

Squawk 'n Talk

June 2019

Chirps from the President's Perch

Many of you probably already know that Lisa Rose's father passed away on May 20th. GPC sent flowers and condolences from all of our members. His funeral and burial was on Friday May 24th.

I hope to be back to STL in time for our June 9th Meeting. Currently I'm in Salt Lake City and enjoyed a pleasant although rainy afternoon at the Tracy Aviary.

This is the home of the renowned Andy Condor. We missed his daily walk around the park as he greets visitors. Today's walk was earlier this morning and was brief because he's not a fan of rain. Have to say that I agree with him. I've included a couple photos of Andy. His wing span is a bit over 8'. He's large and impressive and a great spokes-bird for his species. Below are a couple pictures of Andy.

Georgia Fletcher



Pictures from our May Meeting featuring Michaeline Walsh

Michaeline presented a very interesting and informative program at our May meeting. We thank her for telling us about the Phoenix Landing organization and the wonderful work they do for the parrot community. If you haven't already, go to their website (phoenixlanding.org) and read about how dedicated they are to the parrots' well being. There are some very good articles on the website that are worth reading.



**Varietees Bird Store is hosting a
special event on
Sunday, June 23, 2019
1:00 p.m .**

**Guest Speaker
Robin Shewokis
Enrichment Specialist
Owner of The Leather Elves**

**Robin spoke at Varietees in 2013 to a packed house.
She regularly speaks at parrot clubs across the U.S. She also develops new
products for parrots that will stimulate naturalistic behavior, and has
published articles on enrichment in national and international publications.**

Mark your calendars!



GATEWAY PARROT CLUB
32ND ANNUAL ALL-AMERICAN HOOKBILL
BIRD FAIR **SAT AUG 24**
10AM - 5PM

Parrot Meet + Greet	Silent Auction	Food + Treats
Concession Stand	Raffle Items	Playstands
Birdie Bake Sale	Seminars	Toys

Please Note that the June meeting will be on the 2nd Sunday (June 9), due to Father's Day being on the third Sunday. General Meeting Information

Gateway Parrot Club



Meeting Dates 2019:

- * June 9, Stephen Johnson, Part 2, 2018 AAV Conference Rpt.
- July 21, Toymaking Party
- August 24 (Saturday) All American Hookbill Fair
- September 15
- October 20
- November 17 Randy Morgan, Honey of a Bee Presentation
- * December 8, Holiday Party

*** Meeting will be on 2nd Sunday**

Recent Articles of Interest:

Parrot taken into custody by police in Brazil for trying to warn drug dealers of raid:

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/parrot-taken-into-custody-by-police-in-brazil-for-trying-to-warn-drug-dealers-of-raid/ar-BBWi8w4?li=BBnbfcl>

There were only 147 of the world's fattest parrots alive -- and then came the baby boom:

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/19/health/kakapo-new-zealand-baby-boom-scn-trnd/index.html>

General Meeting Information:

Come and enjoy the fun and bring a bird (as long as it is clipped). It's so enjoyable seeing all the different species of parrots and talking to other parrot owners.

You don't have to be a member to attend, but we would love to have you join. Meeting starts at 1:00 and it will be a full afternoon of meeting, socializing, eating, program, and raffle. For members who have not renewed their membership or who would like to join, please see Renee Davis, our membership chair person. She will be at the meeting to sign you up. An annual membership fee of \$20.00 includes your family (two voting members) and brings you our monthly newsletter by email, and helps us to provide special speakers and to support not for profit organizations. Thank you for joining and helping support the parrot community in St. Louis.

We meet at Varietees Bird Store, 60 Meramec Valley Plaza, Valley Park, MO. Varietees will be open in the afternoon so you can purchase bird food, supplies, toys, cages, play stands, etc.

We do have a raffle most months so if you would like to donate item(s), they are always welcome. They do not have to be bird related. We sell raffle tickets for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

Did you know that the Gateway Parrot Club has a Facebook group page? If you would like to join this group, search for "Gateway Parrot Club" in Facebook and request membership. We have over 500 members!

Chef Christine will be making baked mostaccioli with meat sauce. For those that do not wish to eat meat she will be making baked mostaccioli with a vegetable sauce. In addition, there will be a green salad and garlic bread. For dessert she will make a bundt cake. As usual there will be water and an assortment of soda.



Association of Avian Veterinarians

May 2019 AAV Bird Club News Release

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Breed Spotlight: Finch

Adapted from AAV Species Brochure Series

Finches are popular, hardy birds that are easy to maintain. They are generally quiet and have a pleasant, melodious song. Finches do not require the level of attention needed by parrots. Linebreeding and in-breeding to achieve color or morphologic mutations produce a weaker bird with greater potential for genetic abnormalities. A color mutation Lady Gouldian finch, for example, will have a reduced life span in comparison to its wild-type con-specific. Depending on the climatic conditions and the durability of the species, many finches can be maintained in attractive, outdoor aviaries planted with nontoxic vegetation.

Is Your Finch a Male or a Female?

In some finches, there are obvious or subtle appearance or behavioral differences between the genders. Males are generally more brightly colored or elaborately marked than females, particularly during the breeding season. Differences in singing, courtship or nesting behavior may also provide clues to

gender. Males usually have melodious songs, perform a dance, hop in various postures and build the nest. The females often have more of a chirp or single-note call and are more passive in the courtship role. Alternatively, laboratory methods using DNA technology may be used for sex determination. Finches are prolific breeders. The offspring are usually parent-raised, especially in insectivorous species. Society finches make good foster parents for other finch species.



Lady Gouldian Finch



Zebra Finch



Long-tailed Finches

What Should You Feed Your Finch?

Most avian veterinarians recommend a high quality, toxin-free formulated diet, preferably certified organic when possible. Supplementation may include chopped organic vegetables, and leafy greens. While many finches can apparently live for many years on primarily seed-based diets, most veterinarians believe disease incidence is reduced with a balanced, formulated diet.

What Do Finches Do All Day?

Finches are less likely than parrots to develop a bond with family members. However, they are beautiful and interesting birds to observe. Because they may

consume up to 30% of their body weight a day in food and may collapse from hypoglycemia if they are deprived of food for even short periods, finches spend a great deal of their day eating. Some of the more exotic finches enjoy live food, such as meal-worms, but have been bred on vegetarian diets.

While finches may be small in size, some species are territorial in aviary situations and others have well developed pecking orders. Self-mutilation, poor body condition and increased susceptibility to disease may be indirect results of aggression in birds that are psycho-logically stressed because of their low social position.

There is a tendency to provide housing for finches that is narrow and tall in design, but this restricts the birds' horizontal flying patterns. The finches tend to gather at the same level in the enclosure, leading to overcrowded conditions and secondary aggression among the birds.

Are Finches Tame?

Finches prefer the company of other finches. They will usually fly away when approached. Some young birds can be finger-trained individually. Aggression between birds can be reduced by providing ample space and multiple perches and feeding/watering station to reduce competition. New birds should be introduced gradually (side by side cages) before being introduced into established collections, after a suitable quarantine period.

How to Identify your Bird

Finches that escape outdoors are extremely difficult to recover. However, methods of identification include leg bands and implantation of a microchip, which is possible, but challenging in a bird of this size.

Should the Wings Be Clipped?

Because finches cannot climb around the enclosure using their beaks like parrots, the wings of a finch should never be clipped. Once clipped, the finch will have a difficult time getting to upper perches. For this reason, finch enclosures should be secure to prevent accidental escape.



How to Keep Your Finch Healthy, Happy and Safe!

- Take your finch to your veterinarian immediately after purchase, then once annually for examinations.
- Provide stimulating environmental enrichment by offering greens and herbs, toys designed for very small birds, and foraging opportunities.
- Feed a fresh, high quality, toxin-free formulated diet with fresh chopped fruits and vegetables according to the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Provide clean, fresh uncontaminated drinking water and change frequently.
- Many birds enjoy bathing. Try providing a warm water bath. Finches preferred not to be sprayed with a water bottle.

- Avoid spraying house with insecticides.
Housing for your finch should:
- be as large as possible, allowing limited flight.
- be clean, secure, and safe.
- 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.
- not include sandpaper-covered perches.
- have easy-to-clean food and water containers.
- have perches not placed directly over food or water bowls.
- offer opportunities for protected outdoor exposure to fresh air, direct sunlight and exercise. 3 of 4

Finches can easily become injured if they escape from the cage. Watch out especially for:

- ceiling fans
- stove tops with hot burners, pans or skillets
- fumes from overheated non-stick cookware
- tobacco and cigarette smoke
- chocolate, avocado, salt, alcohol
- toxic houseplants
- pesticides or chemical cleaners

- 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
- **Most Common Disorders of Finches**
- Air sac mites
- Bacterial infections
- Egg binding
- Viral diseases
- Malnutrition
- Intraspecific aggression
- Toe or foot necrosis
- Fungal infections
- Chlamydiosis
- Mycoplasmosis
- Fatty liver disease • Fractures
- Toxicosis

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 near you” or contact the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, www.ABVP.com/diplomate.

Interesting Facts About Finches

Free-ranging finches can be found in most areas of the world, although many species are critically endangered because of habitat destruction and human interference. Most finches intended for exhibit or as companion animals are native to Australia or Africa. Field guides of free-ranging species may be helpful to owners wanting to learn more about their finch. The zebra finch is the most popular, while the Lady Gouldian finch is considered the most beautiful. Bengalese (society) finches, which have been domesticated for centuries, are friendly, easy to care for and breed well in captivity. Java, zebra and Lady Gouldian finches also breed intensively in captivity, and many mutations have occurred. These mutations bear little resemblance to their free-ranging ancestors.