doesn’t bite you, he’ll probably bite someone else who will expect you to Do Something besides scream and panic. We’ve all done that before, so you’re not alone if you have too.

The first thing to do is remove the body part from the beak. This would seem to be an “Oh DUH” thing, but you’d be surprised. (If you doubt me, ask BBT.) Move carefully to the nearest source of cold running water. It’ll hurt, but put the injured part (unless it’s like your face or something) in the water. If the bird has bitten something too difficult to douse – like a shoulder -- get a washcloth, wet

it with cold water, and apply it to the injury. Cold is our friend - it clamps down vessels and slows the action of bacteria.

If the biter is a bird with a crushing injury type beak (macaw, for instance), you will want to keep something cold on the bite for at least 15 minutes. This will keep bruising, pain, and swelling to a minimum. A great cold pack in an emergency is a bag of frozen veggies like peas or corn. You can mold it to fit the injured area. I like that when the emergency is over, you can eat the first aid kit – and share it with your attacker!

If you have been slashed by a sharp-beaked bird (you know who you are, DASH!) you will want to treat the wound slightly differently. Flush well with cold running water (of course after removing the source of the bite unless you are REALLY mad at him). Apply antibiotic ointment and wrap well with a bandaid. If the wound continues to bleed, apply pressure. You can get steri-strips and butterfly bandaids at Walgreens or any other well-stocked drug store. These are good for closing small gaping wounds and allowing them to close up. If 24 hours have passed and the wound is still actively bleeding, seek professional medical help.

For any serious bite/wound above the neck, seek professional medical treatment; also for any bite that will not stop bleeding despite application of pressure, ditto. Signs of infection (rare in bird bites) include a sensation of heat, swelling, red streaks, throbbing. If you experience this, seek professional medical attention. If you have been bitten on a finger and/or joint, and are unable to move it after a few hours and first aid treatment, or experience numbness, you'll want to see your doctor.

I don't know about you, but I'm rather proud of my bird scars. Got 'em the hard way... I earned 'em. These guys aren't always docile and they are not domesticated. They can fly. They can bite. But dammit... They can love us too.

Recipe of the Month

Banana Nut Muffins

Posted by: Barry - barry@newwave.net - May 8, 1996

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup cheddar cheese
- 3/4 cup chopped bananas
- 1/2 cup nuts, finely chopped
- 2 eggs with shell
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Directions:

Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl. Wash the eggs thoroughly, blenderize including the shell, add the oil, and mix well. Add the eggs and oil to the dry ingredients. Spoon into greased muffin cups. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes in a 375 degree oven, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Recipe from the [Birds n Ways website](http://www.birdsnways.com), www.birdsnways.com

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Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

Dear Readers,

I will not be bringing any Library Picks to the January meeting, due to the fact that we will be having a very busy meeting with elections and the (postponed) Christmas Holiday Party. However, if you have any library requests that I can bring to the January meeting, I will be glad to do so. A complete list of books can be found on the GPC website. You can also return any books from the November meeting at the January meeting.

A complete listing of the GPC library is available on the GPC website www.GatewayParrotClub.org. If you wish to check out any of these, or any of our books, please contact me prior to the next GPC meeting by phone (636) 343-8097, or email at Librarian@GatewayParrotClub.org, and I will bring them to the next meeting.

Please note that some books are quite old and some of the information may be a little outdated. Please keep this in mind when reading the books.

All books checked out should be returned at the following GPC meeting. If that is not possible, please return the books by mail to Christine Kinkade, 2412 Angela Dr., High Ridge, MO. 63049-2848.

Happy reading!

The Maui Conures: From Homestead to Flock Fern Van Sant, DVM, San Jose, CA

A non-native flock of mitered conures (*Aratinga mitrata*) are enjoying life in spectacular homes on a sheer cliff in the area of Huelo, Maui. Their origin and history have become an urban legend and a constant source of concern to the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC). Through the years, usually at the request of local authorities, they have come under the scrutiny of state and federal agencies and the issue is currently back in the spotlight.

As with any long running story, the tale of the conures can be told from many different perspectives. From the perspective of the local biologists and MISC, the conures represent one more invasive species that puts at risk the native flora and fauna of Maui. At one time, their numbers were estimated to be close to 300 and local agriculture was considered at risk. At the high point of the "war" on the invasive plant Miconia, the conures were scrutinized as a source of seed dispersal. Early in 2001, Maui Animal Rescue Sanctuary entered into an agreement with MISC to try to remove the conures from the wild by non-lethal means and re-home them in an approved secure location. A 1-year permit was issued but all efforts were unsuccessful in capturing the birds. As Maui's list of invasive species soared, the conures fell off the radar screen. In renewed efforts between MISC and USDA, the conures are once again in the sights of biologists and regulatory agencies.

Mitred conures have proven to be an incredibly adaptable species. Wild flocks of conures, commonly mitred (*Aratinga mitrata*) and red-masked or red headed (*Aratinga erythrogenys*), have secured homesteads in many other states including California, Texas, Washington, Oregon, New York, and Florida. Most flocks seem to have originated from individuals that have escaped or been intentionally released. The incidence of intentional release is no doubt linked to the large numbers of wild-caught birds imported for the pet trade. As loud, vigorous birds, mitred conures were not exactly of ideal pet quality, which no doubt led owners to show some birds freedom through the closest window. Most flocks, though fairly loud, have been accepted by locals and have even acquired a fan base. The conures of Telegraph Hill, thanks to a popular

book and video, are now a famous flock of birds with an international following.

Mitred conures, originally from southwestern South America, extend from southern Peru, through Bolivia, and into Argentina. In the wild, they prefer tall, steep rock faces and have been reported up to altitudes of 4000 m in Peru. They typically inhabit drier subtropical vegetation, but have been observed in drier cloud forests. They are commonly observed in pairs or threes, but may flock to numbers up to 100 in the non-breeding season. They are regarded as especially adaptable and hearty.

The rest of the story of the Maui conures involves a cast of characters unmatched in any wild tale. The original release in 1987 was either an escape or a planned New Year's celebratory event. Atmo, the original male conure for the Maui conures, had been the pet of one of the early Huelo residents, White Star. Huelo lies in the Waipio Valley near Waipio Bay on the north shore of Maui, about 20 miles outside of Kahului on the road to Hanna. White Star moved to the area when the neighborhood was still mostly cow pastures, but the area has since become an enclave of large estates. Atmo's flight to freedom was from White Star's home, Pali Uli, a beautiful estate overlooking a 75-ft waterfall very close to the ocean. Miranda, the original female mitred conure, as the story goes, was left behind by a renter of White Star's and released from a large, beautiful aviary by an amorous Atmo. The rest, as they say, is history.

Atmo and Miranda set up a homestead in abandoned sea bird cavities that they shared with local pigeons. The cavities were on a steep, fragile cliff facing the wild seas on the north shore of Maui. Approach by land and sea was virtually impossible. Most US Coast Guard vessels are not rated for these waters and the land owner declined access to the state and federal agencies for a variety of reasons.

Biologists with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) tried to capture the conures in 1992 when the population was estimated at 12. By 1996, biologists believed the flock had grown to about 30. Three local biologists (Carter, Gassman, and Duvall) were later hired by DLNR to conduct field studies and risk assessment.

By that time, they estimated the flock at 200 or more individuals. In June of 2000, 2 of the birds were shot by DLNR personnel in an attempt to identify the species and survey for infectious diseases. The species was identified as *Amitrata*, based on size and color, and lice found on the birds were identified as common pigeon lice.

Unfortunately, the samples taken for infectious disease tests were lost.

A *mitrata* conures are larger than other similar species and commonly measure 38 cm in length. They can be easily distinguished from other green conures by their size, red cheeks, and olive green under wing coverts. They can also be identified by their loud, strident call.

The current efforts to remove the conures are the result of collaboration with MISC and the National Wildlife Research Center's Hawai'i Field Station, which is part of the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Concerns have steadily increased as biologists have watched the conures expand their range to nearby cliffs. Whereas the numbers at the Huelo site have fluctuated for many years at around 90, expansion of the colony to new sites with successful breeding populations has incited new action. Access to the original cliff face, long denied by the resident, has finally been permitted and allowed biologists to rappel down to nest sites. Actions in July and August of 2006 resulted in the lethal removal of over 30 birds from the area.

Although it remains unclear just how much of a risk the conures pose to the fragile Hawaiian ecosystem, there is a vigorous effort underway to control or if possible eliminate non-native species. It appears that the economic and logistical limitations that have offered the conures relative shelter from authorities have shifted. Time will tell whether the efforts to remove them by any means possible will proceed or be successful.

Release #11, November, 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? This article is for the use of member clubs only and is protected by U.S. Copyright laws. Use by any group or organization not currently enrolled in the AAV Client Education Program, is strictly prohibited.

2008 Schedule

Here are our meeting dates for 2008. We will post more information about meeting topics as it becomes available. Unless noted, all meetings are at the Kirkwood Community Center, on the third Sunday of each month. The Board meeting is at 12:30 PM, followed by the general meeting at 2:00 PM.

January 20
February 17
March 16
April 20
May 18
June 8 (second Sunday)
July 20
August – Fair
September 21
October 19
November 16
December 14

Our Mission

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a not for profit organization established in 1988 to:

Bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.

Create interest in bird care and responsible breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.

Reduce neglect, cruelty and abuse of captive birds through education and public outreach.

Educate the public, as well as ourselves, on the ever present danger of extinction in the wild.

Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

Officers

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679
Secretary	Cathy Wendler	(636) 586-0604
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Jennifer Cira	(636) 527-5889

Board Members

Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Carole Grommet	(636) 529-0026
Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Niki Shaffer	(314) 432-4890

Committees

Educa- tion/Outreach	Dorene Olson	(314) 956-1310
Hospitality	Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Website /Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317