

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 15, Issue 3

March 2015

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

We experienced a wide range of weather since we last met. Zero temperatures, sleet, freezing rain, and perhaps finally the beginnings of Spring.

This month Lisa Rose will speak to us about home safety for our birds. I hope she will address safe plants, safe trees, toys and other issues that most of us need to know. I am confident that we will all learn much and will come prepared to ask questions.

Work and planning continue toward our Fair in August. Vendor Packets are on their way to last year's vendors. If you know of anyone you would like to have come to our fair, please let us know or encourage them to contact us.

We had a last minute, very short notice, request to bring South American birds to a social event with a theme of Brazil to benefit Harris House, a local charity. They contacted me late last Tuesday with a plea to have us bring birds to their event last Friday. Thanks to Dick and Carol, Hannah, and two friends of mine, we had a wonderful showing of Macaws, Amazons, a Conure and a Hawk Head. The Harris House and their guests were very happy with our dazzling display of birds.

At the last meeting Nominations were offered for consideration of groups to make donations to. Each organization nominated is very deserving and all are deeply involved in the study of and work towards the benefit of Parrots. Please review the list and come prepared to vote for three of them at the meeting on March 15th

Once again I ask for your input. We are open to your suggestions for potential speakers and topics of interest for the Fair as well as for our Monthly Meetings. The primary directive of the Gateway Parrot Club is education. Let us know where your interests lie.

See you at the Meeting on March 15th,

Georgia

Tidbits

March Meeting – See details below, about grants. We will be voting for this year's recipients at the meeting.

Dues are Due – This is an escalating nag to get everyone to renew their membership. You can do it on the website, or the old-fashioned way of sending a check to our friendly Membership Secretary, Al Marks. Not sure if you have renewed? Ask Al. If you receive the printed newsletter, and have not renewed, there is a little note on the cover, but you probably already saw that...

Lears Macaws in Brazil – Georgia passed along information about an effort to help Lears Macaws in Brazil. Due to pressure on their natural habitat, they are eating corn from the fields of small farmers and being killed as pests. The Ears for Lears program buys corn from other farmers in Brazil and gives it to the affected farmers as compensation for lost crops and incentive not to harm the birds.

www.afabirds.org/cons_earsforlears.shtml

Grants

Trey Shaffer

As mentioned previously, we will distribute available funds with our nomination/voting process. This two-step process starts with Members nominating recipients then then voting. Nominations opened at the January meeting and close midnight, March 13. Below is the list of nominees at press time. Send your last minute nomination to our President.

STAR

St. Louis Avian Rescue, formerly Perfectly Precious, mission is to provide public education about avian care and accept relinquished birds, then provide veterinary screening, foster homes for rehabilitation and eventually permanent rehoming. STAR has a standards-based screening process for potential adopters.

Feather Distribution Project

The Project, operated for more than twenty years by Jonathan Reyman, collects feathers from a number of sources and distributes them

to Native Americans in the Southwest for use in religious ceremonies, traditional clothing and artifacts. Dr. Reyman has been our guest several times to explain the positive impact the simple act of saving our birds' feathers can have on Native Americans as well as reducing the incentive to capture wild birds just to harvest their feathers. Feathers are provided free of charge. Our donation will help offset operating expenses such as shipping costs.

World Bird Sanctuary

Our mission is to preserve earth's biological diversity and secure the future of threatened bird species in their natural environments. We fulfill that mission through education, captive breeding, field studies and rehabilitation. We maintain a parrot population as well as raptors, and have an Adoption Program, where GPC might adopt several parrots, thereby focusing a donation.

AAV Research

Association of Avian Veterinarians, the American branch of an international organization devoted to, "Advancing and Promoting Avian Medicine and Stewardship." We would donate to their Research Fund. The AAV then allocates funds to individual projects as they see fit.

Wild Bird Rehabilitation

WBR helps over 2,500 birds a year, representing 100 different migratory bird species. WBR receives referrals from St. Louis city, county and state animal agencies as well as many veterinarians and other animal welfare organizations.

TreeHouse Wildlife Center

TreeHouse Wildlife Center is a non-profit, established in 1979, dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of wildlife while promoting environmental awareness through education.

Wildlife Rescue Center

The Wildlife Rescue Center rehabilitates injured, sick and orphaned native wildlife and releases healthy animals to their natural habitat. Through educational outreach the Center provides environmental awareness, promotes a harmonious relationship with native wildlife, and encourages the community to protect our delicate ecosystems.

Ears for Lears (AFA)

This is a program managed by the American Federation of Aviculture. Ears, refers to corn in Brazil. Due to habitat pressure in Brazil, Lears Macaws are feeding on small farmers' corn fields, where they may be killed as pests. The program reimburses farmers for lost crops to discourage harming birds.

All-American Hookbill Fair Update

Dick Grommet

We are getting excited about this year's Fair. Here's a quick update on what is going on with the preparations:

- Vendor packages were sent out this week to over 40 vendors
- We are working very hard to get donations for the raffle and silent auction tables
- Website with the vendor forms will be added to the website shortly
- We will be working with the vendors as the applications come in
- Refreshment stand details are being worked out.
- Volunteer lists are being prepared
- Hotel with special rates for vendors is in process
- In process of confirming speakers for the fair

There's lots to do, but we are on top of things currently with more action items to be added in the months to come. If you would like to volunteer in the areas listed above, please contact me and I will forward your name to the committee head. Please keep in mind that items donated to the raffle or silent auction can be deducted since the club is a 501 C3 organization.

If you or if you know someone who would like to be a vendor, please contact me.

As a reminder, the fair will be held Saturday, August 22 at the Machinists Hall, 12365 St Charles Rock Road.

Join Us on Facebook!

Carole Grommet

We have a new interactive Gateway Parrot Club (GPC) Facebook group and we hope you will join and become a member.

In addition to the members sharing photos/videos, comments, questions, stories, etc., the administrators will be adding the latest news from the club (meeting dates, photos and videos, program topics, information about our yearly All-American Hookbill Fair, etc.).

We plan to keep you up to date on club news and welcome your contributions to the group.

Be sure to check us out!

Breed Spotlight: Cockatiels

Adapted from AAV Avian Pet Care Brochure: Cockatiels

Vital Statistics

Body length: 12.5 inches (32 cm)

Body weight: 75-120 g

Age of sexual maturity: 6-12 months

Average life span: 15-20 years

Cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) are medium-sized, trim birds that are native to Australia. They are the most popular companion bird in the US. They adapt well to mutations are highly valued by some aviculturists, some believe the inbreeding required to produce unusual colors has actually resulted in some negative genetic disorders, including decreased disease resistance, reduced life span and hatching defects. Fifteen different color mutations are recognized in aviculture, including normal gray, pied, pearl, cinnamon, whitefaced, lutino, albino, silver and yellow-cheeked cockatiels.

What to Expect from Your Cockatiel

Cockatiels are relatively quiet, nondestructive, entertaining birds that are easy to care for. Because they are considered so gentle, they are excellent companion birds for children. Although cockatiels may be kept in groups, many owners believe that they are better pets when kept singly. If keeping more than one, be sure there is time for individual at-

tention for each bird. Cockatiels are limited talkers, but some male birds are so good at whistling that their tunes are recognizable.

Is Your Cockatiel a Male or a Female?

Immature gray cockatiels have yellow spots under the primary wing feathers and bars under the tail feathers. A male loses these bars around 9 months of age. Head and facial markings are often brighter on males. Color mutations (lutino, pied, pearl) may not show the same reliable gender differences in feather pattern. Vocalization is the earliest means of sexing cockatiels—the male has a melodious call and may learn to imitate words and songs. Females have more of a monotonous chirp. Cockatiels are prolific year-round breeders. Their offspring are usually easy to hand-raise.

What Should You Feed Your Cockatiel?

Unlike many parrot species, cockatiels are granivorous and adapted to a diet consisting primarily of forages such as seeds and grains. Cockatiels can thrive on a high quality, seed-based diet, although many veterinarians recommend feeding formulated diets to cockatiels. Diets can be supplemented with fresh or dried vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

What Do Cockatiels Do All Day?

Cockatiels are playful and easily amused with simple toys and foraging activities. Because they love to chew, toys must be free of toxic metals, hooks, sharp objects or small, easily consumed components. Provide small diameter fresh-cut branches from nontoxic, pesticide-free trees. Check with your veterinarian for recommendations. In the wild, cockatiels are ground feeders and often prefer foraging and exploration opportunities on the cage bottom.

Are Cockatiels Tame?

Young, hand-raised cockatiels adapt readily to new surroundings and handling procedures. They should be exposed to novel situations (car travel, hospital visits, multiple household visitors, other pets) early in life so they are well-adjusted to these events. Gently handled and well-socialized cockatiels usually make outstanding pets.

How to Identify Your Bird

Cockatiels occasionally escape outdoors, and permanent identification may help to return birds to their owners. One method used to permanently identify your cockatiel is implantation of a microchip, as is performed in other pets. Some birds already have leg bands for identification. Although closed leg bands seldom cause injury, some owners prefer to have them removed.

Should the Wings Be Clipped?

The decision to clip wings or allow free flight should be made carefully. Birds that are allowed unrestricted freedom in the home can encounter numerous physical dangers or toxins. Wing clipping is a personal decision made for

each bird and decided between the client and veterinarian. With careful planning and training, some birds may be allowed free flight in a safe area. The goal of clipping the wings is not to make the bird incapable of flight but to prevent it from developing rapid and sustained flight and to prevent escape.

How to Keep Your Cockatiel Healthy, Happy and Safe!

- Provide stimulating environmental enrichment by offering toys, social interaction, and foraging opportunities.
- Feed a high quality, seed-based or formulated diet with fresh or dried fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Grit is not necessary for captive birds.
-
- Provide clean, fresh uncontaminated drinking water and change frequently, especially if the bird defecates in the water bowl. Consider training the bird to use a water bottle.
- Although cockatiels are not usually prolific bathers, provide occasional opportunities for bath, shower, or misting with fresh water.
-
- Avoid spraying house with insecticides.

Housing for your cockatiel should:

- be as large as possible.
-
- be secure, safe and easy to clean.
- be constructed of nontoxic
- materials (some cages may contain heavy metals, such as zinc).
- contain variably sized perches made of clean, nontoxic pesticide-free wood or branches.
- have easy-to-clean food and water containers.
- have perches not placed directly over food or water bowls.
- offer occasional opportunities for protected outdoor exposure to fresh air, direct sunlight and exercise.

Cockatiels are very curious and will investigate anything new in their environment. That is why it is important to prevent their access to:

- ceiling fans
- stove tops with hot burners, pans or skillets
- fumes from overheated non-stick cookware
- sandpaper-covered perches

- tobacco and cigarette smoke
- chocolate, avocado, salt, alcohol
- toxic houseplants
- pesticides or cleaners
- easily dismantled toys
- dogs, cats and unsupervised children
- sources of heavy metals, such as lead or zinc (stained glass windows, pewter, some mini-blinds or linoleum)
- plug-in air fresheners
- scented candles

Common Disorders of Cockatiels

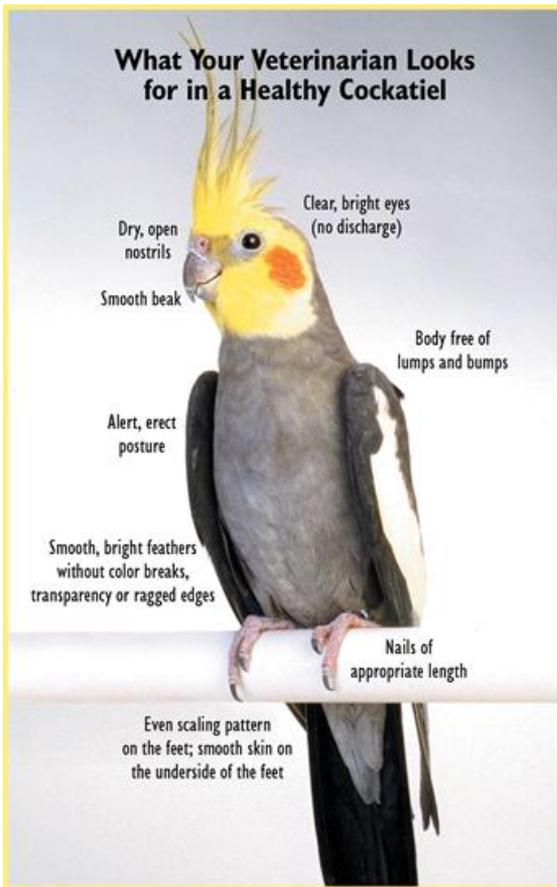
- Injuries from collisions or other pets
- Respiratory disease (sneezing, nasal discharge, clogged nostrils, open-beak breathing)
- Liver disease (abnormal feather color, swollen abdominal area)
- Gastrointestinal disease
- Heavy metal poisoning (lead or zinc)
- Obstetrical problems (egg-binding, yolk emboli)
- Feather destructive behavior
- Broken and bleeding emerging (blood) feathers
- Obesity
- Intestinal parasites
- Incoordination

Many diseases can be prevented with regular veterinary care, proper diet and housing. For these reasons, it is important to develop a relationship with a veterinarian who is experienced in avian preventive care, medicine and surgery. For help in finding an avian veterinarian in your area, contact the Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) by visiting www.AAV.org and click on "Find a Vet" or contact the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners by visiting www.abvp.com/diplomate.

February 2015 AAV Bird Club News Release

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 Bird Club News Release Program, is strictly prohibited.

Photography by Don Preisler



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.

February Attendance

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

Pamela Alsop	Chris Conn
Jim Conn	Mike Cullen
Dixie Danzeisen	Renee Davis
Janet Draper	Glenn Fisher
Kathy Fisher	Georgia Fletcher
Jim Foster	Brian Goetz
Jen Goetz	Carole Grommet
Dick Grommet	Esther Hermann
Jim Hermann	Jennifer Kennah
Christine Kinkade	David Kinkade
Linda Kraft	Al Marks
Janet Marks	Nancy Marron
Jane Mueller	Jessica Murray
Sandy Newcomb	Sue Rodgers
Bernie Seiler	Pat Seiler
Hannah Welby	Rosemary Wilson
Deborah Van Der Heide	

Coming Events

March 15	Safe home
April 19	Dr. Kersting - Flight
May 17	
June 14	
July 19	Toy making party
August 22	All-American Hookbill Fair
September 20	
October 18	
November 15	Nominations
December 13	Elections, Holiday Party

Contact Information

Officers

President	Georgia Fletcher	(314) 504-5019
Vice President	Dick Grommet	(636) 529-0026
Secretary	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Al Marks	(636) 441-0255

Board Members

Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445
Janet Marks	(636) 441-0255
Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Carole Grommet	(636) 529-0026
Jane Mueller	(314) 302-2970
Trey Shaffer	(314) 496-8000

Committees

Education	Lisa Rose	(636) 524-3989
Hospitality	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Penney O'Grady Pat Seiler	(636) 290-4084 (636) 462-4732
Website Newsletter Public Out-reach	Trey Shaffer	(314) 490-8000