



# Angel Wings

A monthly journal for human angels who make a positive difference in companion birds' lives.

April 2013  
Volume 8, Issue IV

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## Angel Toys For Angels

### April's Featured Toys



[Colorful Bagels](#)  
Small Birds



[Spinners](#)  
Medium to Large Birds



[Jeweled Chimes 2](#)  
Small Birds

Check out all the [Angel Toys for Angels](#) now!

## Spring auction is coming

STARTS Thursday, May 9, 2013 and runs until Sunday, May 19, 2013  
*Donations being accepted until May 1, 2013*



Dear Parrot Toy Angel SUPPORTERS,

Look what you have helped accomplish:

19,000+ toys and supplies have been delivered!

Without you, this would not have been possible. We hope you too are amazed at this huge number, and we want to gratefully acknowledge you. You gave, and we worked hard and delivered. How we wish our job was done. We dream of the day when not another bird is abandoned, mistreated, or malnourished. But the truth is that daily, somewhere, a bird is found in an undersized cage, sometimes in a dark garage, barely surviving.

So, once again we come to the people who have been here, whom we can count on, and ask to support us in our auction. You already know that no money goes anywhere except directly to the birds. We have just two fundraisers a year and they are very important.

There are ways you can help:

- ♥ Do you own or work in a store that is willing to donate something to us? We are non-profit and your donation is tax deductible.
- ♥ Do you have a new item that you think someone might like and bid on?
- ♥ Are you willing to tell your family and friends to support our auction...take a look at our items, think of future birthdays/Christmas that could be shopped for, maybe even a bird you know whose life would be made better by buying one of our auction toys?
- ♥ Can you donate a gift certificate? Starbucks? A movie basket with AMC tickets and candy?

You have been generous, we have counted on you in the past, and now we hope with all our hearts that you stay strong with us and continue with our commitment to help "ONE BIRD AT A TIME".

Please drop us a line at [donations@parrottoyangels.org](mailto:donations@parrottoyangels.org) if you would like to help out.

## Auction Preview



From the Angel's Toy Chest  
By Wyspur Kallis



Penne Rigate Birdie Style  
By Toni Fortin

- 4 cups dry whole wheat penne rigate
- 1-1/2 cups frozen peas
- 1-1/2 cups frozen corn
- 1 large organic carrot, washed & grated
- Small bunch of broccoli, washed & grated
- 2 cups frozen cranberries
- 2 large fresh leaves of kale, washed & chopped
- 2 cups cooked lentils
- 1 Tbsp. crushed red pepper

Cook pasta for 10 minutes, drain. Cover with cold water and drain pasta again. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. The birds love the way this pasta grabs the bits and pieces of the vegetables in its holes.



As always, my fids say, "I like it, I like it and it's good!"



Wee Jeweled Wreath

This cute little toy is suitable for the wee little birds. The wreath measures 3" round and is hung on plastic chain 3" long. Tri-beads are strung on stainless steel wire and a cute little bell is added to the bottom. Your wee little ones will love to play with this adorable toy. This toy and others are available for sale at [www.parrottoyangels.com](http://www.parrottoyangels.com).



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Keeping Your Parrot Safe In The Spring And Summer Months  
By Leigh Anne Stewart

Spring and Summer time brings hot weather. This is the time when the children are out of school, when more people bring their pets outside, and when people are traveling. The change of seasons can affect our lives and the lives of our parrots.

The list below will keep your bird safe from the hazards of this time of year:

Clipping Wings

Clipping your parrot's wings will keep him from flying around inside your home. If the bird should get out through an opened door, it might keep him from flying away from your home. However, many parrots, especially the smaller birds like cockatiels and conures, can still fly quite well with clipped wings. I like to have a sheer or lace curtain in front of

all windows and doors to provide an extra barrier against "accidental" fly outs.

#### Air Conditioning

Air conditioning your home in the hot weather will not harm your birds. Just make sure that your bird cage does not sit directly in front of the vents. Change the AC filters often, to keep it in good working order. Swamp coolers need periodic maintenance to keep bacteria from growing.

#### Indoor and Outdoor Sun

If you place a bird cage in front of a window where the sun is shining in, be sure that the bird has a covered area in his cage to prevent overheating. If you take your bird outside during warm days, the same rule applies. Make sure there is a covered area inside the cage where the bird can get out of the direct sun. Always provide plenty of water, indoors or outdoors. Avoid allowing your parrot to become over-heated.

#### Windows and Doors

When doing your spring maintenance, check for damage to window screens. Parrots can fly through the window, hit the screen and harm themselves. When opening doors, know where your bird is in the room at all times. Always close the door to prevent the bird from flying through it. Clipping the wings is the best way to avoid accidents.

#### Ceiling Fans

Birds, who have the ability to fly, will find ceiling fans interesting. Since many of us use this type of fan, you can purchase a fan guard. This guard will prevent your parrot from flying into the fan. To be on the safe side, operate your fans only when the birds are safely in their cages.

#### Spring Cleaning

Most people will "spring clean" their home after the long fall and winter months. When cleaning, one of the safest cleansers for birds to be around is vinegar mixed with water, and it really works. Other cleaning agents, such as ammonia and bleach are not safe for birds to breathe or be around. Air fresheners, pesticides, candles, and cooking with Teflon pots and pans are also all unsafe for your parrots.

#### Going for a Ride

If you often enjoy taking your bird on a short ride, say to the pet store; always clip the wings before going. Never leave the your parrot in the car alone without ventilation. It takes only a few minutes for the sun to heat the car to over 100 degrees and often hotter. That kind of heat harms both people and animals.

Have fun with your pet parrot, but always be mindful of the hazards present.



#### The Incredible Edible Outdoors

By Kim Perez

There are many plants in our own back yards that may be exciting treats for our feathered friends, but how do we know what's safe and what could be harmful?

The most obvious threat to their safety is anything that could be treated with chemicals - for insects, weeds, or even with 'good'

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.

things developed to help your plants flourish. Those chemicals should be avoided, no matter what they are for.

Although, most of us think of dandelions as one of the ugliest weeds to overtake our beautiful lawns, they are a cherished treat for many birds and animals. Iguanas love them and do especially well when they can have fresh dandelions - greens and flowers - to eat. You can try these with your birds, as well. Some like them more than others. The leaves of the dandelion plants are nutrient dense and can be offered as well.

Many of the flowers we grow are also edible and make excellent treats for our birds. Most parrots enjoy the slightly acidic taste of Hibiscus flowers.

The Japanese Honeysuckle is the only honeysuckle that is safe for birds. The flowers also appeal to parrots, but be very careful not to allow them to have any of their poisonous berries.

Farmers' Markets and organic food stores, often times, will have organic edible plants and flowers available for sale. Be sure to buy only the organic ones as the chemicals that can be used on them are far more harmful to our birds than to us. (Although YOU should probably want to eat fewer chemicals, too!)

Other commonly grown flowers that are recommended for your birds include: Lilacs (the wood from the larger trees/bushes make excellent perches, too), Roses, Marigolds, Day Lilies (but not any other type of lily), Daisies, Violets and Tulips.

There are countless online sources for safe and unsafe plants and flowers for our birds. Please check them out when you are looking for advice on which to offer. If you are unsure, it is a great idea to consult your avian vet.



Rikki, This time of year I am so hormonal. I can't help myself. Every time my mom walks in the room, I bite. Then, she ignores me and walks away. She is my person. Dad has taken many bites from me and won't even ask me to step up. What's going on with me?

Signed, DYH in a crazed out mood

Dear Crazed, Ahh, it happens to us all this time of year. Don't blame yourself... but don't blame your mom for not wanting to handle you as much either. We have these silly things called hormones, and they make us feel different at different times. Right now, we have a LOT of them, and they make us moody. One minute we're sweet as pie, the next, look out, it's vampire bird! It will pass. Meanwhile, mom will probably love you more from a distance. She will give you some nifty new toys, and deal with your screaming tantrums by mostly ignoring them, or trying to distract you with treats or fun stuff. It will pass... BTW, did you know your mommy has to deal with hormones as well? So maybe you should be really nice to her when she seems crabby and out of sorts.



Rikki, I haven't been feeling myself lately and finally Mom took me to the vet. Yesterday something white came out of my bottom. Mom said it was something called an egg and took it away. She said it could happen again. I wasn't feeling well because I was "egg bound". What does that mean? Signed, Just Wondering

Dear Wondering, You were an egg once. Did you know that? Your mommy made the egg and your daddy helped her take care of it until you were ready to come out and meet them. Sometimes girl birds get confused. When they are all comfy



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they make an egg inside, even when they don't have a daddy to help them take care of a baby. If they are not really ready to make babies, sometimes the egg gets 'stuck' inside, and makes them feel really yucky. Then you have to go to the doctor to get help. Being egg bound can make you very sick, and can be a real emergency! Parronts are always advised to watch their girl birds for any signs of distress, like sitting on the floor of the cage, rocking, straining, change in (or lack of) poop, labored breathing, or any serious change in behavior or eating habits. Hope that helps...and hey, stop being a silly bird, you don't want to make babies...then you'd have to share your mommy!!!



Do you have a question for Rikki?  
Please send it to The Editor at [editor@parrottoyangels.org](mailto:editor@parrottoyangels.org)



## Beaky

By Bridget Wagenbach



Beaky is a 16 year old Timor cockatoo (a subspecies of the Lesser Sulphur Crested). He lives with my good friend, Suzie and her 11 year-old son, Noah. Beaky is the "top bird" in Suzie's flock of five. Like most cockatoos, he has an outgoing personality and is quite the showoff. He loves to dance and rock to music, particularly Johnny Cash tunes. Beaky can talk and says "Beaky boo", "take a bath", "goodnight", "goodnight Beak", "Amy Lou", and "gooooodnight". He also has a unique call that almost sounds like "nyah ah ah". Beaky loves to bathe, sitting in the sun, and travel. Suzie will take Beaky to places around town, where he is allowed to visit, like her father's nursing home. He is a good eater and loves vegetables, especially peppers.

Like all proud "Moms" of parrots, Suzie often posts photos and videos of her flock online, especially of Beaky. He now has a loyal fan club, including me, who follow his daily antics.

Beaky loves to destroy toys - his favorites being wood and finger traps. What is especially endearing about Beaky is that he is a toy hoarder at heart. He thinks he owns everything and tries to steal toys from his other flock members. His toys are neatly organized into baskets (see photo) on top of his cage. There is even a single basket inside his cage as well. Even though Beaky thinks nobody knows his secret of being a toy hoarder, everybody who loves Beaky knows it and just loves him even more!



We'd love to run your "Favorite Bird Story". Send it to us at [editor@parrottoyangels.org](mailto:editor@parrottoyangels.org)

### Tips For Feeding Your New Parrot

By Leigh Anne Stewart

Getting your first parrot is so exciting. You took the time to find the proper cage for your bird. You purchased an abundance of toys, and then you bought the correct pellets for your parrot. When speaking of nutrition for your new parrot, consider what they would eat in the wild. There are several "mashes" that you can buy and cook. You can also make your own. It is very easy to do.

The first step is going to the produce store and purchasing a few of the vegetables below:

- Carrots with tops
- Squash such as acorn, or any orange squash
- Sweet Potatoes
- Broccoli
- Green, red, yellow peppers (any type of pepper is acceptable)
- Zucchini
- Turnips
- Yams
- Bok Choy
- Garlic
- Kale
- Collard Greens
- Purple Cabbage
- Yellow Squash
- Ginger Root
- Nuts

### Tips For Purchasing Toys For Your New Parrot

By Leigh Anne Stewart

So, you are a new parrot owner and you have just brought your baby home. Owning a parrot is a very rewarding experience. There are a few things you need to know in order to keep your parrot happy and healthy for years to come.

#### Parrot Toys

Parrot toys are necessary for your bird. They prevent boredom and they serve different emotional and physical needs of your parrot. Without toys they may start to pluck or even go to extreme of mutilating themselves.

The thing to remember about parrot toys is that they are for the bird to destroy. There are several online stores to purchase toys or if you are a do it yourself person, you can make your own with inexpensive materials. The Parrot Toy Angels also sells ready made parrot toys and toy parts for your convenience.

#### Types of parrot toys

There are dozens of toys available for your parrot. The question is what toys and toy parts are safe for your bird.

#### Soft Fleece Toys

Soft fleece material toys are great. My parrot loves to nestle next to a "bird buddy", which is a fleece toy that they sit next to when they

Choose a few of the above ingredients (or all of the ingredients) and wash them thoroughly. Give them overnight to dry completely. Chop vegetables into smaller pieces and run through the food processor. The pieces will shred, and they will be tiny when you are done. Mix all of your shredded veggies into a large microwave safe bowl, mix, add water and blanch in microwave until about 1/2 cooked. Cool immediately in ice water and drain. Spoon mixture into small snack sized plastic baggies and freeze. You will not lose any of the nutrition when you freeze if blanched. Feed this mix to your bird everyday, along with the pellets. The beauty of making mash for your parrots is that it takes only about 2 hours, and you get several baggies full of veggies. It costs less than some of the dehydrated mashes, and you have the knowledge that the vegetables are all fresh.

You might want to ask your avian veterinarian about other whole foods that are healthy for your bird. They can give you a long list of healthy ingredients for your mash.

You may also feed small amounts of fruit. The exception is the Eclectus parrot. They may require more fruit than other parrot species along with the fresh mash and pellets.

Happy feeding!



sleep. Fleece parrot huts are the same idea, and they get inside the hut to sleep. You can cut strips of fleece material and tie them to bird safe plastic chain, and hang in the cage.

#### Wood Toys

Wood toys such as wood blocks are great for all types of parrots. The larger birds such as the blue and gold macaw can destroy them in minutes. You can buy thin wood for the smaller birds such as the amazons or african greys.

You may use things like the large wooden spoons or small ice-cream spoons that you used to get in the school cafeteria. Purchase a 2 inch by 4 inch by 8 foot non-treated piece of lumber. Cut up into wood blocks, then bore a hole in them and hang.

You may hang your toys with sisal rope, supreme cotton rope, plastic parrot chain and bird safe leather laces. The toy hangers are made of nickel or stainless steel, they are both acceptable and bird safe. The pear link, or toy hanger are generally made to hang toys for the smaller parrot.

If you like to make parrot toys, check out the different parrot toy stores on the internet to get ideas. Several parrot stores sell toy parts so that you can create the perfect toy for your parrot.

You only need 4 or 5 toys in the bird's cage at once. Change them out monthly to give your parrot a variety to choose from.



## Heavy Metal Poisoning

By Angel Savannah

There are two metals which comprise the bulk of heavy metal poisoning in birds - lead and zinc. They both can cause the same symptoms, cause sudden symptoms, or can build up over long periods of time. Once a certain amount is accumulated, symptoms will present themselves.

Many are familiar with zinc poisoning, which can be absorbed by contact with cages, wire, chain, padlocks, keys, hardware, and pennies newer than 1983. When birds ingest zinc from any of these sources, it can lead to depression, loss of appetite, diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss, and eventually death.

"New cage syndrome" is a term used to describe new zinc-coated bird cages. They are terribly unsafe when new, but if you wash them with vinegar and water, it will age them to where the wire is safe for birds to use. Otherwise, according to reliable veterinary

sources, once a cage ages for 3-6 months, it will be safe. (This is only for zinc-coated cage wire, which is most commonly found in rabbit cages suppliers or breeder bird cages, not the chrome wire cages commonly found in pet shops.)

Lead can be found in the welds on welded wire cages, tap water, bells with lead clappers, paint chips, toothbrushes, imported food packaging, bread wrapper ties, dyed cardboard boxes, lead weights (including fishing sinkers), crystal, some art paints, plastic and vinyl covers, Venetian blinds, lead shot, stained glass windows, plumbing material, tile and linoleum, antiques, curtain and shower curtain weights, batteries, and many more.

The early symptoms of lead poisoning are depression, weakness, and blood in the droppings. The more they ingest or the longer the accumulation, symptoms will progress to vomiting, weight loss, producing large amounts of urine, excessively thirsty, green/black diarrhea, head tilt, blindness, neurological malfunctions including loss of balance, brain damage, seizures and eventually death.

Lead absorbed into the body is retained in the soft tissues, then in the bones. It will eventually be excreted through the kidneys.

If you fear that your bird has ingested something toxic, take that article (if you know the source) with you to the vet and have your bird checked for lead poisoning. Depending upon how recent the ingestion is, treatment could be an injection or surgery. Heavy metal poisoning is not something that is easily treated. They are not likely to just rebound and all of the sudden be "well." In fact, many birds must undergo years of treatment therapy, and some seem to get well and some do not.

Along with the medical treatments, you can also try some foods that help to flush the toxins from the bird's system. Cilantro is a natural chelation remedy and helps to flush toxins from the body. There are several recipes available online for natural chelation remedies. They look as though the birds would love them. They are fairly high in protein and fats, to assist in putting weight back on the bird. Some of these recipes can be used on well birds as a preventative, too.



Help Us Help the Birds...

Our Angels generously donate their time making toys for our needy feathered friends. Quality toy-making supplies are expensive and shipping charges are outrageous. That's why we need your support to help keep us going. Every dollar amount, large or small, is gratefully accepted. Donations are tax deductible.

We also welcome donations of toymaking parts and supplies. A receipt will be issued for every donation. Contact us at [Parrot Toy Info](#) for further information on donating.



*All donations tax deductible.*



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While PTA at all times tries to ensure any information provided in this newsletter is accurate, all articles are submitted by volunteers, and we are not avian professionals and make no claim as to the suitability of featured products, food, or toys for your particular bird. PTA strongly recommends that you ensure that all toys are safe, that you make sure your bird is fed a well balanced diet, and that you always provide continuing medical care through your avian vet.

Do you have a question or comment? Perhaps you have an idea for our newsletter, or simply want to share a story on how an Angel has touched your life. Drop us a line at: [editor@parrottoyangels.org](mailto:editor@parrottoyangels.org)



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