

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 8, Issue 10 October 2008

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

As we begin planning for next year's Fair, there will be some exciting changes in store. First of all, our 2009 All-American Hookbill Fair will be at a new location! It will be at the Machinists' Hall, located on St. Charles Rock Rd. just off of I-70. Another big change is that the GPC will be doing its own concessions for those attending the fair. This will bring in added revenue for the GPC. You can find out more about these and other exciting changes by attending upcoming meetings.

Autumn is upon us. The days are becoming shorter, leaves on the trees change color, and the air becomes cooler. For some of us, it is the best time of the year. For others, it is a depressing time of year. This time of year also seems to affect our birds, as well. Some birds get "grouchy" or nippy or just want to be left alone. Other birds do not seem to be affected at all. With a little understanding and patience, we can give our companion birds the support they need while they, in turn, return to us their companionship.

Autumn is also a reminder that it is time to test your smoke detectors and replace the batteries, if necessary. But, first, you may want to move your parrot to another area. That is, unless you don't mind your parrot mimicking the sound of the smoke detector all day long!

In November we will be taking nominations for new Club Officers & Board members for our upcoming election that will be held at the December meeting. Be sure to attend the next two important Club meetings.

See you at the Meeting. ---- Dave

(PS: Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour on Nov 2)

Tidbits

It's been a quiet month in GPC-land. As Dave mentioned, the big news is a new venue for the Fair. We had a good run at Queeny Park, but we have been pinched recently between increasing costs and the likelihood of continued increases, and a decline in attendance. We will work on methods to increase attendance, and the Machinists Hall offers us a great facility with services, a friendly fee structure and great flexibility in how we conduct our event. Perhaps most notable is the kitchen facility and our ability to operate our own concession. So let your mouth start watering, and think of ways to help plan and operate the food service. The change of location will simplify things for out-of-towners, while remaining convenient for St. Louisans. The Hall is about ¼ mile east of I-270, on St. Charles Rock Road, across from DePaul hospital, next to Target.

Thanks to Froggi VanRiper, for her presentation at the September meeting. Froggi talked about a number of behaviors and demonstrated training for and dressing your bird with a flight suit/diaper and a harness.

Froggi will be back this month, along with Niki, discussing first aid.

Election coming – You may have heard. Where do the candidates stand on issues significant to parrots? Who knows? Actually, I was referring to our annual election. Just a reminder, the election is in December, with nominations in November. Offices up for election this year are President and Vice President. Three Board positions will be elected, those currently held by Suzanne Dohack, Janet Draper and Trey Shaffer. Any active member can make a nomination. Nominees must have attended at least four meetings in the 12 month period ending on the day of nominations, this year 11/16. So you have two more opportunities to make the four. Niki will compile a list of potential nominees.

Articles needed – My perpetual plea for more content. Things are a little thin this month, and the cupboard is bare, so sharpen your pencil and send me something for next month...

And that's the news from GPC-Land, where the women are strong, the men are good looking, and all the birds are above average...

Bread Bad For Birds?

Donna Sleight – The Real Macaw Parrot Club

Recently, in correspondence with the Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research in Delaware, they had an interesting hypothesis about bread and other carbs in relation to appropriate bird diets. According to them, bread can be a bad thing to feed wild birds. If this is true for wild birds, I think it is a viable consideration for the health of our parrots, don't you?

In most households, bread and other carbs seem to be a most enjoyable staple -- despite the low-carb hype of recent years. Bread is the source of fuel preferred by the cells in our bodies, coming with an assortment of a few essential vitamins and minerals. However, even though bread (including whole grain varieties) is also enjoyable to birds, is it essential, or even safe for our parrots?

In maintaining our parrots' health, we should be aware that bread may rob a bird's diet of the more nutritionally dense foods it requires. In the case of a wild bird that relies on optimal muscle mass, bone strength, and feathering, they are more susceptible to predators, to making potentially fatal pilot errors, and to losing out in the competition for more appropriate food. What, then, could it mean for a parrot's health? No, they usually don't need to protect themselves against predators; however, muscle mass, bone strength and feathering are very important. So, again, this is a viable consideration.

Upon doing a little research on this subject, it seems that bread can kill a wild bird directly by damaging its whole digestive system, as well as contributing to potentially fatal intestinal blockages.

Most vulnerable is the "crop", located at the base of a bird's throat. The crop is where food is moistened. Any sticky or expandable (bread product) substance can remain in the crop, causing it to become distended, infected, or impacted ("crop stasis"), which will kill a bird.

Knowing the risk to wild birds, it isn't worth the risk to our parrots' life to feed it bread, or bread products (cake, cookies, chips, crackers, rice or fries).

Options? For your outside wild birds, you can feed black oil sunflower seeds, suet, berries, apples, oranges, or even a dish of yummy meal worms. Ducks and other waterfowl can be given

whole corn (feed corn, not seed corn). Seed corn is most likely treated with insecticides, and can kill birds. For your parrots, offer a wide variety of vegetables and fruits.

Autumn is here – take ad-vantage of the season and don't forget to buy your parrots some of those little pumpkins (not the shelled or painted varieties), almonds in the shell, and especially those luscious pomegranates. A pomegranate will keep a parrot occupied for hours.

Oh, and by the way, my African Grey does not agree with the part about the cookies!

Thanks again to The Real Macaw Parrot Club, based in New Jersey, Shelly Orloff, their editor, and of course Donna Sleight, for this article.

www.RealMacaw.com

From the AAV Basic Psittacine Incubation and Hatching - Part 1

Here are two articles on incubation and hatching, really a two part article. Breeding sounds like a lot of work... And after that comes all that feeding...

FEBRUARY 2007

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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, who gets off her eggs to eat and exercise, incubator temperature is constant. The heat deter-

mines 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 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.

From the AAV Basic Psittacine Incubation and Hatching - Part 2

MARCH 2007

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Basic Psittacine Incubation and Hatching

Rick Jordan, Dripping Springs, TX

Part II, Egg position, hatching, and assisted hatches.

Gravity will prompt the developing embryo to position itself within the egg during the latter stages of development. The proper position for the baby to be in during hatch is where the head is in the large end of the egg with the air cell. If the eggs are improperly positioned during incubation, some young will sense the gravity and will position themselves in the wrong end of the egg, resulting in less than 50% hatch probability.

Psittacine eggs should be positioned on their side, as in nature. For this reason, it is often better to choose an incubator designed for psittacine eggs rather than for poultry, which have been selectively bred for hatchability from the vertical position.

The hatch process usually begins about 72 hours prior to actual emergence from the shell. The beginning of the hatch process can be observed by candling. Hatching eggs will have an elliptical-shaped air cell where the air appears to be moving downward along the side of the egg. This change occurs when the baby moves and pulls the internal shell membrane away from the shell, allowing light to shine between the shell and the membrane. At this stage, the temperature should be maintained at incubation temperature or 1 degree less. Humidity may be increased to keep the internal membrane moist so it does not adhere to the hatching. Turning is no longer required at this stage. Maintain the necessary heat and humidity and the young should hatch within a few days after the external pip.

It is not wise to assist the hatch of an egg unless a problem is evident. Identifying a problem takes experience. If the baby vocalizes very loudly and seems to be pipping in the same spot instead of properly cutting the shell, it may need help. Often removal of the

shell over the air cell and the addition of moisture to the inner membrane is all that is needed. Use clean water to moisten the membrane, being careful not to disrupt an active blood vessel or cause excessive bleeding. Make small assists, placing the egg back in the incubator between sessions so they can regather strength. Never feed the babies in the egg. Never pull a baby from the eggshell, Allow it to climb out on its own when the blood supplies have dried up and the yolk sac has been drawn back into its body.

Release #3, March, 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.

Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

Because this month's education focuses on first aid for birds, I have chosen five books that have references to first aid. As I have mentioned before, some of our library books are older and do not have a first aid section. The following Picks do have a section on first aid.

First Aid for Birds by Julie Rach with Gary A. Gallerstein

This book, which has been donated to the GPC Library by Christine Kinkade, is for pet owners and focuses on administering first aid to birds. You will learn step-by-step information on emergency situations, how to quickly save your bird's life by taking actions, and how to prevent emergencies by feeding your bird a balanced diet, regularly trimming his wings and nails, and bird-proofing your home. Several color photos. (126 pages).

Guide To The Quaker Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan

Here is everything you need to know about caring for and training your Quaker parrot. Although this book is primarily about the Quaker parrot, the first aid and medical care section can be related to any parrot. The book also lists the things you will need for a home emergency kit. Dozens of full-color photos and illustrations. (122 pages).

Eclectus Parrots by Katy McElroy

This is my absolute pick if you have an eclectus. A must read for the eclectus owner or if you are considering an eclectus as a companion parrot. This book has a section on first aid emergencies, a first aid kit list, and a section on making your home safe for your bird. There is also a list of safe plants and trees for your bird. Lots of full color photos and illustrations. (95 pages).

Parakeets by Annette Wolter

This handy pet owner's manual answers all your questions about purchase, care and feeding, illnesses, and the mysteries of behavior. There is a section for when your bird is sick that covers first aid, a first aid kit, and how to recognize illnesses such as egg binding, difficulty in breathing, diarrhea, constipation, skin injuries, and more. Thirty drawings and 22 color photos. (74 pages).

GPC members can check out any of these featured picks at this month's meeting. Please note, 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!

Coco's Favourite Cupcakes

From the Birds n Ways Website

www.BirdsnWays.com

Posted by: Samantha – August 6, 2003

handraisedheaven@yahoo.com.au

- 1 Cup of seed
- 1 Cup s/r flour
- 1 teaspoon of honey
- 2 teaspoons of sugar
- 1 egg
- ½ cup of water

Combine all the ingredients and mix with whisk or blender.

Put them in a greased cupcake tray. Leave them in the oven at 150 degrees for 10-20mins. Then remove and let cool.

Once cooled put them in the freezer in wrap or bag if not being used straight away

Optional extras: glaze honey on the muffins once cooled and sprinkle nuts or fruit on top.

Cokie's Cookies

From the Birds n Ways Website

www.BirdsnWays.com

Posted by: Pam Katz - April 27, 1998

MizPam@AOL.com

- 1 cup dried fruit (any of your birds favorites-i.e. apricots, apples, figs, dates, coconut, etc.)
- ½ cup uncooked oatmeal
- ½ cup raisins
- ¼ cup hulled seeds and/or crushed nuts (I use sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, and walnuts)
- 1 Tbs. peanut butter
- 2 Tbs. honey

In a food processor, process all ingredients together except for the honey and peanut butter. You will have a sticky glob to put into a medium size bowl.

Add the peanut butter and honey and stir until it gets too thick. Then use your hands to knead the rest to a "rollable" consistency.

Make ½ inch balls and place them on a cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 for about 20 minutes. Cool and serve.

They are quite delicious (you'll like them too), and they're just the right size for my Scarlet Macaw, "Coconut", to hold.

2008 Schedule

October 19 – First Aid
November 16 – Nominations
December 14 – Elections and party

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

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Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445

Committees

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Hospitality	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Website Newsletter Public Relations	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317