



Angel Wings

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

March 2011
Volume 6, Issue III

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Angel Toys For Angels

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ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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



NEW NEW

ON THE SITE:

♥ [New Items](#) ♥

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥

[Spring Auction](#)

Spring is on it's way and so is Parrot Toy Angel's Spring Auction.

This one promises to be as good as our last one. We will have many items for both you and your birds. Bird toys and toy parts, gift baskets, handmade items, DVD's, jewelry and lots of surprises are just a few of the items that will be up for auction.

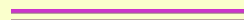
We are currently accepting donations to add to our auction. If you would like to donate an item, please contact

donations@parrottoyangels.org.

Anything you may want to donate will be appreciated. (All donations are tax deductible). Please help us make the Spring 2011 Auction the best yet!!

The dates for the auction will be announced in April's Angel Wings, so don't miss it.

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥

Recycling, Angel Style Foot Toy

By Wyspur Kallis



Supplies you will need:

One or more small cups (you may find these in the baby section of your local store)

2 Plastic or Wooden Beads

100% Cotton Supreme™ Rope -

OR- Vegetable Tanned Leather Strips

Safe Shredded Paper

Drill & Scissors



Drill a hole in the top and bottom of the cup.



String the first bead on the rope, then the bottom of the cup, followed by the top of the cup and the last bead. Tie a knot in the rope.



Stuff the cup with shredded paper and close. Pull the rope tight and tie a knot in the other end. Cut off any excess string and tape. Now



Garden Delight Pasta and Veggies

By Toni Fortin

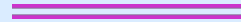
- 1 lb. Garden Delight spaghetti, broken into pieces**
- 4 cups soaked, cooked split peas
- 3 cups frozen corn
- 1 lb. frozen mixed greens
- 2 cups sprouts
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 4 hard boiled eggs, chopped

While pasta is cooking, put greens and frozen corn into a very large bowl. Drain pasta, and while hot, pour over greens and corn. Let sit a few minutes and add everything else, eggs last. This freezes wonderfully.

****NOTE:** This pasta has dried carrots, tomatoes, and spinach in it.



you've made your feathered loved one an awesome recycled foot toy!



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Featured Fid ~ Red Throated or Orange Throated Conure

By Delta Holder



Bubs, Red Throated Conure who owns Delta Holder

Red throated conures are found in El Salvador, Highlands Eastern Guatemala, Honduras, and Northern Nicaragua; and they inhabit subtropical or tropical dry forests. Even though they are numerous in their natural region, they are extremely rare in captivity.

These guys have a good hefty size about them. Even though they are larger than the

green cheek conure or similar bird, they are still smaller than a cherry head conure . They have hefty body builds with a large, wide beak. They weigh in roughly at 130 grams and measure about 9 - 11 inches in length, including their long tail.

Bubs, my red throated conure, is very loud and can rival a nanday conure. Anyone who knows or has been around a nanday conure knows the high pitched vocals. The red throated can easily equal or exceed those. They are not a pet for someone who does not tolerate noise or lives in an apartment where others will hear. With the little information available about these guys, I am not sure of their vocal abilities in their natural habitat, but Bubs vocalizes very often in a run of a day.

They are a very active bird with a good ability to chew. They need lots of toys for stimulation and chewing. They are very smart and from what I've researched, can make an excellent pet if tame. Bubs was an adoptee and cannot be handled, so I cannot vouch for the pet quality they appear to have when tame. I am assuming, like most conures, they can be lovable and enjoy spending time with their favorite person. Like most conures, they do go through a nippy stage. These guys need lots of guidance and attention in order to keep their pet quality. If ignored or not given the proper attention, they can easily develop a wild tendency, which is what I experience with Bubs.

They tend to enjoy lots of activity and noise and are not turned off by active households and activities. The more around them the more they seem to enjoy it.

These conures are very brave. Bubs will not back down from anyone or anything. He is very head strong and will stand up to protect his territory. I know from experience that they can deliver a very painful bite. That larger beak would explain the strength they may have compared to the smaller species of conures.

According to my research, they can be taught basic tricks and with time and patience, may learn more complicated ones. They can match quite well the medium to large species for intelligence.

For housing , I would suggest no smaller than a 24 x 22 cage size. I would even suggest larger as they are very active. They enjoy crawling all over their cage and even walking upside down across the top. They enjoy their toys and if anything like Bubs, anything that makes noise seems to be of more interest to them.



Bubs, Red Throated Conure

Red Throated Conures have mainly bright green plumage with the red/orange throat. This sometimes can extend to spots around the eyes or up the sides of the neck. When young, they are completely green and gradually develop their neck color as they mature. They have blue tinges to their primary flight feathers and tinges of yellow on the underside of their wings. Their eye rings are a gray/brownish color with orange pupils. Upon research, I found that their eye rings are a different color when young and darken as they get older. Bubs is not banded and I am not sure of his age, but I believe him to be about 10 - 15 years old because of the color of his eye ring. One thing you will notice about the red throated conures compared to most other conures is the eye patch. Most conures have a bright white/yellowish eye patch that extends around the eye, but the red throated conures do not have the same. There is a small eye patch, but it is a darker skin color. They have the bone colored beak with darkened color at the top of the lower

mandible and on the top part of the beak where the two connect. Their feet are also skin colored.

The males and females look the same at maturity. The only definite way of determining sex is by DNA testing.

I am not sure of the female of the species, but I know the males are very protective of their property. Bubs chooses who his friends are (he has two) and will be quite vicious to those he considers not friends or those trying to be near "his" friends. He is probably one of the most gutsy birds in my home and could easily do damage to another of my flock if I am not careful.

All in all, I feel the red throated conure would be a good pet for those ready for the challenge that any type of conure can bring. With Bubs being an adoptee, I cannot vouch for pet quality, but I would love to have another and experience it for myself.

Editor's Note: There is quite a bit of good information available on the red throated conure at the following web page: http://www.parrots.org/index.php/encyclopedia/profile/red_throated_conure/



Unwanted Eggs

By Angel Savannah

A single female bird can and probably will lay eggs sometime in her lifetime. There are some strange behaviors which can precede egg laying and which are a great sign that something is about to happen. When our pet Congo African Grey was about seven years old, she suddenly stopped eating for a couple of days and acted like she was frightened by something. She was fairly still and wasn't playing with her toys or talking. She just seemed a little "off." Then we noticed a little blood in her droppings so we called our avian vet. He told us to keep an eye on her for another day. I think he was suspicious that she was going to lay an egg, because ordinarily I think I would have been instructed to bring her to see him immediately.

The next day she laid her first egg. It was perfectly formed and had some blood on it. We called the vet again and he reassured us that this was normal and that he had suspected that she would be laying an egg very soon. She has since laid four eggs over the past 5 years. She has the same pre-laying symptoms each time, which our vet assures us are normal.

For our Grey, this behavior isn't so frequent that it's a problem for her. For some birds, this can be a problem.

A friend's Eclectus had gone on an egg laying "binge." She would not stop laying eggs and had laid more than 20 in a period of 4 - 5 months. She was always irritable and lashed out at her owners, who were very concerned for her health.

In this type of case, there are a few things one can try in order to impede the egg laying. The first thing I recommend is to remove anything that could be misconstrued as a nest, such as tents, bowls, buckets, etc. The next thing I would recommend would be to limit the hours of daylight. In the wild, birds breed when days are long. In our breeder room, we increase daylight hours in the spring to encourage breeding. The opposite would discourage breeding, and hopefully discourage egg laying. Our friends also limited certain types of fresh foods such as sprouts which are plentiful in the wild following the rains which also begin the breeding season.

These interventions should discourage many birds from egg laying. When this isn't enough, the next measure we took with the Eclectus was to change her surroundings. She came to live with us for a couple of weeks. She acted like she was going to lay eggs the whole time, but she did not. Our friends moved her back home and she laid one more egg. They tried something similar and moved her to a large aviary near their

small birds in their basement. They were able to more completely limit daylight hours since she wasn't near as many windows. The bird seemed to be distracted by the sounds of the smaller birds and has not laid an egg since.

One other suggestion is to not take the eggs away from your bird. Let her sit on them. Usually, about the time a fertile egg would take to hatch is how long it will take for your bird to get bored sitting on it. The sitting process will also discourage the bird from laying additional eggs. She is more likely to focus on the task of incubation.

When females are laying eggs, wanted or otherwise, you need to supply them with additional calcium to make up for what they use in making eggs. This does not encourage them to lay more, but will decrease the risk of eggbinding.

All of these ideas should be helpful if you find yourself in the same situation.



Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, Mom gives me the same old pellets all the time in my cage. She does give me other foods she calls healthy people foods, too. Dah grandson was here and put all kinds of yummy looking foods in my dish which I've never had before. Mom found them before I got to try any of the yummy new goodies and took dem away. Why? I likes to try new foods.

Signed, Treatless in Seattle

Dear Treatless, Your Mom's grandson was trying to be helpful and feed you some of the foods he likes. Some of those foods aren't even good for him to get too much of. So when your Mom found them in your dish she took them out so you wouldn't get sick. Your Mom loves you and wants to keep you healthy by giving you a good diet and lots of healthy treats. Humans like to eat all sorts of non-healthy foods they call "junk food". Their bodies can tolerate it, but if they eat too much of that junk food they can get sick, too. We birdies have a more delicate system and can't handle as much. Enjoy the good, healthy treats your Mom provides. You are not missing anything! Trust me.

Toy Safety: Mop Heads

By Kim Perez

Many of the fun toys our birds love to preen include wonderful natural cotton ropes. We all like to find easy ways to offer our birds fun toys and one of those items I get asked about is mop heads. I have actually seen some darling toys made from them. There is a reason that you do not really see a lot of them available as toys, though. Mop heads resembling cotton rag dolls can be made in a variety of ways and may or may not have any chemicals added during manufacturing. There is not one mop head manufacturer that would state that their product would be safe for birds to play with. But the true problem with mop heads is that they give off millions of tiny particles which can be unsafe in regards to birds' breathing. Their lungs or nostrils can become clogged with all of those particles.

Because of the ideal concept of the mop head style for a toy base, I would like to suggest options for how to make a safe toy base to use in its place.

Using a 100% natural fiber bird-safe cotton rope, such as Supreme Cotton Rope, cut several pieces the same length (the quantity is up to you for what you are going to make). Use a plastic or acrylic ring and pull the lengths of rope through so you have half hanging out each side of the ring. Use a piece of Paulie Rope or a heavy duty zip tie and tie the rope close to the ring. This should give you about the same look as a mop head and offer you a bird safe item to use as a toy base. To this you can tie in beads, birdie bagels, wood and plastic shapes, and more! Be sure to keep in mind safe lengths of loose rope so your birds cannot get it wrapped around their necks.



Rikki, I'm bored! I have a nice cage, I guess, but it is boring. Mom did put a few things in my cage she calls toys and a swing, but they don't do anything to entertain me. I don't like that swing thing 'cause it moves if I try to sit on it. Them toys aren't no fun either. Mom complains she buys me toys I don't play with and says she's not gonna buy no more, it is a waste of money. I'm bored and Mom's not happy with me. What can I do?
Signed, Bored

Dear Bored, Tell your Mom you need different kinds of toys and to teach you how to play with them. Sometimes it can be difficult to see what to do with the toys when they are first put in your cage. Not all birds like the same kind of toys, so variety is the key until you have chosen your favorite kind. Even then they may seem big and scary. Your Mom should show you the new toy and leave it on the table, chair or couch for a couple of days before putting them in your cage. Then she should show you some of the fun things you can do with it. You will feel more comfortable with the new toy if you see how to play with it. My Mom likes to watch me with the new toys in my cage the first day she puts them in to see how I do. She even plays with them with me. She laughs and sings while she's showing me. Good Luck and hopefully you can turn bored into busy.



Do you have a question for Rikki?
Please send it to The Editor at
editor@parrottoyangels.org



Other bases you can use to run cotton rope through would be a large wiffle ball, or tie the rope around metal rings. These types of toys can be finished off so many different ways that you could literally use them for any size of bird. You could string large chunky pieces of wood on them for even the largest macaws, or you can put little beads and tiny bagels on for the little guys!

This type of toy can be particularly recommended for birds that pluck or over-preen their feathers. When you can get a bird interested in preening a busy cotton rope toy, they will hopefully be distracted enough to leave their own feathers alone.



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Are Your Pellets Safe?
By Lori M. Nelsen

I was searching through the internet a few weeks ago and noticed an old article by someone who had lost a parrot. The article claimed that there had been metal shavings found in the pellets that had been fed to her bird, which caused its death. The article included information about the discovery of the metal shavings and the necropsy. This piqued my interest and I decided to find out how our parrots are protected from this unfortunate situation currently.

I contacted several pellet manufacturers and a grain processor. I received answers from

some manufacturers, but not all. I thought that these answers received from these particular companies about the initial processing of the grains for pellets might be of interest.

ZuPreem: Per our discussion, I wanted to once again confirm that ZuPreem has invested in high quality metal detection devices to ensure the safety and accuracy of all ZuPreem products. As you are aware, there is a great deal of metal equipment used in the production of human and animal foods. Aside from top of the line technology, ZuPreem also has in place a plan of action [and it] should, in the unlikely event a piece of metal [is found, it] sounds the alarm. Production would immediately cease and a quality control engineer, along with other staff members, would fully inspect and clean the system.

Totally Organics:..... I spoke to the mill which is manufacturing our pellets. They explained to me that they have several HUGE magnets, even in the grinder and also at the place where the ground ingredients go from the grinder to the pellets press.

Lafeber:..... Metal filings found in food is a rare question but one that is possible to occur.

Metal filings in food can occur when the grinding equipment used is not working properly or is out of alignment. Preventing metal or any other foreign materials in our pet foods as it is in human food is only as good as the ability to control it.

We can't speak for other companies, only on what we do at Lafebers. Because we are a small company, our ability to control what goes into our food and the quality of our foods is much greater.

For example, we clean all our food processing equipment at the end of every day's production runs, (we only run 1 shift). During our daily cleaning, 'key' areas are inspected, lubed, aligned, calibrated and maintained. This minimizes equipment grinding, as everything is in sync and runs smoothly, unlike large manufacturing facilities where their equipment is so big they can't even reach to clean it and they run their equipment around the clock with no downtime for daily cleaning and maintenance.

Since our equipment is small but sophisticated, (like a laboratory size model) all the technology is there. Metal traps and detectors are in place in the rare event that something malfunctions. Once the food batches are completed and tested, they go into our packaging area where again we have very sensitive metal detectors calibrated to detect minute traces of metal (both ferrous and non-ferrous) if they are present in the foods, thus eliminating any potential problems.

Buhler Inc. Grain Processing:..... In a good process or system there are normally magnets beyond the hammermill to catch the ferrous metals before they reach valuable components like rolls or pelleting dies. Of course this would also eliminate the metals from the product, which is very important. Our pelletmills have a magnet built into the inlet right before the product enters the die area.

For non-ferrous metals and heavies that are unaffected by magnetic force, we use gravimetric separators and destoners. These machines remove solid heavy materials, [such as] stones, glass, ss, and aluminum materials from the product via a directed stream of air which separates the lighter product from the heavies stream or by vibration and air movement, but always it is an air stream removing the lights from the heavier products.



CITES and The Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992
An Overview - Part I
By George Goulding

We have recently published articles about Parrot species that we noted as being either extinct (Carolina Parakeet) or threatened with extinction (Hyacinth Macaw, Ground

Parrot, Lilac Crowned Amazon), and this prompted this writer to look deeper into the subject. Most serious parrot owners are well aware of the serious dangers to survival facing a very large percentage of wild parrots throughout the world. Certainly, we know that it is very difficult to obtain a wild caught parrot in the United States, although there are still wild caught parrots available. Fortunately, most wild caught parrots available in the U.S. today were imported prior to legislation being passed prohibiting the importation of most parrot species. Nevertheless, there still exists a large black market for wild caught parrots throughout the world despite laws protecting these birds. In fact, smuggling of wild caught exotic birds continues to be a lucrative trade both in this country and elsewhere around the world. For instance, in 2007 149 Amazons and Conures were confiscated from smugglers attempting to cross into San Diego from Mexico. Considering that nearly every parrot and related species in the wild is threatened with extinction, the importance of domestic and international laws protecting them cannot be over stated.

Prior to conservation specific legislation being passed in the United States, an international treaty governing the import and export of endangered plants and animals was adopted by many countries including the United States. This treaty is known as CITES or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. It is an international agreement designed to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of The World Conservation Union, and it was finally agreed to by representatives of 80 countries in Washington DC in 1973, and became effective in July of 1975. Today, 175 countries have adopted CITES.

It is important to understand that CITES does not prohibit all trade in endangered plants, animals, and related products, but it does accord varying degrees of protection to more than 30,000 species, whether they are traded as live specimens, fur coats, dried herbs, or other form. CITES does not specifically prohibit the trade of every species it protects. It does allow some to be traded under controlled circumstances. CITES is a far reaching agreement, and it is not our intent to report on all aspects of it. However, those parts dealing specifically with parrots and related species are important to our understanding of how these beautiful birds are protected.

It is also important to note that although CITES is legally binding on the nations adopting it (meaning that they have to implement the Convention), it does not take the place of national laws. Each nation party to the Convention must pass its own domestic legislation with CITES providing a framework to be respected by each nation. This ensures that CITES is implemented on a consistent basis at the national level globally.

CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. All import, export, re-export, and introduction from the sea of species covered by the Convention has to be authorized through a licensing system. Each Party to the Convention must designate one or more Management Authorities in charge of administering that licensing system and one or more Scientific Authorities to advise them on the effects of trade on the status of the species. The species covered by CITES are listed in three appendices according to the degree of protection needed. Of interest to us are the parrot and related species in Appendix I and Appendix II which cover almost all Cacatuidae (Cockatoos) and Psittaciformes (parrots, amazons, cockatoos, lorikeets, lories, macaws, and parakeets). Appendix I lists around 50 parrot and related species ranging from Extinct to Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (see below). Appendix I is the Convention's highest level of protection. It lists species that are the most endangered and which are threatened with immediate extinction. CITES prohibits international trade in these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, and then only under strictly controlled conditions. The next level of protection is Appendix II, which lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. The distinction between these two levels is perhaps of minor importance considering that each species appearing in either is in danger of being lost forever. Sadly, all wild parrots with the exception of a few are listed on Appendix I or II.

The ICUN Red List mentioned above is compiled by the International Union for

Conservation of Nature (IUCN). IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is widely recognized as the most comprehensive, objective global approach for evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species. This List categorizes threats to species as follows:

- Extinct
- Extinct in the Wild
- Critically Endangered
- Endangered
- Vulnerable
- Near Threatened
- Least Concern

The following is a link to a document on the PTA web site listing all of the parrot and related species listed in CITES Appendix I along with the IUCN Red List classification applicable to each [CITES Appendix I](#). Feel free to download the document if desired. It should be noted that the category "Least Concern" can apply to species on CITES Appendix I, so it should not be interpreted as not meaningful.

Whether you are a parrot owner or simply one who appreciates these birds for their intellect, beauty, and personalities, it is important for all of us to understand the danger facing these birds in the wild, and to support and join the efforts of governments, NGO's, and other groups in protecting them.

In the United States, the implementation and management of CITES is through the Wild Bird Conservation Act (WBCA), 16 U.S.C. §§4901-4916, passed in 1992 and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. We will examine the WBCA and FWS roles in implementing and enforcing CITES, as well as some of the ways wild parrots are being threatened in the April issue of the PTA Newsletter.



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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



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