

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 15, Issue 1

January 2015

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

Welcome to the New Year. I wish to thank you for your confidence in me to take the office of the President. I have much to learn and hope to grow in my knowledge as Gateway Parrot Club grows in membership and activities.

As we venture into 2015 we have, as typical for St Louis, experienced balmy warm weather days and brutal bone chilling cold - all within a few days. We have all learned the need for being prepared for the unexpected.

Our guest speaker this month will bring us information and guidance to assist all of us to be better prepared for the future. Mike Doyel is an attorney from our area who will speak to us about Estate Planning for our companions. I think this is something we all have thought about and perhaps did not know what to do or even what is needed. Mr. Doyel will answer these concerns so that we may feel confident our Parrots and other companion animals will have their future and welfare secure.

Please let your friends know about this wonderful opportunity to gain knowledge about how to handle this very important topic. We welcome visitors and this topic is so often overlooked that we don't want anyone to miss out. I hope to see many of you and your friends there.

Sincerely,

Georgia

Tidbits

December Meeting – We ate and had fun. We also had elections, and there is some new blood in the management team. Welcome to Georgia Fletcher as President, Dick Grommet as Vice President, and new Board Members Carole Grommet and Jane Mueller.

January Meeting – With many of our birds expected to live many years longer than us, what are we doing to secure their well-being after we are gone? Not always the most pleasant thought, but a very practical one. Come to the meeting and listen to Michael Doyel and ask questions about estate planning.

GPC Public Event – Saturday, January 31 at Chesterfield Mall, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We have done these before. Come out, visit with folks interested in birds and tell them a bit about the GPC. Let me know what time you can attend...

National Bird Day?

Did you know that January 5 is/was National Bird Day? Jane Mueller let me know about it just after it had passed.

Not surprisingly, there is a web page for National Bird Day. After spending a few minutes looking through it, it seems to have two purposes, first to promote National Bird Day and second, an educational theme. Both of these seem admirable.

The GPC doesn't endorse other organizations without some due diligence looking at their mission and affiliates. In particular we tend to stay away from animal rights organizations advocating restrictions on keeping pet birds. It is sometimes hard to identify these groups without some reading between the lines.

The National Bird Day web site has prominent ads/links to The Avian Welfare Coalition and Born Free USA. So let me know what you think about these organizations, and maybe we can plan ahead to promote the next National Bird Day.

Fruit . . .

The Short and Sweet of It

Madeleine Franco

Fruit kabobs are a great way to serve your bird fruits without losing really great healthful treats through the cage grates. Fresh pineapple, bananas, apple, papaya, mango (Paulie's favorite!) and a limited amount of citrus--which can cause problems among some species of birds prone to iron storage disease--are easily strung on a kabob and hung inside of the cage. Banana wheels, 3/4-inch slices with peels intact, from which even small birds will scoop out the pulp, are also a favorite. Along with fruit, you may also want to mix in some vegetables, such as cooked sweet potato wedges (rich in Vitamin A " . . . good for feathers"), raw red, green and jalapeno pepper, kale, par-boiled broccoli, dandelion greens and other vegetables that lend themselves to snacking. Avoid avocado, which can be lethal. While we're on the subject of oranges, I have found that my birds prefer their orange segments if I serve them after allowing them to dehydrate somewhat on the countertop for about 24 hours; through observation, I concluded that the birds didn't like being sprayed with the juice when they bit into the segment. Birds are opportunistic in the wild and eat what they can find. All birds benefit from more fruits and vegetables in their diets, and Eclectus especially seem to thrive on a diet containing more fruit than average, except Lories, toucans and other fruit and nectar eaters.

To "sneak" fruits and vegetables into your bird's diet, you may want to try covering a monkey biscuit or two with unsweetened fruit cocktail (the kind made with pear juice). My Eclectus loves that! Additionally, if you juice for yourself, try using the remaining pulp in your favorite birdie muffin recipes. In almost any recipe that calls for milk, unsweetened apple juice, or carrot juice may be substituted, and one of my flock's favorites is banana nut muffins made with lots of walnuts, apple juice, and grated carrot. A great snack party for birds to enjoy with their humans includes cocktail cubes of cheese and pieces of apple.

When serving fruits of any kind, be sure to remove food items—particularly those placed in dishes—after only several hours, as spoilage can be an issue, particularly in moister climates. Also, remember that fruit—which should comprise less than 20% of your bird's diet and will likely account for even less in winter—has a high water content, so your bird's stools may be much more watery as you introduce

more fruit into his diet. To avoid waste, you needn't serve it every day, but do keep fruit in mind as a welcome change of pace and a healthful, high-energy snack for your bird . . . and yourself!

This comes to us from our association with the AFA, American Federation of Aviculture.

© 2007 Madeleine Franco, all rights reserved. Madeleine Franco, former president of the Las Vegas Avicultural Society, is an award-winning business writer and president of Jordan Richard Associates LLC. She is an investor relations and corporate communications specialist, and a work-from-home "bird mom" to a non-breeding, highly interactive and platonic pet flock.

Deciphering Avian Medical Tests

Lisa McManus

If you are not in the medical profession, the results from tests taken on your bird by your avian veterinarian can be extremely confusing. So as not to confuse things further with a lot of extra verbiage, let's just look at some of the tests and what they can tell you.

A blood panel can include quite a few different tests on many body systems, depending on what your vet wants to focus. A panel taken on your bird when it is healthy can be compared to the same tests run when a medical concern arises, which can be very helpful in diagnosing a problem.

WBC stands for White Blood Count and the range is between 5,000-11,000 IU/L. A high count can indicate a bacterial infection, leukemia or stress. A low count can indicate a viral infection or a poor immune system. This test can help in diagnosing PBF (Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease).

HCT stands for Hematocrit and the range is between 40.2-55.12%. HCT is the percent of red blood cells in the whole blood. This test is a measure of the size of the red blood cells as well as the number. A high level can indicate dehydration or cancer. A low level can indicate blood loss, autoimmune problems, chronic illness, cancer, or parasites.

TP stands for Total Protein and the range is between 3-5 g/dL (grams per deciliter) and tests the albumin and globulins. High levels can

indicate dehydration or lipemia. Low TP may indicate many different problems including malnutrition, malabsorption (inability to absorb), liver disease, renal disease, chronic disease, parasite and stress.

AST stands for aspartate transaminase, and may also be referred to as SGOT (Serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase). The range is between 140-360 IU/L (International unites per liter). SGOT is an enzyme released into the system after an injury. This tests liver values or enzymes when liver disease is suspected. A number higher than 350 typically indicates liver disease or muscle damage.

CPK (CP) stands for creatine phosphokinase and creatine-phosphate and the range is between 147-418 IU/L. This test is run with the AST. Muscle damage can raise the CP level; damage can be from injury, a long flight or even from drawing the blood for the test. This test is taken when muscle damage or wasting is suspected.

LDH stands for Lactate Dehydrogenase and the range is between 208-414 IU/L. LDH is found in red blood cells, muscle, liver and kidney. Elevated values may indicate liver or cardiac disease or skeletal muscle damage. Elevated LDH and normal CPK levels usually indicate liver disease. LDH levels can be raised when blood cells are damaged during the blood draw.

EPH stands for plasma protein electrophoresis which divides TP into prealbumin, albumin, alpha-, beta-, and gamma- globulins. Elevated levels of the immune proteins can indicate pneumonia and deep skin infections. Elevated levels of beta and gamma globulins can indicate the over activation of the immune system due to infection. Elevated levels of immune globulin can be caused by a fungal infection such as aspergillosis, a bacterial infection such as psittacosis and mycobacteriosis or tuberculosis.

Cholesterol range is between 100-300 mg/dL (milligrams/deciliter). Normal levels of cholesterol in birds have not been well documented, but the norm has been accepted as being between 100-300 mg/dL. High levels are caused by hypothyroidism, obesity and of course, a high fat diet. Low cholesterol may indicate liver or kidney disease.

Glucose range is between 200-400 mg/dL. Stress, egg yolk peritonitis and diabetes can cause high glucose levels. Diabetic birds will consistently show levels over 700-900 mg/dl. Low glucose may indicate malnutrition or insulinoma. Levels below 150 mg/dl indicate a very serious life-threatening condition.

Calcium range is between 8-12 mg/dL. High levels can indicate kidney disease, cancer or ovulation. Low levels usually indicate a defi-

ciency in the diet. However a bird with a calcium deficiency may still test in the normal range.

Uric Acid range is between 2-11 mg/dL. High levels can indicate liver disease or gout.

Bile Acid range is less than 100 umol/L (micromoles per liter). This tests liver function. Levels higher than 150-200 umol/L indicate liver dysfunction.

The ranges listed above are generally accepted as normal, however your avian vet will indicate what he or she feels is too high to too low for your bird; normal ranges will differ between the species.

This comes to us from our association with the AFA, American Federation of Aviculture.

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.

December Attendance

The following attended our last meeting and signed in...

Pamela Alsop	Jim Berk
Dawn Breer	Cindy Burquin
Phyllis Cotton	Mike Cullen
Renee Davis	Janet Draper
Ginny Feikert	Georgia Fletcher
Carole Grommet	Dick Grommet
Cindy Haselwander	Tony Haselwander
Esther Hermann	Jim Hermann
Christine Kinkade	David Kinkade
Linda Kraft	Al Marks
Janet Marks	Nancy Marron
Jane Mueller	Sandy Newcomb
June O'Brien	Paul O'Brien
Penny O'Grady	Gerri Otto
Kathy Reynolds	Sue Rodgers
Lisa Rose	Bernie Seiler
Pat Seiler	Trey Shaffer
Niki Stein	Cathy Timma
Pam Walsh	
Hannah Welk	

Contact Information

Officers

President	Georgia Fletcher	(314) 504-5019
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Secretary	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
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Board Members

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