

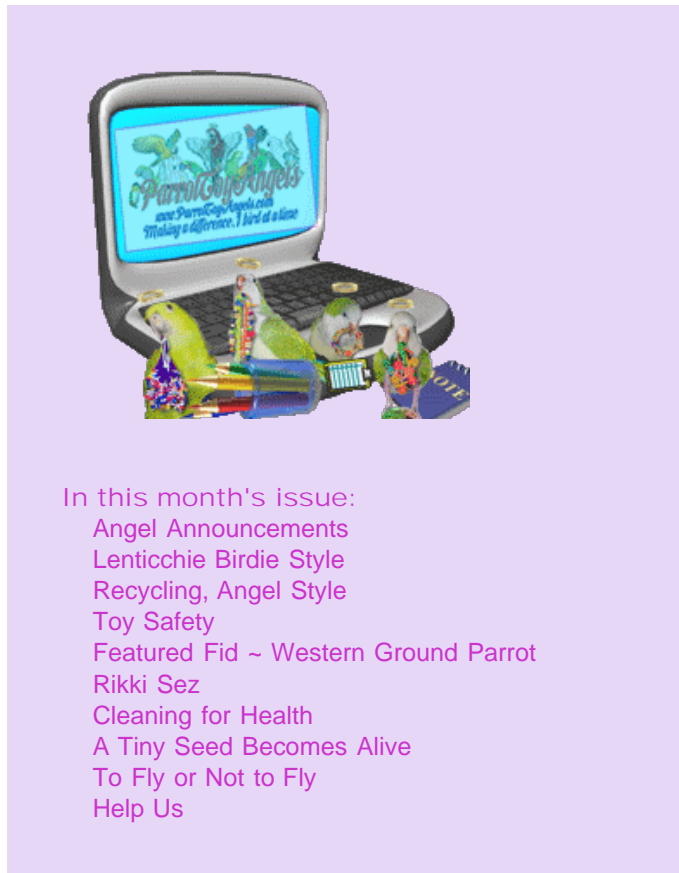


# Angel Wings

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

January 2011  
Volume 6, Issue 1

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Help Us

HAPPY ★ NEW ★ YEAR

## Angel Toys For Angels

### January's Featured Toys



[Balls & Bagels](#)  
Large Birds



[Ducky Ball](#)  
Small Birds



[Abacus](#)  
Medium Birds

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

## ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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



NEW NEW

### ON THE SITE:

- ♥ [New Items](#)
- ♥ [Happy Flappers](#)
- ♥ [M&C Rescue - Monument Pictures](#)
- ♥ [Under My Wing Pictures](#)

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥



### Lenticchie Birdie Style (Italian Lentil Soup)

By Toni Fortin

- 1 cup soaked and cooked lentils
- 1 cup any small pasta cooked - ditalini, elbows (I used whole wheat rotini broken in 1/2)
- 1/2 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 roma tomato, chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- 1/2 tsp. parsley
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 2 Tbsp. grated carrot
- 1/4 cup well cooked, chopped chicken (optional)

Mix all together. Serve cold or warm.



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

## Recycling, Angel Style Straw Tips

By Nancy Goulding



Budster enjoying his straw toy

Supplies you will need:

Straw tips -- these are the small pieces of straw remaining after straws are "Whacky-Whirled." Pieces can be any size depending on what size bird the toy is for. You will need an awl or similar tool (I use a small, pointed pair of scissors) for making a hole in the straw pieces; Gimp or thin bird safe rope; a small piece of wood is helpful to place the straw pieces on when punching the hole; scissors to cut Gimp or rope. I like to sort the straw tips into groups of alternating colors to easily keep color combinations consistent.



Stringing the tips: Tie a knot in one end of the Gimp or rope. Use the awl or other tool to punch hole in the middle of each piece.



String as many straw pieces as desired.



When desired length is reached, tie a loop if it is to be a hanging toy, or tie a knot in the end if it is a footer. How many pieces you need depends on what you are



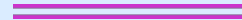
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[The Caged Bird Courier.](#)

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making. A 7 inch chain takes about 80. A 3 inch footer uses 30. A small wreath takes about 150. This is an easy to make, colorful, and inexpensive toy that your bird will have hours of fun with.



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### Toy Safety By Kim Perez

Toy safety has become a huge issue in the bird world. I am amazed at some of the information I am finding --- some by looking for it and some actually come and find me. I attend a monthly bird show in the northwest Chicago suburbs every month. There are several bird toy vendors there and we are all very different from one another. I specialize in wood toys for medium birds. One lady specializes in big chunky wood toys for larger birds. One lady bakes her own "cookies" for bird toys and makes some wonderfully creative toys with them. One lady sews and makes some darling toys and accessories. And there is a new vendor at the show who makes "recycled toys" and uses almost every item from our "UNSAFE" parts list.

Being a caring bird toy maker, I asked her if she realized that some of the components of her toys were really not safe for the birds. Her reply was, "I really don't care. I am here to make money."

I am not young and naive, but I have to admit that her uncaring statement took me by surprise. I didn't know what to say to her! She had been 'reported' to the people who run the show there and they had decided that they are going to add a safety list to their Vendor Application Forms for 2011. Luckily, these will be printed soon and must be signed in order to be a vendor at this show. Then, if there is any unsafe item being used, the vendor will be dismissed.

Why should this be necessary? I know that we should all be intelligent and informed about what is safe for our birds. However, there are always going to be people who are new to birds and lack the necessary experience to be able to make educated purchases from vendors with questionable goods for sale. Those are the people whose birds I want to protect. My belief is that EVERY bird deserves the same level of protection.

Is it too much? We hear about government trying to step in and tell us what we can and can't feed our children, what type of health care we will receive, how much of the money

we earn that we cannot keep and now when we die, we have to give a big chunk of what was ours to the government. People are strongly opposed to that kind of regulatory intrusion. Is it intrusive of us to require that bird toys meet safety standards?

There really are no actual "Industry Standards" when it comes to the manufacturing of bird toys. And although there are many toy makers out there who do research every component to the toys they make, there are many more who do not.

I wondered how many other bird toy vendors had the same attitude of the 'I'm here to make money' lady, so I went from vendor to vendor and checked over all of the toys. One big vendor there uses brass bells and hardware on their toys. Having a metal specialist in the family, I have learned that brass is extremely toxic. One uses foam beads (which have mixed reviews) and pom poms (my vet said NO!). Another vendor uses bottle caps and other household items in her toys, which are safe, but seem tacky when you are asking money for toys. And then there is the recycled toy lady. She does not just use items from around the house, but she actually uses pre-chewed bird toy parts! She takes used toys apart and uses those parts to make "new" toys. There are multiple key rings on EVERYTHING -- pretty colors, but totally unsafe! She even had packing peanuts on wire!

I am grateful to the people running this monthly show for adding a safety agreement to the contract. We may not care to be scrutinized all the time, but it shows that this bird fair organizer cares about their reputation for running a quality show. I don't think I will miss seeing pre-chewed toys for sale.



### Featured Fid ~ The Western Ground Parrot

By George Goulding



Photo by Brent Barrett, West Australia Department of Environment and Conservation.

The Western Ground Parrot is a small parrot similar in size to a rosella. It is green and yellowish-green with yellow, black or brown flecks or bars, and has a red band above its beak. It is a unique and highly endangered parrot found only in a small portion of the south western coast of Australia (southeast of Perth), with the largest population being in the Cape Arid National Park, and a lesser number in the Fitzgerald River National Park.

This small, ground dwelling parrot is unique for several reasons. It is one of only four ground dwelling birds in the world (the others being the Night Parrot, the Antipodes Island Parrot, and the Kakapo). It has very recently been classified as a "new" species. The November 23, 2010, issue of Science Daily reported that "a team of Australian researchers involving DNA experts from the University of Adelaide has identified a new, critically endangered species of ground parrot in Western Australia." The existence of the Western Ground Parrot had, of course, been known for a long time. It had been first described as a separate species in 1911, and subsequently considered a subspecies of the Eastern Ground Parrot in 1912. The research team studied DNA samples from museum specimens up to 150 years old and found that the Eastern and Western Ground Parrots are "highly distinct" from each other. They recommended that the Western Ground Parrot be recognized as a new species, *Pezoporus flaviventris* (previously *Pezoporus wallicus flaviventris*).

The Western Ground Parrot builds its nest on the ground as noted above. This makes the eggs and the young vulnerable to predators. Clutch size is believed to be between 3-4 eggs.



Interestingly enough, the last nest observed was in 1913, further attesting to its rarity and to the difficulty in studying nesting habits. As the name would suggest, this bird spends most of its life near the ground rather than in trees. They fly very close to the ground, and seldom fly during daylight hours. They are most active at dusk and early morning prior to sunrise. The top photo (from the Perth Zoo web site) shows vegetation typical of their habitat, which is primarily low heath usually with open mallee (woody plants and shrubs), and swamp. The other photo shows how the bird's colors act to camouflage it in this type of vegetation.

Their diet consists mainly of seeds, flower buds, and leaves, and they normally feed alone or with one other bird. Flock size varies from 1 to 3 birds.

There are only around 110 of these birds remaining with the vast majority being located in the Cape Arid National Park as previously noted. Once plentiful and widespread throughout much of Western Australia, the population of the Western Ground Parrot has declined dramatically over the past 150 years. Initial declines were due the clearing of large tracts of land as settlers began to move into the area beginning in the late 19th century. The habitat destruction continued until much of the bird's habitat had been destroyed by the middle of the 20th century.

The first comprehensive survey carried out in the 1980s estimated Western Ground Parrots numbers at approximately 380 birds. In 2004, the parrots' population size was estimated at less than 200 individuals. The sad and steady decline continued to an estimated 140 individuals in 2008, and most recently to 110. Government programs have been initiated to try to increase and sustain the population. The Department of Environment and Conservation of Australia initiated the Western Ground Parrot Recovery Program in 2003. The initial intent of the program was to translocate birds from Fitzgerald River National Park to a new site to start a new population. It was discovered that the population had declined so much that relocation efforts would be futile. For the next several years, the project then focused on monitoring known populations and looking for new ones.

The main threats in the wild are from wildfires, foxes, and feral cats. Aside from being federally protected, public awareness of the threat of extinction has been increased through groups such as Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, which assists with research and recovery projects and lobbies for government support. Recently, this group, along with volunteers from other organizations and with assistance from the Department of Environment and the Perth Zoo, began a captive breeding effort in hopes of supplementing the depleted wild population with captive born. This effort is in the very early stage, and may not see the first result until well into 2011. There is also a government supported feral cat eradication effort that is on going and appears to be having an impact on reducing the feral cat populations.

The Western Ground Parrot is but one example of endangered bird species threatened with extinction. With only slightly more than 100 known to exist, there is a real possibility that they will become extinct in our lifetime. If they do, they will become the first bird specie in Australia to become extinct since 1930. Hopefully, the ongoing efforts of the Australian Government and private conservation groups will not only save this beautiful bird from extinction, but increase the population to a sustainable level.



Rikki Sez

[Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.](#)

CLEANING for Health  
By Angel Savannah

I work in a vet clinic and cleaning is one of the main things that takes place,



Rikki, My mum brought home this big hairy thing called a cat. It is big and has sharp teeth, and it makes noise. I am scared and afraid it's gonna get me. I hide from it in my toys, but it can still see me. I don't want it here. Would you tell it to go away?

Signed, Scared and Afraid

Dear Scared, Ask your mum to let you have a room of your own and keep the door closed when the cat is in the house. It is for your safety! Cats sometimes like to play with little birds and do not mean to hurt them, but sometimes it happens. "A cat is a cat and that is that!" Also, remind her that the cat's mouth and claws have bacteria (humans and other mammals have these same bacteria) that can kill a bird. Ask her to please put the cat in a separate room with the door securely closed whenever you come out to be with the family. You need to have time and love with your human family too.



Rikki, Please help me - I am confused. My mommy just got new hearing aids. I know it is a good thing because she finally realized how much I talk to her. I was always calling her mommy and telling her I love her, but because I speak in such a low voice, she never really heard me. I am happy about that, but now she keeps telling me to be quiet when I call her in my language. I love to call my mom and let her know where I am all the time. I don't like mommy asking me to please be quiet, Clickie. I thought about biting the little things on her ears that help her hear, but I know she would get real upset with me. What's a bird to do????

Signed, Clicket, the not-so-loud Sennie

Dear Clicket, Those things called hearing aids are a good thing for your mommy! It helps her hear, and now she hears all the noises she missed before, including your calls. She will need to help you learn to readjust to her new ability to hear you. This means more time with

second only to animal care. I get asked all the time what we recommend to use around pets that is both safe and will disinfect thoroughly.

There are two cleaning products that I use in the vet clinic (at the direction of the vets there) and they are Kennel-Sol and bleach. Both of these products are safe for pets. I use Kennel-Sol, a disinfectant, in the kennels when the dogs are still in them or when they are going to be in them before the floor dries. I apply this to the floors using a traditional mop or chamois mop. This comes in an odor-free and a very light, fresh scent. This can also be used on their dishes and toys. I rinse those items and the dogs can use them right away, even while they are wet, and they are perfectly safe.

I use bleach on just about everything else in the entire clinic. I use it to disinfect every surface in every exam room, hallway and the main reception room.

At home, I use the Kennel-Sol on my bird room floor because it is an excellent disinfectant and it doesn't have the harsh smell of bleach. On the birds' cages, I prefer to use Poop-Off as it is made to use with birds and does a nice job. When I soak their dishes, I soak them in bleach water. If I run them through the dishwasher, I only use 1/4 cup vinegar and allow the hot water to do the disinfecting.

Perches and acrylic toys can be soaked in bleach water. They will come beautifully clean with little effort using this method. You can also place them in your dishwasher.

When I wash the rugs and other cloth items that are used around our pets, I do not use a detergent, but only bleach. You can never be completely certain that there are no detergent residues on fabrics. You can use bleach on colored items, just in a lower concentration so as not to cause bleach marks. When I dry them, I don't use dryer sheets. We have had several clients bring their pets in for treatment after they have ingested dryer sheets, and they can cause a lot of health issues.

In warm weather, we use a pressure washer (water only) to clean cages, perches, and toys. This is a great method for eliminating bird dust, which can be an

mommy. You will need to work together to find a suitable amount of calling to get your mommy's attention. Now you shouldn't have to call so loud or long for her to answer you. She can now call back to let you know she heard you and is still there for you. She needs to work with you and reward you with a favorite treat when you understand and adjust the amount and loudness of your calling. Hope you two have fun relearning how to work to make each other happy with the new hearing aids.



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



issue with cockatoos, cockatiels and African Greys. When you pressure wash outside, that bird dust is out of your house!

Other cleaning products I would recommend include natural products. There are too many brands/types to mention. If you find something that you would like to use, or would like to know if it's safe to use, you can contact your local veterinary office and inquire, or call the product company. Tell them the type of pet/pets you intend to use the product around and get their feedback.



## A Tiny Seed Becomes Alive

By Lori M. Nelsen

During germination, seeds become alive and undergo many fast changes. The great miracle of this amazing process is a huge increase in a host of nutrients which are created inside the sprouting embryo.

- ♥ Chlorophyll and carotene increase dramatically when they are exposed to sunlight.
- ♥ Vitamin content increases up to 12 times.
- ♥ Minerals combine in a way that increases assimilation.
- ♥ Starches change to simple plant sugar.
- ♥ Proteins are converted into free amino acids.
- ♥ Enzymes immediately become active and create a host of nutritional changes.
- ♥ Water absorption swells the seed from 6 to 10 times its normal size.

For example, wheat sprouts contain 4 times more folic acid and 6 times more vitamin C than unsprouted wheat. In studies at the University of Pennsylvania, vitamin C was found to increase up to 700% in some seeds in the first 72 hours of sprouting. For this reason, some sprouts contain more vitamin C than citrus juice. This also applies to vitamins A, E, the B complex and many more depending upon the variety of seed sprouted. A Yale University study of grains, seeds and beans shows that sprouting increases all B-vitamins from 20 - 600% and vitamin E up to 300% within 4 days of sprouting.

Sprouts are live and complete foods. Their proteins are "complete proteins" or "complete amino acid profiles" because the essential amino acids are in the correct combinations. They are called "complete foods" because they contain all other essential dietary nutrients, along with the enzymes to assimilate them. Sprouts are classified as "quick energy" foods because the simple plant sugars are easily digested and enter the bloodstream quickly.

The grains can be allowed to just swell at the end of the seed to become full of nutrition. However, beans (legumes) will need to be soaked overnight and then fully sprouted to 1/2 inch tails to disperse the anti-nutrients. The following recommended beans can be sprouted: adzuki, mung, lentils and sprouting peas. The rest of the bean family would need to be soaked overnight and then boiled for 10 minutes and then simmered for 20 minutes to rid them of their anti-nutrients that cause tummy upsets and gas in both humans and avians.



## To Fly or Not to Fly

By Jan Lewis

That is the question many companion bird owners often ask themselves. I thought I would share some of the information I have found as well as my thoughts on flight for companion birds. First, I will tell you that all of my birds are currently flighted, and have been for the past seven years. We have a house that has been bird-proofed, to the best of our ability, but it does require diligence and constant thinking for the safety of the birds. My birds are only allowed out of their cages when I will be there to supervise their time out.

### Benefits of Flighted Birds:

Many vets and aviculturists believe it is beneficial for our birds to learn to fly competently prior to going to their first home. They also recommend regular exercise either by flying or wing flapping in the case of a bird with clipped wings. Flight or wing exercises help with the bird's respiratory system and with building muscle and maintaining proper weight for better overall health. Learning to fly early in a bird's life helps it to have confidence and a healthy mental attitude as well. A confident, flighted bird with proper care and training can be easier to retrieve should it accidentally be lost outside. (Also, I personally feel that it gives them a better chance to avoid predators until they can get back home to their human family.) Unfortunately, many homes are not suitable to allow birds to remain flighted.

According to the on line article by Pamela Clark appearing on [parrothouse.com](http://parrothouse.com), hot stoves, heating units, windows, tops of doors (often a favorite perching spot for a flighted bird), open toilet seats, filled sinks and frequent opening and closing of doors can result in the injury, death, or loss of a bird. Children can often frighten birds with their fast movements and are more likely to leave doors open or to close doors without checking to see where the bird is located. Even a glass of water left briefly while a bird is loose can result in them drowning while trying to get a drink. This happened to a friend's cockatiel. If allowed out for free-flight time, an owner needs to be sure they are aware of where the bird is and what it is doing. Electric cords are sometimes a temptation for a bird to chew on. One night I fell asleep with my cockatoo in my lap; he woke up first and found a nearby electric cord and chewed on it. Fortunately, it was a heavy duty cord, but had he chewed any further I'm afraid he may have been electrocuted.

House plants can be a danger as well. I try to only buy safe plants for my home, but have had friends give me unsafe plants. I try to find the unsafe plants a new home, but sometimes end up having to move them to a room that is off-limits for the birds.

### Benefits of Clipping Wings/Flights:

Once a bird's wings have been properly clipped, they must rely on their human companion to take them from place to place. A properly clipped bird should not be able to gain height should he be startled and fly off, but should have a short, level flight to the floor. Clipped wings can help make it harder for your bird to get into trouble or danger. Clipped wings can also help make it less likely that your bird will be nippy. Be sure to take your bird to either an avian vet or groomer who knows how to give a proper wing clip. Ask them to teach you how to do a proper wing clip and do it yourself. A proper wing trim is very important. If done incorrectly a bird may fall like a rock and injure itself.

A bird with clipped wings understands its reliance on its caretaker, so is less likely to be nippy. My normally sweet Quaker developed an attitude when his flight feathers first grew out. He was very nippy and when I got him out he wanted to fly and explore rather than be with me. So I decided he needed a wing trim to help with his attitude. Immediately after the trim, he reverted back to my sweet little Quaker.

I hope that this article, while not all inclusive, will help you make that important decision of keeping your bird flighted or not. These are just a few things you may want to consider and research more before making your decision. May you and your feathered family members have a safe and happy New Year!





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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.



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