

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 8, Issue 4

April 2008

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

They say that April showers bring May flowers. At the rate it's going, the month of May may also bring an ark full of animals! All joking aside, I hope no one was flooded out by the rising rivers and creeks this past month.

The 2008 Bird Fair is only four months away. I believe we have a good lineup of speakers this year, so be sure to tell your friends, family, and relatives to come to the fair. You will also want to attend the next few meetings to find out all of the up-to-date information about the fair.

Suzanne Dohack is organizing the volunteers for this year's fair. Check with Suzanne at the meetings to find out how you can help with this year's fair.

I would like to thank Nancy Schnell for the Education Program last meeting on GeesePeace. It was very informative, and the role-playing by some of the GPC members gave a good demonstration on how GeesePeace replace the Geese eggs with wooden "eggs". I guess umbrellas come in handy for things other than April showers!

Our Education Program for April will be John and Pep Tomasovic with a travelogue of their travels. You certainly want to be at this month's meeting to hear all about their interesting and educational travels.

See you at the Meeting. ---- Dave

Tidbits

20

Oh, by the way... This is the twentieth anniversary of The Gateway Parrot Club! We haven't really made a big thing out of it. I just noticed it last month as I was reviewing our mission statement. It starts out, "... es-

tablished in 1988. I will do a little casual research, and hopefully some of our older, er, longer-standing, members will help me out... Who were those folks that, twenty years ago, thought it would be a good idea to start a parrot club? I think Dr. Kersting was one, and I think our guest speakers at the April meeting, John and Pep Tomasovic were part of the founding group. If you were, or know someone who was, let me know.

GPC Appearances – We had a good turnout for the Earth Day event in St. Charles. Brian Peck is the teacher that coordinates the event. In recent years it has been at Hardin Middle School. This year Brian, and the event, were at Jefferson Middle School. For the GPC, Debby and Larry Martin were there, as were Suzanne Dohack and Pam Walsh. We had birds on display from Rosie Bourkes and Love Birds to Cockatiels and Macaws. Returning organizations included the Herp Society and House Rabbits. The St. Charles Police K-9 Unit was right next to our booth and the Bunnies. New this year, and quite interesting, was the National Tiger Sanctuary. Did you know there was a National Tiger Sanctuary, or that it was located in Bloomsdale, MO, just south of St. Louis? Check out their website at

www.NationalTigerSanctuary.org

They offer tours and educational programs. Like so many animals in our "civilized" society, even tigers need rescue organizations.

Ahoy there matey... Q and I also made an appearance at the Holy Redeemer Church's Caribbean Night event. It was a dinner/fund raising event with a pirate theme. One of the organizers contacted me through the website and asked if we could supply a pirate with parrot to complement the atmosphere.

Member Profile Dawn Breer

What do you do for a living? My first and most important job, though unpaid, is a Mom to my 3 kids. They are wonderful, compassionate kids with a heart for kindness and protection of animals. As "hobby" job, I make bird toys. The small amount of business I do helps with the "fun" part of raising kids. It's kind of our eat out, birthday, holiday money.

Where are you from? I am a native of St. Louis, but moved away as an Air Force family when I was 11 and returned here at 19 to make this a permanent home.

Tell us about your personal birds. I have what I call my dream bird, a Sulphur Crested Cockatoo named Rue. We are his second home and he will be 19 this year and we've loved him now for almost 7 years. We also have a female Eclectus named Rowan, we are her third home and she has been with us for over a year and claims my son as hers!! My daughter has a lovebird that was my mother's. His name is Squeakers... and rightly so, he lives for my daughter and stays in her shirt most of the time. He adores her and follows her through the house.

What other pets do you have? We recently ventured out into the dog world. We took in an unwanted Bichon Frise and had to get him a friend, so adopted a Chinese Crested Powderpuff. Their names are Bentley and Parker and they are inseparable. Other than that we have fish, African Cichlids, and that is my husband's thing. He has had fish his whole life and intends to keep doing so.

How did you first become involved in the GPC? Through a seminar, years ago, up by the airport. I was a vendor there and met Michelle Reehten, a former member. She was hosting a toy making party for the club and I offered to help. The friendship, membership, and the rest... history.

What are your main concerns in aviculture today? How demanding our avian friends are and what a huge responsibility they are. They are not the caged, hamster-type pet, they truly must be part of the family household to have a happy and healthy relationship. The commitment is huge!!

What would be your advice to an inexperienced person who called you looking for a bird? Research the different breeds of birds and fit the breed's general personality, size and needs to

you. Do not pick out a pet on looks or talking ability alone. It is no different that picking a breed of dog to fit your family's lifestyle.

What other clubs or organizations do you belong to? I am a member of the Missouri Caged Bird Club (inactive member, I attend their fair, but there's just not enough days in the months to do everything) and do bird fairs for a few other clubs. Outside of that, I volunteer for a crisis organization called Hand 'n Hand Pregnancy Center. It will be 10 years this October we have been open. It is a wonderful group of volunteers who have a helping heart who want to help these mothers and children have a shot in this world and with some assistance, love and the Grace of God, they will.

Besides birds, what hobbies have you? I can honestly say that I do not have much time for hobbies or interests of my own. Maybe that will come late in life. My husband holds down two jobs to keep me home with the kids and between their Scouts (both Boy Scout & Girl Scout), gymnastics and homework, church activities, and the center... I'm out of hours in a day!

Anything else you would like to share? A thank you for the nomination and election, and I appreciate your patience with my kids that have to be with me at the meetings. My husband works Sunday afternoon so he can attend church with us in the mornings, so we're kind of a package...the kids & I.

AFA Convention In St. Louis

Cliff Patterson



For the first time in many, many years the American Federation of Aviculture (AFA) will be meeting somewhere other than Florida, Texas and California, the big bird breeding states. In 2008 they're coming to St. Louis!

What is the AFA? It's our country's leading organization for the protection and promotion of our birds. In addition to being a great place to actually meet folks whose names you've read about, it's very educational. Many speakers present short papers on the latest developments in bird conservation, bird medicine, bird breeding, bird training, etc.

Virtually all of the groups dedicated to a particular species of bird have a table there. Many of them have their annual meetings in

conjunction with AFA. It's also common for them to have small raffle tables with the opportunity to bid on fascinating bird items.

The convention this year will be held at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport. It runs from July 30th through Aug. 2nd. You can attend for one day or all of them. As the schedule of speakers is announced, we'll keep you posted.

Registration rates are \$205 for AFA members and \$235 for non-members through June 16th. After that, the member rate is \$245 and nonmembers are \$275 so it pays to plan ahead.

In addition, the AFA has arranged a special behind the scenes tour of the Saint Louis Zoo. This might be a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn about birds, make new bird friends, and generally have a great time!

Cliff Patterson
AFA Illinois state coordinator
Cliff@babybirdfarm.com

Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

Mattie Sue Athan will be one of our featured speakers at the August 23-24, 2008 Bird Fair at Queeny Park. Mattie Sue has written several parrot-related books. We have two of her publications in our GPC Library. I will feature both books this month. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with Mattie Sue's books, as she is quite an accomplished author and speaker.

Here are this month's picks:

Guide To The Quaker Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan

Here is everything you need to know about caring for and training your Quaker parrot. This book guides you in the details of parrot behavior training that is best begun when the bird is still in its baby stage. You also get advice on grooming, diet, protecting against household accidents, choosing cages and toys – and dealing with that all too common problem: what to do if your bird flies away. Dozens of full-color photos and illustrations. (122 pages).

Guide To A Well-Behaved Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan

If you own a parrot or plan to get one, this book will give you practical solutions to the pet behavior problems that sometimes trouble

owners of these birds. You will also get helpful information on bathing, grooming, communications, selection of accessories and toys for your parrot, and advice on maintaining safe interactions between you and your parrot. Dozens of full-color photos and detailed drawings. (144 pages).

Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill by Mark Bittner

The true story of Mark Bittner and his interaction with a wild flock of cherry-headed conures in San Francisco, CA. during the 1990's. Mark Bittner tells how he became fascinated by the birds and patiently developed a friendship with them that would last more than six years. There are a few black & White pictures. (287 pages).

The New Parrot Handbook by Werner Lantermann

A comprehensive book about parrot husbandry, purchasing, housing, care, diet, diseases, behavior, breeding, and more. Color pictures and b&w illustrations. (144 pages).

Small Parrots by David Seth-Smith

This book is meant mostly for identifying small parrots such as; conures, lorikeets, cockatiels, monk (Quaker) parrots, parakeets, and etc. Several color and b&w pictures. (302 pages).

Macaws as a Hobby by Horst Schmidt

Practical advice on buying a macaw. Housing, feeding, caring for, breeding, and how to teach a macaw to talk are all discussed in this book. Many color pictures. (98 pages).

GPC members can check out any of these featured picks at this month's 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.

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.

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!... Christine

Ginger's Foraging Tray

Debby Martin

It's Ginger here, dictating an article to my faithful scribe, Beta Bird. I promised, in an earlier article, to give our parrot club flock the secret of the Ginger Foraging Tray Deluxe. Here is how I have Beta Bird make it:

Ingredients

- Small, plastic Tupperware or some other durable washable tray.
- Shredded black and white newspaper
- Small items to forage through and throw around such as plastic straws cut into 2 inch pieces, plastic or untreated wooden buttons, Lego pieces, pony beads and other small bird-safe items.
- Shredders cut into 1.5 inch pieces, small pasta pieces and some larger items to forage through and toss around such as popsicle sticks, small whiffle balls, chunks of soft wood such as balsa, pinecones, large beads stuffed with nut pieces and pellets.
- Edible foraging items such as pellets, nut pieces, crushed Nutriberries, a bit of seed, coconut.

Assembly

- Place shredded newspaper in bottom of tray.
- Sprinkle the treats and pellets on top (Beta Bird keeps trying to make it more pellets than treats, sigh)
- Mix up the small items and spread on top of food
- Add larger items on top
- Mix everything up a little bit and set tray in cage where Mozart won't poop on it (that's tricky).

Enjoy!

Search for Justice Avian Forensic Identification

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.

Joy Halverson, DVM, MPVM

Disputes involving the individual identity of lost or stolen birds occur occasionally. Disputes involving the individual identification of lost or stolen birds are frequent. In a recent case, an African grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) escaped from an apartment. A visitor had inadvertently walked into and knocked out a screen door. Startled, the bird had flown from the high-rise condominium into the forest below. The owners contacted all the local veterinary clinics and animal shelters but failed to find it. A month later, the owners canvassed the shelters again and were told that an African grey parrot had just been adopted from a local shelter. Using the Freedom of Information Act, the owners compelled the shelter to provide the contact information of the adopter. The adopter refused to let the subjects see the bird and rebuffed their offer to buy her another African grey if the bird turned out to be theirs. The subjects then embarked on a pursuit of justice. They contacted Zoogen and QuestGen Forensics. Unfortunately, a sexing sample submitted many years earlier had been discarded. But luckily, they had saved molted feathers from the bird. DNA typing was then possible for comparison with the adopted bird.

Mitochondrial DNA analysis has become increasingly important for forensic identification. Although it is less informative than nuclear DNA markers, which can be used to assign identity beyond question, it becomes the method of choice for sample with minimal or degraded nuclear DNA.

After a year, the found bird was taken and a blood sample was drawn by a local veterinarian with no opportunity to witness the draw by the purported former owners. A second sample was subsequently drawn, witnessed by one of the former owners.

DNA extraction was performed on a molted feather from the lost bird. In addition to DNA extracted from the lost bird's feathers, the found bird's sample (#1), and the witnessed sample (#2), DNA from 16 African grey parrots (routine gender testing samples from Zoogen) were sequenced and compared.

Results

Twenty-five mitochondrial types were identified in the Genbank sequences and Zoogen samples combined. The Zoogen samples showed 11 types; 1 type was common (28%) suggesting a genetic bottleneck of the U.S. pet population of African gray parrots. The 2 samples reputedly from "the found bird" had different mitochondrial types; only the first non-witnessed sample matched the feathers from the lost bird.

Discussion

Twenty-five MtCR haplotypes were identified in the combined Zoogen samples and Genbank accessions. This finding suggests that MtCR haplotyping can be a useful tool in avian identification for species in which no nuclear DNA markers are available or in situations when the sample available for DNA testing is not ideal. However, caution should be exercised in the interpretation of results. Although our starting database is small, the finding that some MtCR types are common means that in some cases DNA results will match by chance and not because the samples came from the same bird. For that reason, forensic scientists often speak of MtCR testing as a powerful tool for exclusion rather than as an identification method. However, in this case, the results are unequivocal. Despite the fact that the original bird and the first submission of the found bird had the most common type seen in our small database, the second submission most definitely came from a different bird. A second bird had been brought to the witnessed collection so that the former owners would not recognize their bird. Ironically, if the new owner had just presented the bird for a witnessed collection as instructed, she could easily have argued that the type was common enough that it didn't prove ownership. Why did she allow the real bird to be sampled the first time? Perhaps she thought the DNA testing was just a ruse to allow the owner to see the bird and didn't believe DNA identification was possible.

As of this writing, the bird is still in the new owner's possession. One of the former owners died in April 2005 before hearing of the test results. Exhausted from the ordeal of his friend's death and in debt for legal fees, the former owner is continuing the pursuit of ownership in memory of the co-owner.

Release #9, September, 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?

Editor's Note: I think this is an argument for microchips. I don't think tattoos, popular with dog owners are used on birds, and a leg band would probably have been removed by an unethical holder.

Recipe of the Month

Applesauce Cookie Bars

Posted by: Cindy Cook

cinderella@accessunited.com - April 8, 2001

This is high in vitamin A, calcium and iron.

- 4 Boxes Jiffy Cornbread Mix
- 3 bottles baby food banana/yogurt juice
- 1 jar baby food mango dessert
- 1 jar baby food sweet potatoes
- 1 jar baby food squash
- 2 jar baby food macaroni & cheese
- 1 jar baby food oatmeal & apples cereal
- 1 jar baby food diced apples
- 1 jar baby food carrots
- 1 egg w/shell crushed
- 4 jars baby food applesauce

Mix well and pour into pan. Bake on 350 until done. Makes (3) 8" x 11" pans. Cut into long strips and top with applesauce. Freeze and thaw as needed. Birds cannot resist this!

Recipes from the Birds n Ways website, www.birdsnways.com

2008 Schedule

| |
|---------------------------------|
| April 20 – Tomasovic Travelogue |
| 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 | Niki Shaffer | (314) 853-5323 |

Board Members

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Christine Kinkade | (636) 343-8097 |
| Dawn Breer | (636) 464-8085 |
| Suzanne Dohack | (636) 734-4527 |
| Trey Shaffer | (314) 432-4317 |
| Janet Draper | (314) 432-3019 |
| Jim Berk | (636) 586-1445 |

Committees

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Education | ??? | |
| 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 |
| Public Relations | | |