



Parrot Education & Adoption Center™

# BEAK TO TAIL

Issue 70

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## FEATHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR PART 2

by Eric Kern

### ***PARROTS' DIETS (cont)***

• **Supplements:** Calcium and vitamin A deficiencies are still a serious health problem in parrots who are fed a primarily seed diet or too much human junk food.

These two nutrients are essential for the proper growth and condition of tissue, skin, and feathers. There is also a direct relation between vitamin C and feather picking/skin mutilation. Another small, but very important, function of Vitamin C is its natural antihistamine action. Most people believe that all birds produce their own vitamins, so supplementation is unnecessary; but a good quality vitamin supplement, given on a regular basis although not every day, can be very beneficial. A deficiency of enzymes and/or essential fatty acids in the diet will contribute to feather abuse. This most often occurs when more than 50% of the diet is comprised of cooked or manufactured foods in which these nutrients have been destroyed. That's why fresh, organic food is so important in their diet. Calcium is another needed mineral which is usually lacking in birds. This is because calcium cannot be absorbed into the system unless there is vitamin D3 present; and, as it is not found in any vegetal material, and animal flesh is not recommended for parrots, it needs to be supplemented in the form of avian liquid calcium.

• **Miscellaneous notes:** Too much of something can be as bad as too little. As with everything else, moderation is the way to go. Too much protein is as bad as too little protein; same with vitamin C... even spirulina has been found to cause screaming and erratic behavior in some birds. Watch your bird carefully; keep records of his schedule and diet; record all environmental conditions such as weather, unusual sounds, visitors, changes in routine or changes in the home or cage position, and compare your notes frequently; this will help you determine what can be causing FDB.

### ***PHYSICAL BUT NOT MEDICAL CAUSES:***

**Improper wing clipping**

**Injury or trauma**

**Dry skin**

**Inadequate lightning**

**Lack of exercise**

### **Improper wing clipping**

I do not believe in wing clipping for many reasons, but I will only mention one here, and this is that some wing clips can cause a parrot to feather pick. One way this can occur is when the wing feathers are trimmed in such a way that it causes the trimmed feathers to poke into the sides of the bird and irritate that area. Another theory is that birds would "get rid" of a clipped feather as they perceive it to be an abnormally-growing feather. This is done in order to maintain the integrity of the plumage, a matter of survival in the wild and encoded into their genes. Still a third theory is the one that has to do with a bird exercising by flapping its wings and not encountering the expected (and normal) resistance to the air, which can frustrate the bird and prompt him to feather pick the offending wing as a result. But, whatever the reason, for some birds, clipping has been found to be the trigger that started them plucking, and in some cases, allowing the feathers to grow back has been the cure.

### **Injury or trauma**

Injury plucking is most common in young birds. One of the major causes of injury plucking in babies is a fall in the cage which often ends up in a thrashing episode.

Young parrots fall in or off their cages for a variety of reasons: trimming the toenails too short; babies that are made to perch before they develop their balance skills; a bad landing due to clipped wings or undeveloped flying skills; etc. Several types of injury can cause a bird to bother the feathers excessively, often resulting in their destruction. In the wild, young parrots which are startled or become afraid either hide or fly away from the situation -- usually with the guidance of their parents. In captivity, a bird may instinctively attempt to fly, but instead, will end up crashing into their cage, tangling their wings and tails in the cage bars and grate. For this reason, it is important that the cage bar spacing and size of the cage is appropriate for the size of the bird. Grates in the bottom of the cage are particularly dangerous when birds are young.

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Letter from the Director

Dear PEAC Members,

I cannot believe that September is over and fall is upon us. Halloween is at the end of the month, which indicates the holiday season is soon to begin. We are also now celebrating the Jewish holidays, and I would like to wish a happy New Year 5775 to everyone.

It has been a very busy summer for PEAC and its volunteers. I sound like a broken record when I once again bring to everyone's attention the staggering numbers of parrots being relinquished. At the time I write this message for our newsletter for the second time since becoming the director in January, we have had to implement a waiting list for intake of parrots, as our foster homes are beyond full. We are always looking for members to consider being volunteers and taking the steps to becoming a foster home for one of the birds in need. If you have any interest in this, please get in touch with me or Melanie, our operations volunteer, and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have and begin the training process. Fostering can be very rewarding when the bird you have provided temporary shelter and love for finds a forever home.

Now I would like to report some positive news about PEAC. We currently have four adoptions in the wings (no pun intended!) that we hope to complete in the coming weeks. To date we have had nine successful adoptions. So there are people out there who are bird people like you and me, who have made a wonderful decision to adopt instead of buy a bird, and have thought about the issue of how critical the unwanted parrot story has become.

We have several Petco outreach events scheduled, along with two veterinary clinic pet expos to attend and present our work to the public.

(continued on page 11)

### WHAT WE ARE

Parrot Education & Adoption Center is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to educating its members and current and potential bird owners about the proper care of pet birds. Unwanted or found parrots are accepted at PEAC and in turn are adopted to qualified applicants.

Sharing current information and correcting misconceptions about parrots are the major aims of PEAC. Our goal is to keep abreast of the latest developments in the world of aviculture and share them with you, our members.

PEAC was founded in 1996 by Bonnie Kenk, who served as the Executive Director for our first 12 years.

### CONTACT US

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San Diego, CA 92160-0423

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Melanie Ariessohn

**Social Media**

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**PEAC  
Policies and Procedures**

1. PEAC does not purchase birds, even to remove them from bad situations.
2. PEAC will accept birds donated to our organization.
3. PEAC does not breed birds or place any birds into breeding situations.
4. PEAC does not adopt birds to children.
5. Potential adopters are required to attend an afternoon class focusing on Basic Anatomy and Health, Nutrition, Enrichment & Environment, and Body Language.
6. All potential adopters will then receive a home visit performed by a PEAC volunteer.
7. Potential adopters will receive a copy of our adoption application after the home visit has been completed.
8. Approved adoption applications will be placed on a waiting list if a bird is not currently in our system that would be a good match for the approved adopter.
9. Only one parrot acquisition/adoption per home or PEAC membership is allowed in an 18-month time period.
10. Adopters are required to pay an adoption fee and reimburse PEAC for veterinary fees the bird may have incurred.
11. Adopted birds are to remain in the home and be treated as a member of the family.
12. Adopted birds may not be sold, given away, bred, or used for any type of monetary purposes.
13. After attending the mandatory seminars, those wishing to adopt a first-time large bird, such as an Amazon, African Grey, Cockatoo, or Macaw, will be required to spend hands-on time with the species of their choice under supervision of one of our volunteers before being approved.
14. As a general rule, we will not place a Cockatoo, Macaw, or other noisy bird in an apartment or condominium.
15. PEAC will not adopt birds as companions to other birds.
16. Birds must remain in a 100% smoke-free environment.

## Available for Adoption in San Diego/Southern California

Call 619 287-8200 or email [adoption@peac.org](mailto:adoption@peac.org) to find out more about any of these birds!

### African Greys



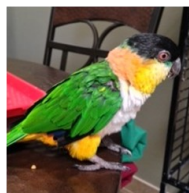
**“Bentley,” 13-yr-old m. Timneh.** Bentley is in generally good feather. He eats well and is always willing to try new foods. He loves any toys that can be shredded or torn apart. Bentley talks, but mostly mumbles. He whistles beautifully and mostly communicates when you are out of the room, but loves to whistle and talk back and forth. Bentley needs some work with cage aggression. He would probably do best in a home with a low level of energy where he gets plenty of attention, but isn’t required to be extremely affectionate. His charm is in his intelligence and forward personality.



**“Morris,” 37-yr-old m. Congo.** Morris came to us when his elderly owner could no longer care for him. Due to a seed-only diet and a stressful environment, he developed feather destructive behavior and barbered a large portion of his plumage. He is

now on medication and an appropriate diet, and has begun growing his feathers back and playing with foraging toys. Morris is a very gentle and calm African grey who wants to share his life with a human companion who understands the intricacies of his species.

### Caique



**“Bailey,” 22-yr-old f. black-headed (also called “black capped”).** Bailey was relinquished by her only owner, who is elderly and no longer able to care for her. She loves interaction with people, but needs boundaries, as she was permitted free run of her former home. She is adjusting well, and will make some lucky person a splen-

did companion.

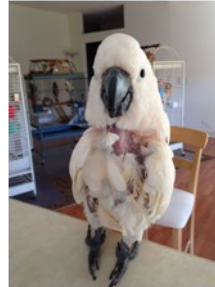
### Cockatoos



**“Francis,” m. Moluccan.** Francis entered PEAC in June of 2012 when his owner surrendered him for what we were told was a screaming problem. On receiving Francis he was not handle-able and had a lot of phobic behaviors. He has now improved greatly. His screaming is mainly now only fear driven and also used for tattling on his foster’s other cockatoo. He’s no longer phobic, he now chews on toys, and he is eating a

better diet and starting to explore his surroundings. He is working on stepping up, but is still nervous when left alone.

Francis may be best suited to a home with another bird. He will require someone who has a great deal of cockatoo experience, and with some more work, he is going to be a wonderful companion parrot.



### “Rosie Bubbles,” f. Moluccan.

Rosie came to us in 2012 from a hoarding situation. With surgery followed by a handmade specially-fitted apparatus to prevent self-mutilation, she has made phenomenal progress. Her surgical wound has healed completely, and because of the apparatus and her change in environment, she has completely

stopped her feather picking and self-mutilation. At present, she is still in need of the handmade “bibby,” but each day she is making great strides in her healing. We are also working on a screaming problem, and she has made excellent progress.

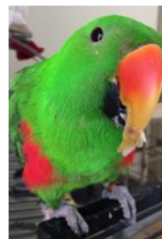


### “Tootsie,” 12-year-old f. umbrella.

Tootsie came to us in April of this year. The couple that had Tootsie for her entire 12 years moved and had to confine Tootsie to a very small cage. She was unable to adjust and pulled the majority of her feathers from her chest and legs.

Since coming to PEAC and getting an appropriate cage, Tootsie has begun to grow a large amount of down, and we hope she will begin to regrow some of her feathers. She is gentle and loves to cuddle and be around her people. She tends to call when she misses her humans, and we are working on redirecting this behavior. Tootsie knows a few words such as “hello” and “I love you.” She is a fast learner and just wants to be in a forever home that will love her and care for her the way she deserves.

### Eclectus



**“Grasshopper,” m.** Grasshopper came to us in July 2014 from the Department of Animal Services, so we don’t know his history. He has a huge and ever-growing vocabulary which will amaze you! He is good natured, with an easy going demeanor. He gets along well with dogs, cats and other birds. He eats a varied diet. Grasshopper is a big personality in a little green body who would love to have a forever home.

Congratulations, Sugar and Poco, on finding your forever homes!

## Available for Adoption in San Diego/Southern California

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### Amazons



**“Oscar,” m. orange-winged.** Oscar is a male orange-winged Amazon of unknown age; however, he appears to be relatively young (probably less than 5 years old) as he seems to be actively learning words and whistles. He is an

exceptionally sweet bird who steps up well and makes no attempt to bite. He enjoys being around both humans and birds. He is now learning that whistles and babbling gain him the attention he desires, and his previous loud outbursts have been reduced to only a few times each week. He'll make a splendid companion for a family who is willing to keep his mind stimulated and has the time to include him in their daily routine.



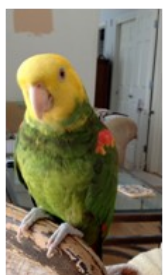
**“Billie,” 26+-yr-old f. blue-front.** Billie is a DNA-sexed female blue-fronted Amazon. She's in her late twenties and lived with the same family for over 26 years. Her original owner passed some years ago, and the son who cared for her now travels extensively due to work commitments. Billie was on a seed-

based diet; however, she now eats pellets and an excellent variety of vegetables. With the addition of foraging toys and a roomier cage, her new feather growth looks beautiful with no evidence of over-preening. Billie uses a variety of words and phrases, whistles, and laughter. She steps up well for both genders in her foster home. She is very engaging; an all-around clown; and clearly enjoys interaction from the people in her life, allowing trusted people to hold her like a football and turn her upside down.

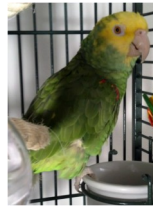


**“Ralphie,” 2-yr-old m. red-lored.** Ralphie came to PEAC on January 1, 2012. He apparently had been part of a wild flock near Los Angeles, CA, and had been hit by a car, breaking his leg and bursting his air sacs. He was taken to a shelter and

then brought to San Diego, where he underwent surgery. He now steps up on a stick, whistles, says “hello,” and is beginning to mumble along to “Old McDonald Had a Farm.” Ralphie will do best in a home with more than one bird. He is a wonderful, playful companion parrot who is looking for a forever home.



**“Samantha,” 20-yr-old f. double-yellow head.** Sam was turned over to our Anchorage Chapter by Dept. of Animal Services from a hoarding situation. Now, Sam loves showers! She enjoys ambient attention from the people in her life, but prefers not to be touched. She has a beautiful, melodic voice, speaks clearly, and loves to laugh along with you. She steps up on a stick, and would love to follow you around the house!



**“Barney,” 33-yr-old m. double-yellow-head.** Barney is a 33-year-old double-yellow-headed Amazon who lived with the same family for his entire life before joining the PEAC flock in September of 2014. He is in gorgeous feather, and after only 2 days with his foster family, he began eating a pelleted

diet with gusto. He says a number of clearly-enunciated phrases and from the very beginning showed that he loves head scratches!

### Pionus

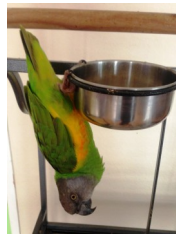


**“Kiwi,” 11-yr-old f. Maximilian's.**

Kiwi was relinquished when his first and only owner had to move his entire family back East and felt it was not fair for Kiwi to live in a travel trailer for an undetermined amount of time. Kiwi is a fun, beautiful, well-feathered bird who feels like

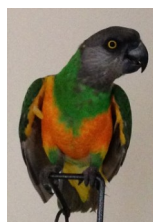
velvet when you touch his feathers. Kiwi makes lots of chirping noises, but for the most part is a quiet bird who enjoys hanging out with his foster family and their flock of parrots. He is not much of a toy-player yet, but is being worked with to get him to open up his personality a bit more.

### Poicephalus



**“Kito,” f. Senegal.** Kito was surrendered to PEAC when her owner no longer had enough time for her. Kito is in beautiful feather. She is an extremely sweet and fun bird who enjoys dancing to music. She says a few words and likes to do all kinds of whistles. She interacts well with most people and needs to be the only bird

in the home. She steps up well and loves to do puzzles. She loves a good head-and-neck-rub. She is relatively quiet, and could live in an apartment or condo.



**“Sammi,” m. Senegal.** Sammi came to PEAC after he escaped his cage and was found 10 months later. A vet check found him in excellent health. His former owner could not take Sammi back, so he was placed into PEAC.

Sammi steps up and makes many different whistles and sounds. He loves to cuddle and get scratches from his foster mom but does not like men or other birds, so would be happiest as a single bird in a home with a woman as his primary caregiver, where he can show his charming and loving nature.

**MORE BIRDS FOR ADOPTION ON PAGE 16!**

**PEAC SAN DIEGO PRESENTS OUR TOY-MAKING WORKSHOP!**



**Sunday October 26, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm**

**Check-in 12:30 pm**

**Department of Animal Services**

**5480 Gaines St., San Diego, CA 92110**

**PEAC members: \$40/person, registration by 10/19/14;  
\$45 after 10/19**

**Non-members: \$50/person, registration by 10/19/14;  
\$55 after 10/19**

*This hands-on workshop includes instruction on identifying various parrot play styles, step-by-step instruction on making a variety of bird toys, ideas for toy-making materials, and much more. Participants will hear a guest speaker and complete two parrot toys. Cost of workshop includes all needed materials. Late registration is welcome but not guaranteed!*

***Yes, I want to register for the Toy-Making Workshop!***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Type/s of Bird I'm Making Toys for: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop (PEAC members):  \$40.00/person

Workshop (non-members):  \$50.00/person

Late registration (after 10/19/14)  \$45.00/person (PEAC members)

Late registration (after 10/19/14)  \$55.00/person (non-members)

I'd like to donate an additional \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and be recognized as a sponsor of this event.

Total Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method: (check one)

Check enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Visa  MasterCard  AmEx  Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV#: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

PayPal at [membership@peac.org](mailto:membership@peac.org)

Mail to PEAC, P.O. Box 600423, San Diego, CA or fax to (909) 563-8418 or email to [membership@peac.org](mailto:membership@peac.org)

PEAC thanks the following Avian Board-certified veterinarians, who have generously agreed to provide discounts on veterinary care for our program birds:

Dr. Jeffrey Jenkins, San Diego 619.260.1412

Dr. Brian Loudis, Encinitas 760.634.2022

Dr. Todd Cecil, La Mesa 619.462.4800

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We welcome our new volunteers, Anthoni Bartronie, Kyle Reyen,  
Caleb Ball, and Reyna Aragon!

## PARROT EDUCATION & ADOPTION CENTER 2014 SEMINAR SCHEDULE

"People protect what they love. We need to provide the information so that they can love."

- Jean-Michel Cousteau

### NEW SEMINARS!!

We are changing our seminars as new information becomes available in the world of parrot care and behavior, in addition to providing updates to our foster volunteer requirements.

So please come - - we'd love to see you and share with you all that's new.

And with pre-registration, it's free to members!!!

9/28 Sun 1:00 pm "Living with Amazons"  
2:15 pm "Become a Foster Volunteer," foster volunteer requirements and updates

**10/26 Sun 1:00 pm TOY-BUILDING WORKSHOP!\***  
\* See page 6. Cost for this special workshop is \$40

There will be no seminars in November and December, due to the fundraising campaign and holidays.

San Diego seminars are held at the San Diego Department of Animal Services, 5480 Gaines Street, San Diego 92110. Seminar check-in begins at 12:30 pm. First seminar begins at 1:00 pm; second seminar begins at 2:15 pm. When possible, program birds will be present 12:30 to 1:00.

<b>Seminar fees (per person/day):</b>	<b>ADVANCE REGISTERED*</b>	<b>AT THE DOOR</b>
<b>PEAC Members:</b>	FREE!	\$5.00
<b>Non-members:</b>	\$10.00	\$15.00

\*Advance registration is due by the Wednesday prior to the seminar; no exceptions.

### REGISTER ME!

Sign Me Up in Sunny San Diego for these 2014 Seminars:

DATE	TITLE	# PEOPLE	AMT
			\$
			\$
			\$

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ (VISA MC AMEX, DISCOVER) Exp. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature (for credit cards) \_\_\_\_\_ CVV (3 digits on back of card) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to PEAC and mail with this form to PEAC, PO Box 600423, San Diego, CA 92160

Or fax credit card payment to 909 563-8418 or email credit card or PayPal to membership@peac.org.



**NEW — OUTREACH EVENTS IN TEMECULA!**

PEAC will now be appearing at Petco Adoption Fairs in Riverside!  
Come check out our booth!

**9/21 Sunday 2:00-5:00 pm**

**10/19 Sunday 2:00-5:00 pm**

**11/16 Sunday 2:00-5:00 pm**

Program birds will be present for you to meet and greet!

Location:

Petco at the Mall in Temecula  
40474 Winchester Road  
Temecula, CA 92591  
951 296-0388

***BRING YOUR FRIENDS! WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!***

Come see us with some of our foster birds in beautiful Pacific Beach on 10/11, 2:00-4:00p at the 4th Exotics Expo, Turquoise Animal Hospital, 950 Turquoise St., San Diego 92109.

PEAC is participating in the North County Pet Fair Saturday, 10/25, 1:00-3:00p, Mission Animal and Bird Hospital, 655 Benet Road, Oceanside (off Rte. 76, ½ mile west of the airport). Free door prizes including an Ipad, gifts for all the kids, pets for adoption and pet-related vendors, costume contest for pets, kids, and adults, face painting, police and agility dog demos, and much, much more!! We hope to see you at our booth!

## FEATHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

(continued from page 1)

### **Dry skin**

Regular bathing is necessary for feather health, and a bird that has dirty feathers and/or dry, itchy skin is more prone to plucking. Frequent showers or baths may help alleviate or prevent feather-disorder behaviors in parrots. A completely drenched parrot will not pluck; and baths also promote healthy preening and afford entertainment from the daily boring routine of a captive bird. Baths should be always given in the morning, latest at noon, to allow sufficient time for drying before bed time. Baths should be given with cool, cold or room-temperature distilled, spring, or purified water, NEVER WARM! as it strips the natural oils from skin and feathers. A splash of organic aloe vera juice helps to keep the skin and feathers supple. Using a humidifier during the cold season and dry times of the year is absolutely necessary for tropical and semi-tropical birds.

### **Inadequate lightning and/or schedule**

Inadequate lightning is one of the most important and most often neglected aspects of a captive bird's life. Birds don't only see much better than humans but also use light to regulate their life cycles. It is so important to them that bird experts are beginning to consider it a nutrient more than an environmental incidental. Not only do they have twelve times more light receptors than humans do, they also have an extra photoreceptive cone that allows them to see ultraviolet light (which is invisible to the human eye); their retinas contain no blood vessels, allowing them greater visual acuity as the light does not 'scatter' when it hits it; and their eyes account, on average, for 15% of their head mass, against only 2% in humans. That, added to the fact that exposure to unfiltered or full spectrum light has been found to increase levels of serotonin (the feel-good hormone), is a good argument for giving our birds the benefit of good light. The March, 2005 issue of *Veterinary Practice News* mentions studies on self-plucking in birds that responded to supplementation with 5-hydroxytryptophan or 5-HTP. This amino acid derivative of tryptophan is important in the production of serotonin in the brain. But why give them a chemical when proper lightning can take care of the problem? All it requires is installing full spectrum lights with a CRI of more than 93 in the room where the bird is kept, and opening the windows during the warm weather months so the sun can shine in.

Another incredibly beneficial measure for captive birds is keeping them to a strict natural daylight schedule. This practice not only prevents chronic egg laying, but also gives them the natural seasonal cycles that nature intended for them, provides the twilight triggers, maintains their metabolisms on the right track, and allows for sufficient sleep; and it's free! Lack of sleep can contribute to a feather-picking problem, although species do differ in terms of the number of hours of sleep needed. Generally speaking, Central and South American parrots are happiest when getting a full 12 hours of darkness and uninterrupted rest. African greys, once mature, frequently need a bit fewer hours of sleep than this. This is substantiated by the fact that they have been observed in the wild flying well after darkness has settled. Macaws are normally late risers, but most birds will wake up as soon as some light creeps under their cage covers, and waiting for the owner to uncover them can create a lot of stress and boredom, two reasons for plucking.

### **Lack of Exercise**

Birds in the wild occupy their days flying for miles and miles to reach feeding sites, foraging, interacting with their mates or other members of the flock, courting, breeding, raising young, etc. Every single natural activity for parrots is denied to a captive bird, one of the most important ones being flying, which is the only exercise that birds need. Free flight, with the attendant decision-making that it implies, is not a luxury for a captive bird but a necessity. It not only prevents obesity and respiratory infections, it also provides entertainment and a measure of control over their own lives.

### **OTHER CAUSES:**

- Boredom
- Nervousness
- Insecurity, Stress
- Overcrowded housing (finches in particular)

(Continued on next page)

## FEATHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

(continued from page 10)

### ***OTHER CAUSES (cont):***

Overenthusiastic plucking of a brood patch

Excessive courtship

Parents persecuting their chicks to drive them from the nest so they can breed again (possibly an inherited trait)

While the last four causes are easily solved and only seasonal, the first three are the most difficult aspect of a parrot with FDB to change, because an individual evaluation of each bird needs to be done in order to determine what is the lacking element.

### **SUGGESTIONS TO MODIFY FEATHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS**

#### ***GIVE THE BIRD MORE CONTROL:***

Birds, especially highly intelligent species like parrots, need control over their own lives. One way to achieve this is to announce what you are about to do to or with the bird. Some examples include *asking* the bird to step-up to your finger, *telling it* you are giving it food or water, and *letting it know* that you are about to give it a bath or it's time for bed.

#### ***GIVE THE BIRD A SENSE OF SECURITY:***

Create rituals and predictability in every way possible. Parrots love rituals because they enjoy being able to anticipate with certainty what is going to happen next. The issue of predictability is closely related with their innate need as prey animals to feel safe. In the wild, most things are predictable. The sun rises and sets without fail. Even the land dwelling animals in the area will tend to behave in predictable, cyclic ways...foraging and resting at certain times of the day. It is only predators who are unpredictable, appearing out of nowhere. Thus, for a parrot who has learned to feel anxiety, any method that you can use to create predictability will be helpful.

The location of the cage can also have a huge impact upon a parrot's sense of security. If the cage is in front of a window, this can afford the bird a profound sense of vulnerability. Parrots, if alone in the wild, do not normally perch in a location where they are highly visible. In order to feel secure, parrots need the conviction, the absolute knowledge, of physical and psychological safety.

(Continued on page 14)

### **Director's Letter** (continued)

We continue to stress education, as that is the basis of what PEAC is about, to educate not only potential bird owners but the general public who are not aware of the need so many birds currently have for a good home. Many of our seminars have been revised and updated, so I encourage you to take a look at our website for dates on upcoming seminars that you may be interested in attending. We have also been invited to set up an info table at the Temecula Petco once a month. We are very excited to reach out to those in the eastern and northern parts of Southern California. A big thank you to Barb and Joni for manning these events for PEAC. Starting the weekend before Thanksgiving we will be kicking off our second annual fundraiser again working with GlobalGiving. We have arranged to be at a Petco store every weekend during the campaign and encourage you to stop by and pledge a donation. This time, we will be striving for monthly contributions that can be set up automatically with GlobalGiving. Having a steady monthly income will go a long way in meeting our operating budget needs.

(Continued on page 14)

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT:



Avian Behavior International



Diamond Avian



Rebecca O'Connor/CAITEC  
/Project Parrot Positive



Petco Foundation



Thank you to the following people  
who have so generously donated to the birds of PEAC:

Anonymous

Bob Begin

Gale Chan and Steve Scott

Mike and Julie Comella

Rayna Duenas

Kelly Flynn

Pamela Harris

Jim and Karen Hodson

Debra Kolen

Susan Maggiacomo

Kathy Fraga

Philip Jenkins

Beverly Berkowitz

Ann Palik

Dave Ramsey

Jean Rockwell

Jackie Rose

Alex Ross

Linda Stuart

Muriel Usselman

Virginia Van Dyke

Michelle Warren

Susan Elaine Weir

Judith Lazar

Chloe Rogers

Judy Michaels

West Valley Bird Society

## SPOTLIGHT on Baby



Baby is an eight-year-old male Yellow-Collared Macaw. Before being relinquished to PEAC, Baby had lived in a tiny cage and was not let out. He did not step up, and was on a high-fat diet consisting only of sunflower seeds. A vet check after taking him in to PEAC was normal though, despite his poor diet.

Baby is now eating a balanced diet and is learning to play with toys. He does exhibit feather destructive behavior and has no feathers on his chest. Baby tends to make very loud vocalizations, especially when left alone, as well as when he first wakes up and at dusk.

Baby now enjoys human interaction and is out of his appropriate-sized cage for about 10 hours a day. He says "Hi baby" and "Hello". He readily steps up from the floor, and we are working on step up from the cage. Baby gets along with other parrots and both men and women, and does not seem to have a gender preference. He is a fun guy who is looking for his forever home.

If you're interested in adopting any of our program birds, you must attend the seminars required for adoption and complete an application for approval. You must also show proof that you have an adequate cage and are acquainted with an avian veterinarian before taking your bird home. Adopted birds may not be bred, sold, given away or used for any type of monetary purposes! A minimal adoption fee is required, as is reimbursement for any vet fees that the bird you are adopting has incurred.

For more information on adopting a PEAC bird, visit [http://peac.org/?page\\_id=40](http://peac.org/?page_id=40).

### VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

Upcoming quarterly meetings for volunteers:

November 9\*, 1:00p; Gaines Street location  
\*\*NOTE DATE CHANGE\*\*

January 25, 1:00p; Gaines Street location

Please submit suggested topics to Eric by 7 days prior to meeting.

Volunteers: we look forward  
to seeing you there!

**DIRECTOR'S LETTER** (continued)

Last year I was AMAZED and OVERWHELMED by the generosity of so many people. We raised just over \$10,000, and wouldn't it be wonderful to double that this year! So to all of you who read our newsletter, please spread the word about this upcoming drive and take an active role in helping fund the work that PEAC does for the parrots in Southern CA.

In closing, I want to thank a few valuable people in our volunteer group. Melanie, our operations volunteer, has taken over a great deal of the day-to-day work, which has allowed me time to investigate other funding opportunities for PEAC through some grants that are available. Melanie has also taken over managing the membership renewals and new memberships. So when you see her at one of our events give her a big thank you, as without her we would not be able to expand our work.

(Continued on page 18)

**FEATHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR** (cont from page 13)

Often a parrot will live quite happily in front of a window until the day that a juvenile hawk perches outside staring at him, or a wild bird slams into the window, and from that day forward, the window itself is perceived as a threatening aspect of the environment. In such cases, it can help to shift the cage slightly to the side, so that only half of the cage is in front of the window, and a wall shields the other half. That way, the bird has a choice and can move from a place of exposure to a place of "hiding." If his cage is near a stairway or a doorway where people "appear out of nowhere," then his cage should be moved to a quieter location, while still located in the living area so that he can be near his human "flock." If this is not possible, then family members will need to learn to stop just outside of the room and verbally announce their impending entrance, so that he is not abruptly startled when people appear near his cage. A cage placed against a wall or with a cloth draped over the back will be helpful in giving the bird a feeling of safety.

(Continued on page 16)

*Come visit us on the Web!*

"Like" us on Facebook

[Parrot-Education-and-Adoption-Center](#)

Check the updated calendar and interesting articles on our website

[www.peac.org](http://www.peac.org)

*Watch your email for our PEAC Monthly Info Blast*

**NEWSFLASH - - UPCOMING FOSTER BIRD EVENTS!!**

Come see our volunteers and foster birds in San Diego at the following events:

Petco Unleashed, 308 Washington St. **10/5**, 9:00a to 2:00p

Turquoise Animal Hospital 950 Turquoise St., 4<sup>th</sup> Exotics Expo **10/11**, 2:00-4:00p

Mission Animal & Bird Hosp. 655 Benet Rd., Oceanside, North County Pet Fair **10/25**, 1:-3:00p

Petco Unleashed, 308 Washington St. **11/2**, 9:00a to 2:00p

***ENTERTAINMENT! ENTERTAINMENT! ENTERTAINMENT!:***

Ladders, swings, boings, natural branches (make sure they are not poisonous, either naturally or due to insecticide, and are sterilized to kill all parasites, insects and fungi), plucking toys, foraging toys, musical toys, etc., etc. Nothing needs to be costly; often, the least expensive items are the ones that work the best. Put several natural, unused whisk brooms in the cage. They are cheap and provide a texture that birds find appealing. Natural perches with bark offer an amusing distraction. Tie leather and sisal strips to the cage bars (but make sure the pieces are short enough not to cause a safety hazard). Try Dixie cups with papers tied around the top and a treat hidden inside, or threaded organic and whole grain pasta in different shapes alternating with dried organic fruits, organic non-toxic flowers for them to eat like dandelions, roses, and all the pumpkin and squash varieties, and mirrors (but only if the FDB is found not to be caused by elevated hormonal levels).

***OBSERVATION (DO THE ABC OF PARROT BEHAVIOR):***

The ABC of parrot behavior is simple:

**A**ntecedent – what brought on a certain behavior? What happened immediately before the behavior became manifest?

**B**ehavior – Take an objective note of the behavior itself.

**C**onsequence – What was the consequence of the behavior? What did the bird gain from manifesting that behavior? (For more on ABC's of parrot behavior, see <http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org/PDFFiles/ABC.pdf>.)

Observe your parrot; study his behavior patterns. Strive for objectivity. Get acquainted with what his body language looks like when he's startled or scared. With many species, the feathers will be held tightly in toward the body, the neck will elongate, and he may look rather "wide-eyed." Anxiety in African greys is often demonstrated by dancing from one leg to the other while biting the toenails of the elevated foot, or by twisting of the head in a figure-eight motion while seeming to look upward. Generalized anxiety or stress often results in lack of play, fewer vocalizations, and sometimes decreased food intake. Extreme anxiety will result in the more obvious behaviors of feather picking or phobia. On the other hand, a relaxed, happy parrot will vocalize frequently, eat hungrily, preen normally, and find ways to invite social contact with us. "Happiness behaviors" will also be observed. These include tail wags, stretches that include the wing and leg on one side of the body stretching at the same time, fluffed head feathers, and wings raised in unison as a greeting.

During the period of observation, make note of any incidents that startle him or cause your parrot to look afraid or anxious. Once you have a list of situations in which you have observed fear or anxiety, changes should be made accordingly. For example, if he appears wary when visitors get too close to his cage, then any future guests should be instructed to remain a certain distance away until the parrot gets to know them better through repeated visits. It is important to socialize a parrot to new people, but this should be done gradually and with sensitivity if the bird happens to have a shy or timid nature.

The owner must also learn to anticipate and avoid any new situation or object that is likely to scare the bird. It is predictable that many parrots will find at least many of the following to elicit fear:

- Anything that seems to appear out of nowhere, especially from above
- Sticks, ropes, brooms, ladders, hoses
- Unbroken or extended eye contact
- A new fingernail or hair color, especially if it is a bright shade
- Large boxes
- Moved furniture
- Costumes or unusual clothing
- Bald heads
- Hats or strange headgear
- Balloons
- New overhead track lighting or large pictures recently hung on the wall
- Shaking out blankets, rugs, or other large pieces of fabric
- Loud noises from construction equipment, remodeling activities, or fireworks.

(Continued on page 19)

## Available for Adoption in San Diego/Southern California

Call 619 287-8200 or email [adoption@peac.org](mailto:adoption@peac.org) to find out more about any of these birds!

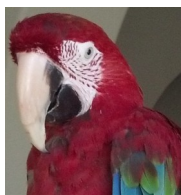
### Macaws



**"Baby," 8-yr-old m. yellow-collared.** Before being relinquished, Baby had not been let out of his cage, did not step up, and was on a high-fat diet of only sunflower seeds. A vet check after taking him in to PEAC was normal, despite his poor diet.

Baby is now eating a balanced diet and is learning to play with toys. He does exhibit feather destructive behavior and has no feathers on his chest. Baby tends to make very loud vocalizations, especially when left alone, as well as when he first wakes up and at dusk.

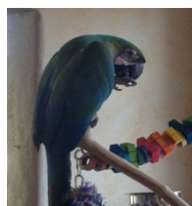
Baby now enjoys human interaction and is out of his cage for about 10 hours a day. He says "Hi baby" and "Hello". He readily steps up from the floor and we are working on step up from the cage. Baby gets along with other parrots, and both men and women, and does not seem to have a gender preference. He is a fun guy looking for his forever home.



**"Chili Pepper," 21-yr-old f. greenwing.** According to her prior owner, six years ago Chili Pepper changed overnight from a loving and wonderful pet to an aggressive and cage protective bird that could not be handled without fear of being bitten. The owner also said that at that same time, Chili Pepper stopped

wanting to take showers.

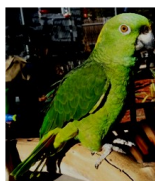
On arriving in San Diego, one of our volunteers who was assisting with the transport asked if he could try to see if she would step up for him out of the carrier. As though she were a different bird than the owner described, she easily stepped up and wanted nothing more than to be petted and preened. The next day, she was happy as a clam, opening her wings and playing in the misty shower water. Chili Pepper seems so far to be a very warm and loving Greenwing who just wants someone to give her the time she deserves and a wonderful home that she can feel safe in once again.



**"Malloy," 2-yr-old m. Milligold.** Malloy was surrendered to PEAC after his second owner realized the amount of time and energy that a large parrot takes. He is very "beaky" and needs someone who understands that a stern but loving approach is necessary to grow into a well mannered and enjoy-

able companion parrot for someone. Malloy is a great escape artist who steps up well and is a big responsibility, but will be just as big at giving you love in return.

### Amazon



**"Bonnie," 39-yr-old f. yellow nape.** Bonnie's story starts in Honduras 39 years ago when two Peace Corps workers stationed there returned to the States and brought her with them. Now on her third home, due to owners' difficult circumstances and not

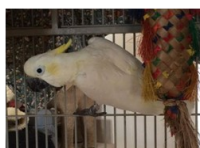
behavioral issues, Bonnie requires someone with a good deal of experience with Amazons to adopt her. She is in excellent health, though at her age is showing signs of some arthritis in both her feet and legs, so we are observing her to see if she requires any medication to make her more comfortable. At this time, she is doing very well without medication. She steps up willingly and seems to have no undesirable behaviors. She is a wonderful bird who talks a great deal and loves to sing all day when there is a person around to listen to her.

### Cockatoos



**"Mia," 12-yr-old f. Moluccan.** Mia came to us from the same home as Pita. She is warming up well to her new foster home, and every day is met with new positive steps. She has a great vocabulary.

Mia plays well with the toys in her cage and on her playstand. She steps up when asked, and has not tried to bite. She does a minimal amount of screaming. She gets a little nervous around other birds, but doesn't mind dogs or cats. Mia will make someone a great companion!



**"Pita," 10-yr-old m. lesser-sulfur crested.** Pita lived along with Mia and his previous owner from the time he was weaned until she found PEAC to assist her in finding a new home for him. He was being kept

in a fairly dirty cage and was being given cardboard boxes to play with, which contributed to an aggressive personality. With work by his foster volunteer, however, the personality traits that are not conducive to a pet cockatoo have been removed.

Pita is now on a very healthy and varied diet of fruits and vegetables along with a pelleted diet. He is adjusting well to his new foster family and working on stepping up. He is comfortable around small dogs and cats. He has a varied vocabulary and he likes his outdoor aviary time. With positive reinforcement training, coupled with lots of love and patience, Pita will become a wonderful sulfur crested cockatoo.



JORDIE'S STORY:  
A QUIET LITTLE MAN OF A BIRD  
Reprinted with the permission of Joan Banks

No one knows why Jordie started plucking out his feathers. Most likely it was malnutrition, but perhaps boredom as well. His behavior suggests he might have been physically abused, too. By the time he came into rescue at Parrot Education and Adoption Center (PEAC) about 10 years ago, he had a 2 1/2" naked band around his body. The plucking has stopped, but the feathers will probably not grow in because the follicles are damaged.

When Tausha Hope of El Cajon, California saw Jordie on Petfinder, her heart went out to this bird who had been in several foster homes. She arranged to meet him at a bird expo.

"I was so excited but I knew it was all up to Jordie," she says. "I stood beside his perch and looked down at this quiet little man of a bird. I reached my hand out, and Jordie stepped up. He wanted back on his perch a minute later, so I put him back. I didn't ask anything of Jordie, so he tested me about six times. I had a wonderful visit with him."

She applied to adopt him. A prerequisite was to participate in two PEAC seminars about exotic birds. There was also a home visit. She waited anxiously to hear the outcome. Finally, the call came; the adoption had been approved.

She drove two hours to Jordie's foster home and met "his wonderful foster, Dory," who bundled up his favorite things for the trip - and then he was on his way to a fresh start. Today he is a happy bird, who often follows Hope around the house.

Parrots are being surrendered at an alarming rate, she says, because people think they are low-maintenance pets and find out otherwise. If neglected, they will not thrive. Education before adoption is the key.

Our next fundraiser through GlobalGiving runs November 22—December 31. We need recurring monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly donations to help keep our foster flock in food and toys! Won't you consider making a donation? Go to [www.globalgiving.org](http://www.globalgiving.org) and type in Parrot Education and Adoption Center under "Search." Then click on our name and go to the right-hand column to select a one-time or recurring donation. We have an anonymous donor who will match all new recurring monthly donations. Our foster birds thank you!!!

~ IN MEMORIAM ~

Beverly Kirkegaard, long-time PEAC member and supporter, passed away in May.  
She will be missed.

### DIRECTOR'S LETTER (cont from page 14)

Second, I would like to thank ALL our foster homes. It has been a busy season with a lot of new arrivals into the foster program, and not once has anyone complained about opening their home to one more bird. I have developed a new advisory committee to help guide me in some decision-making that is very hard to do alone, and the insight they bring to the table is irreplaceable. We also have a few new members who have stepped up to being on our adoption committee, so to them I also extend a thank-you for the time that they kindly give to PEAC.

I wish all of us a happy and healthy fall season and an enjoyable holiday season that is just around the corner.

Cheers,  
Eric Kern  
Director

### Letter from the Editor

Dear PEAC Members,

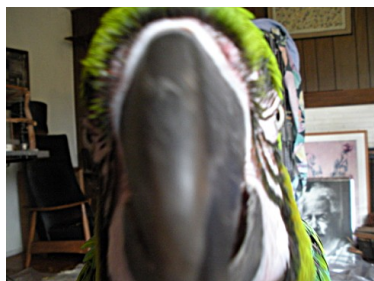
My little clown, China, and a foster, Kiki. If cameras and parrots aren't to have fun with, then what is??



*You mean some birds EAT these?*



*OMG - - who's next??*



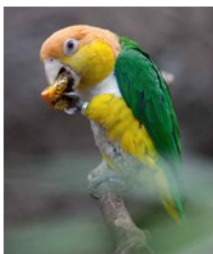
*Gimme a little kiss....*

Wishing you and your flock a fun-filled autumn and a warm holiday season!

Best regards,  
Melanie Ariessohn  
Editor/Operations

**FEATHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR (cont from page 15)****CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it can be simply said that there are as many possible causes to feather destructive behavior in parrots as there are ways in which to try to remedy the condition. I have always strongly believed that parrots kept in captivity always need to be trained and worked with in a manner which allows them to always be parrots, not children and not a possession. I have seen over the years many well-intentioned guardians of parrots trying to love the condition away, but in reality, this is not going to solve the problem, nor are psychotropic drugs alone. I believe that a combination of care and modern medicine is the only hope that parrots suffering from this condition have. As with any disease or illness, our understanding and knowledge of how to treat is ever changing as we continue to learn more and more every day. We all need to promote research in the area of avian veterinary care, as well as avian husbandry, so that hopefully in the near future, our understanding of this condition will be such that we will have proven ways to treat and resolve this problem in captive parrots.



**BEAK TO TAIL**  
PARROT EDUCATION & ADOPTION CENTER®  
P.O. Box 600423  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92160-0423



Parrot Education & Adoption Center®

## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 11, 2014  
4th Exotics Expo  
(San Diego)

October 19, 2014  
Petco Outreach Event  
(Wildomar)

October 25, 2014  
North County Pet Fair  
(Oceanside - San Diego)

October 26, 2014  
Toy-Making Workshop  
(San Diego)

November 22—December 31, 2014  
Annual Fundraiser