



# Angel Wings

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

February 2012  
Volume 7, Issue II

Having trouble viewing this email? View as a [Web Page](#)



In this month's issue:  
Angel Announcements  
Waldorf Salad Birdie Style  
Recycling, Angel Style  
Featured Fid ~ Great-billed Parrot  
Angel Tip  
Rikki Sez  
Beads  
Blue-green Algae  
Mold and Bird Health  
Yay, Bath Time!...or not?  
Help Us

♥ Happy Valentine's Day ♥

## Angel Toys For Angels

### February's Featured Toys



[Here's My Hearts](#)  
Small Birds



[Love Ya Man](#)  
Small Birds



[Sweet Hearts](#)  
Small Birds

Check out all the

### ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Watch for upcoming events, news, website updates, etc. here



#### ON THE SITE:

♥ [New Items](#) ♥



### Waldorf Salad Birdie Style

By Toni Fortin

- 1/4 red apple chopped
- 1/4 green apple chopped
- 1/2 stalk celery chopped
- 10 fresh cranberries cut in half
- 6 red seedless grapes cut in half
- 1 tsp. plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp. chopped pecans

Mix ingredients all together.  
Store in refrigerator.

My guys loved this.  
For the humans, more grapes were added. It was delish!

### Recycling, Angel Style Simple Foot Toy

By Wyspur Kallis



Supplies you will need:

- Hacksaw with metal cutting blade
- Leftover plastic chain (size appropriate for bird)
- Leftover parts with a hole large enough to fit over a plastic chain link
- Large bead to cover open space in the chain link



Using the hacksaw, cut a plastic chain link in half and scrape away any shavings.



Put the toy parts on the chain link. You can use any parts your parrot likes to play with.



Slide the bead over the cut in the chain link.  
Make sure the bead covers the entire opening in



the link to prevent any hazard to your bird. Now introduce your new toy to your feathered loved one and watch the fun begin.



## Great-billed Parrot

By Wyspur Kallis



The Great-billed Parrot, (*Genus: Tanygnathus Species: megalorynchos*), is also known as the Moluccan Parrot, Island Parrot and Large-billed Parrot. It is a medium-large bird about 16 inches in length and weighs in at slightly over 400 grams on average. Coloration is mostly green with a large red bill, blackish shoulders, olive green back, pale blue rump and yellowish green underside. The female is typically smaller than the male, but otherwise the sexes are similar.

According to World Parrot Trust, the population in the wild is around 110,000, and they are primarily found in several Islands around Indonesia. They are found in coastal lowlands and adjacent foothills; also in primary and tall secondary forest, forest edges, closed woodlands and mangroves and can be found at elevations as high as 3280 ft.

The IUCN lists the Great-billed in Appendix II with a rating of "least concern." There is an excellent article available for the interested reader that disputes to some extent the IUCN rating at least as concerns the populations in some areas of Indonesia. As with many species of parrots deforestation resulting in loss of habitat along with illegal trade are the main threats. The link to the article is as follows: [Great-billed Parrots](#).

In the wild, their diet consists mainly of fruits and nuts and they will gather in groups of a

dozen or so birds while feeding. In captivity, a more varied diet is recommended consisting of such foods as small seeds: canary, oats, safflower; spray millet; limited sunflower seed, dry, soaked or sprouted; sprouted mung or other beans, cooked butterbeans or lentils; boiled corn; fresh green leaves, as well as fresh vegetables including carrot, celery, squash, green beans, peas in the pod; fresh fruit including apple, pear, orange, cactus fruits and bananas and a variety of nuts such as walnuts or hazelnuts.

The Great-billed Parrot is not commonly kept as a companion bird, but can make a very suitable one. They are generally quiet in both manner and voice. According to our sources, they may become very good talkers, but are not generally known for talking ability. One of the draw backs to owning this bird is that a very large enclosure is recommended. According to Avian Web and world Parrot Trust, the minimum accommodation should be 12 - 14 feet in length.

#### SOURCES:

[World Parrot Trust](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

[Avian Web](#)

[Birdchannel.com](#)



#### Angel Tip

By Ilona Peterson

#### Tea Holder Sprouter

For those of us who have just 2 or 3 birds, the big sprouting jars are, well, just too big. While shopping this week, I discovered this tea holder. Normally, being a tea-bag person, this would not have caught my eye...but being a bird-person, it sure did. I chose one that is 3 inches in diameter, it turned out to be the perfect size for sprouting for my small flock. It can sit in water and it makes rinsing a piece of cake. They come in smaller and larger sizes. Give it a try, it makes sprouting easy!



Happy 2012 Sprouting

#### Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, My name is Willie. I am a Quaker with a 'tude. I love my Mom to pieces, even though I do have to bite her sometimes to keep her towing the line. I wanna know something. Why is it when Dad gets sick, sneezes, coughs and blows his nose, she gives him extra loves and medicine to make him feel better, but if I sneeze, cough and blow my nose all she does is laugh at me? I am sick too. I want some extra loves and medicine. Why does Mom laugh and not give ME medicine and extra loves?  
Signed, Sneezing and coughing my beak off,  
Willie

Dear Willie, Sounds like you're a little jealous. Your Mom laughs at you because she knows

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥



*Bird Cages Galore  
Affordable Quality*

Why buy a Bird Cage from Bird Cages Galore?? Because we do not "just sell" top quality cages at reasonable prices, provide free shipping and a free toy with each cage; we offer first rate customer service and will answer your questions about most bird-related matters. Visit us on the web, browse our selection, join our discussion forum and sign up for our free Newsletter, [The Caged Bird Courier](#).

We are here to help, because we care about your bird!!

♥ ♥ ♥

you're not really sick and just mocking Dad. She has your number. You don't need any medicine and if you want a hug, speak up. Tell your Mom she can give you a healthy treat when she gives Dad his medicine to make you feel better. Loose the 'tude, Willie and you may get lots of loves.

♥ ♥

Rikki, My Mom use to have plants and flowers in the house. Once, I got close to one and started to eat some. Mom was really, really upset and called the vet. I think she said it was an Amaryllis. The vet said to just let it pass through my body and I should be okay. I was a little sick, but I got better. Mom doesn't have plants anymore and she won't let me near when she has flowers. Please tell me why?  
Signed, Sick in OH

Dear Sick, I am very glad to hear you got better! Some household plants can be toxic to fids and other pets. Others can make you very sick. Your Mom cares about you and that is why she got rid of the plants. It just shows you that you must be careful with what you put in your beak.

♥ ♥

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

♥ ♥ ♥

## Beads

By Kim Perez

There are so many different beads to choose from when making toys for our birds. There are plastic, wood, metal and glass beads. Let me first say that I would never recommend using metal or glass beads in a bird's toy.

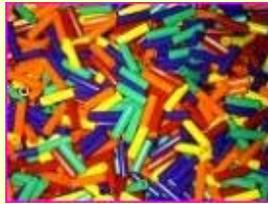


Plastic beads - the most common bead used in toy making is called a pony bead, standard size being 9mm. I use this bead in toys which are given to all sizes of birds from parrotlets to cockatoos.

Pony beads come in many shapes and colors, which can add interest to your toys. The other pony beads I commonly use are heart shaped and star shaped.

Another plastic bead commonly found in toys is called a fuse bead. These are cylindrical beads with a flat top and bottom. They are made to place on a plastic peg board. They can then be ironed or otherwise melted and fused together to make wall hangings. They come in many

different sizes and I use them according to what size of toy I am making. When I make little toys, I use the smallest ones I have, which are only about 1/8" in length. For big bird toys, I have some that are 3/8" long and 1/4" in width.



A longer bead that looks a lot like these fuse beads is called the tube bead. This one is about 1-1/2" long and 1/4" diameter.

The other plastic beads I use the most are what I call Lifesaver beads, a small round bead. These are approximately 5/8" diameter. These are a very hard plastic. I only use them on toys intended for small birds. Large birds would be able to easily break these.



Another hard plastic bead which has many versions would be like these shown to the left. This type of bead is available in many different shapes and they are fun to work with. They are around 1" at their largest point. You can use them in toys for all sizes of birds.

I use several wood beads in my toys, as well. The most common ones I use are round beads. I buy them undyed and dye them. These come in many sizes, from 3/8" diameter to 1" diameter. Even the smaller beads are safe with my big birds, as they enjoy snapping them in half and watching them fall off their toys.



Given this large selection of beads, you can make quite an array of toys for your birds. Experiment and see what they like the best.



### Blue-green Algae

By Lori M. Nelsen

Spirulina can be a mystery for parrots. It has taken the blame for toe tapping, plucking, nervousness and a host of other problems. However, these problems may not be caused by the addition of spirulina, but by an overall imbalance of nutrients or the sensitivity of a particular species or individual parrot.

Some pellet manufacturers such as

### Mold and Bird Health

By Angel Savannah

Mold and fungi can be found virtually everywhere. Not only are they not good for your birds, but they can be deadly.

The most common fungal infection found in birds is Aspergillosis. Aspergillosis is an infection or allergic response due to the Aspergillus fungus. This mold or fungus can be found literally everywhere. It is on their bedding, their food and in the air. Aspergillus is the fungus that grows on bird droppings,

Harrison's, Hagen and Goldenfeast add spirulina to their food. Due to the powerful nature of this blue-green algae, a change in the percentage of pellets in the diet could result in a subtle or drastic change in the reaction of a sensitive parrot. Adding a vitamin supplement to a pelleted diet, where both products include spirulina, could result in several problems manifesting themselves.

Spirulina is a powerful single-celled microorganism that is considered to be a complete protein. It is a blue-green algae which contains between 60 and 70 percent protein, including the essential amino acids. It is also a particularly rich source of other nutrients including various B vitamins, beta-carotene, vitamin E, carotenoids, chlorophyll, manganese, zinc, copper, iron, selenium and gamma linolenic acid (an essential fatty acid).

Spirulina sensitivity can vary depending upon the source of the algae. All blue-green algae can be contaminated with toxic substances called microcystins. Spirulina can also absorb heavy metals from the water where it is grown. Some manufacturers collect their blue-green algae from the wild where many types (toxic and nontoxic) can grow together. A recent study found that most of the products tested had low levels of blue-green algae toxin. The US FDA has received complaints from human consumers about nausea; diarrhea and other symptoms after taking blue-green algae supplements, but these cases have not been confirmed as being caused by the supplements.

Source:

[Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#)



spoiled food and anything that gets wet. It is usually fuzzy and gray in appearance. Birds who contract Aspergillosis can get it from literally anything and anywhere, whether their environment is always sparkling clean or not. The hardest thing to understand is that multiple birds can be housed together in the same exact conditions and one can get Aspergillosis and the others will not.

My vets recommend that you keep your birds' food dishes clean, remove any uneaten fresh foods before they spoil and do not use any particle type bedding in your cages. Ground corn cob bedding, ground walnut shell bedding and other like products provide excellent growing conditions for Aspergillus. The recommended cage lining medium is newspaper. What I do with my cages is have a few layers of paper down, and daily or every other day I can simply roll up the soiled top layer and throw it away. Once a week, I reach the bottom of the stack and take the trays to my scrub sink where they get a bleach water wash and rinse. The bleach water will kill almost every germ, including mold and fungi, making your bird trays safe. Rinse with clear water before taking the tray(s) back to your bird room. Bleach, although itself safe, has harsh fumes which could prove to be hard on birds' lungs.

The signs of Aspergillosis included labored breathing, fever and unusual temperament. Most birds are asymptomatic. You don't know they have it until it is discovered in a necropsy. Even when found while the bird is still alive, it is difficult to treat.

The way I clean my cage trays is an acceptable way to clean other non-porous items on which you might find mold. Bleach is one of the only bird-safe cleaners which will completely remove mold. So if you find a foraging toy or skewer that has molded, you can clean in with bleach or a bleach water solution (1 cup bleach to a gallon of water), and then rinse well in clear water. For future use, try to clean the items as soon as food is removed from them.



Yay, Bath Time!...or not?

By Ilona Peterson

You might be one of the lucky ones who has a bathing bird. For my bird, it was the "or not".

It took a while to find out the best way to entice my Gaby to take a bath.

First, it was tying up dripping wet lettuce in the center of the atom and having her wrestle with it, getting wet while doing so. Fun to watch...a mess to clean up.

Next, since she liked wet lettuce, I tried minimizing the mess and laying lettuce leaves (organic) in a huge serving dish, pouring water over it, and letting Gaby wiggle around in that. Did she love that! Oh yes, however, neither method got her wet enough for it to be considered a 'bath'.

There had to be a way. But nothing worked.

It came to me one day as I watched her fly to the top of the shower door, where I hung a towel for her to land securely. An idea hatched...I would need only two things: a big boing and some hanging toys.

The boing was stretched out to hang over the sliding shower door...1/2 on each side. A few toys were hung outside the shower, and one toy on the inside.



This got her used to going inside when she wanted to play or just hide out. With this new and improved bathroom design, the bathroom became a favorite hang-out and talking time for her. The acoustics are excellent!

Well, it was a good plan, but nothing more than that happened.

Then one day, rather than running the faucet below first, I turned on the shower to let the water get warm. Darned if she didn't get fluffed up and run to the top and then down to where the water would reach her. Quickly I turned the water to cold, put it on the gentlest function, and positioned it. What a surprise and fun it was to watch her run up and down the boing, back and forth, until she was dripping wet. Now, THAT was a bath !!



If you try this and nothing happens, don't give up. It took about 6 months for that first bath. What I never did during that time was just turn it on and leave it on for her without me in the shower. That might have done the trick sooner.

Try it...if nothing else, your bird will enjoy spending time with you while you shower, get ready in the morning, or just have a new place to 'hang out' for a while. It will also provide you with a new place to clean up after your darling.



### 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.*



Don't forget you can help PTA by clicking one of the following buttons:

GoodSearch is a search engine toolbar that's totally spyware free.  
Every time you use it we get a penny ...you can download it here:



Shop with GoodShop, you shop we earn:



Shop at any of over 680 stores using this banner:



and help PTA earn!



This is the official newsletter of the Parrot Toy Angels. Members and subscribers are encouraged to submit articles/photographs for publication. PTA reserves the right to reject, edit, or use only portions of items submitted. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the PTA Editor, Directors, Officers, or the general membership.

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)



© 2008-2012 Parrot Toy Angels • P.O. Box 34372 • Houston, Texas 77234  
All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced by any means, print, electronic or any other, without prior written permission of the Editor or author.  
For permission to reprint, please contact us at [Editor](mailto:Editor@parrottoyangels.org)  
[www.parrottoyangels.com](http://www.parrottoyangels.com)