



# Angel Wings

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

March 2014  
Volume 9, Issue III

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## Angel Toys For Angels

### March's Featured Toys



[Bunny Toy Box](#)  
Medium - Large Birds



[Easter Baskets](#)  
Small - Medium Birds



[Egg Jangler](#)  
Small - Medium Birds

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





## Spring Auction is Coming

Dear Friends and Supporters of Parrot Toy Angels,

Spring is almost here!!! And that means PTA's Spring Auction is not far behind!! We all know that a busy parrot is a happy parrot. Have you ever thought about who provides toys for parrots who have to live in rescues or sanctuaries because they have no one who wants them? Well, Parrot Toy Angels thinks about it constantly! And we're quite proud to say we've been able to donate over 20,000 toys to help make their lives happier!

Your generous donations and bids in our auctions allow us to provide the endless necessities, buy supplies, and pay for shipping. The need the rescues are experiencing is so great that we bury our pride during this time and beg for your generosity. More and more pets are abandoned due to the economy, and the amazing people who keep finding "one more spot" to put a needy bird are truly scrambling for funds. They come to us...the requests we receive for help are many, not being able to help them all and having to choose is pure agony.

If you have a business, a store, have a talent, do crafts...we will gratefully include your items in our auction. If not, please consider donating gift certificates and gift cards. These are items everyone likes. Some of the hits from previous auctions include any bird-related items, bird supplies and toy making supplies, gift baskets of all kinds, all animal-related items, retail gift certificates and gift cards, jewelry, art, household and holiday items. Your store's banner will be added to our Supporters page and seen by the many visitors to our website.

It's through your support and that of our volunteers that we are able to do what we do for so many birds and make a difference in so many birds' lives. You can view some of our previous projects here: [2012 Projects](#) and [2013 Projects](#)

Won't you help us keep our toy makers in supplies? Any donation, large or small, gratefully accepted. All donations are tax deductible. Donations should be received at our home office no later than March 31, 2014. Please contact us at: [donations@parrottoyangels.org](mailto:donations@parrottoyangels.org) if you'd like to donate.

As always, we appreciate your support.



### ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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



**NEW NEW**

ON THE SITE:

- ♥ [New Items](#) ♥
- ♥ [Happy Flappers](#) ♥
- ♥ [Gift Certificates](#) ♥



### Macaroni Salad for the Birds By Toni Fortin

- 1 cup whole wheat elbow pasta
- 1/2 roma tomato, chopped
- 1/4 cup broccoli, chopped
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup soaked, cooked lentils

Mix together in a bowl. You can add any fresh fruit or other vegetables you have.

<>My girls loved this. As always, they said "It's good and I like it, I like it!"



### An Angel Amongst Us

Parrot Toy Angels come in all shapes and sizes, and from all walks of life. Let us take this opportunity to get to know each other better and introduce you to one of our Angels.

This months Angel Amongst Us is Wyspur K....



Wyspur lives in COLD, COLD Minnesota. Her flock consists of 3 caiques, 6 cockatiels, and 8 budgies.

Fun times between Wyspur and her birds are special one-on-one time with each of them.

Wyspur became an Angel after she was invited by Lynn. She says she has been an Angel for so long, she doesn't remember the date!! She is also one of our Angel Mentors.

When not tending her flock and making toys, Wyspur is a Dietary Aide.

For those that don't know, Wyspur owns and operates [wyspurcreations - Handcrafted Parrot Toys For Sale](http://www.wyspurcreations.com). She also has a sanctuary for small birds with special needs.

Being an Angel and knowing what a difference her contributions make, gives Wyspur a sense of pride.

We are very happy to have an Angel such as Wyspur!



#### Beak-A-Boo News - Issue III

HEY! Boo here, again, and it's NO FAIR! I had to sneak outta my cage to come write to you. Mom's been really MEAN and keepin' me a prisoner in there, all because she says I'm being a 'hormonal brat', whatever THAT means! I'm only screaming when Mommy leaves the room because she should NEVER leave the room! I only beaked Gramma because she was trying to take away my food, even if it was yucky and I didn't want it. It's MINE! It's ALL MINE, everything is MINE!

I most certainly did NOT chase Daddy around the kitchen trying to bite his

#### Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, I am a 'rescue' bird, according to Mom, and learning how to play with toys. I don't

toes, nor did I beak Mommy on the nose because she wouldn't give me pizza! I would NEVER...Ohhh, hang on a sec, here comes Daddy, I neeeeed to bite his toes!  
\*SQUAWWWWK!\*

MOM'S NOTE: Sorry folks, Boo is back in her cage and barred from the computer, the bedroom and the kitchen. In the last week she has shredded (and I do mean SHREDDDED) 12 new toys and 8 older ones, along with half a dozen baskets, 6 or 7 willow wreaths, 3 shirts and the arm of what used to be my favorite chair. She's beaked my hubby, his mom, and ME, and has attempted to beak anyone else who gets near, after begging them to 'come here' and 'Love the Boo' in her best begging voice. I'm sure most of you have dealt with a bird going through that wonderful 'Spring Fever'. I'm just really glad it only lasts a little while with Boo. She's normally so well behaved, everyone is used to her visiting, and stopping to visit with her. But right now she's got a quicksilver temper, sweet as pie one minute and all beak and claws the next. Her cage is a bit of a mess, but you take your chances right now if you try to clean it or add or take away anything. She'll be over it soon, we've been through this before, and know that we all need to be a little more tolerant of her right now, give her some space and let nature take its course. She'll be good as gold before you know it, and have stories to share!



*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

know what foraging is. Any help for Mom and me?

Signed, Curious Birdy

Dear Curious, If you were out in the wild, you'd have to spend a LOT of your time looking for food. But, because you have a home with some loving parronts, they bring you all the food you need. I know this sounds like (and IS) a good thing, it also leaves you with a lot of time on your talons, time your basic instincts tell you should be used looking for food - foraging. So, your parronts want to provide you with an outlet for that instinct. This is done by presenting food to you in different ways, ways that challenge and entertain you. Often this is done by 'hiding' food inside something else, and by placing it in different places so you have to move around and 'find' it. There are various toys designed for birds of different sizes that help with this, and there are many ways it can be done without toys or products. Maybe your mom will make little paper boxes you have to rip open that have food treats inside, or wrap up grains and veggies inside some leafy greens and let you rip it open to enjoy. The options are endless, and can be lots of fun, for both you and your parronts.



Rikki, Mom is bringing a new sibling into our flock but this birdie, a rescue bird, must be 'quarantined' for at least a month. Why?  
Signed, Where's My Friend?

Dear Friend, Your mom cares for you very much, and doesn't want to take the chance your new friend might be sick, and also, perhaps, to make sure he or she is going to be good-natured enough to get along with you. Many people have brought home a new bird, which seemed perfectly fine at the pet store or rescue, only to discover, sometime later, it was sick. And if they had introduced the newcomer into their existing bird family right away, the birds they already had could get sick too. Any new bird should be isolated to watch for signs of illness, which may only show up after the stress of moving to a new home. This is also the best time to assess temperament and give the new bird parronts time to get to know the new bird and work on any behavior issues. Better safe than sorry!



Rikki, Before I came to live here, I had a small comfy cage. But a few days ago, my new parronts put me in this new huge cage, and I feel lost! I have to climb all around to get

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!!



### Angel Tip

Don't you wish they sold almond milk in a smaller container? I can only get it in a 1/2-gallon container. Pour into ice cube trays and freeze. Pop out when frozen and store in the freezer in a zip lock bag, squeezing out the air. This way they will be ready for the next bird recipe and your smoothies.



to my food and water and my favorite perch and I'm just exhausted! Why did they do this to me?

Signed, Spaced Out Bird

Dear Spaced, Oh you silly bird, a bigger cage means more room for toys and goodies and fun places to perch and play. Many birds spend their entire lives in cages that leave them no room to move around and play, and it's sad. Naturally, one needs to take safety concerns into consideration (bar spacing, etc.) but a nice big cage that leaves a bird **NEEDING** to move around to eat and drink and play is a **GOOD** thing. You need room for toys, and perches of various sizes and materials, and foraging, and just being a bird! I will add this, though. Unless your old 'comfy' cage was unsafe for you to stay in, it would have been a good idea for your parronts to move you into a new cage in stages. Perhaps set up the new cage next to yours, put some food and water in it, maybe one of your favorite toys, and let you get used to seeing it, perhaps playing on it or around it, before making it a permanent thing. It probably would have let you feel a little less 'spaced out' about the move!

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



### Blanch Before Freezing By Lori M. Nelsen

When freezing vegetables, blanching is often recommended. It slows the natural enzymes in the vegetables that can cause loss of flavor, texture, and color during freezing. Blanching also cleans the surfaces of fruits and vegetables to remove dirt, organisms, and reduce bitterness. This hot-cold technique brightens the color of certain vegetables, especially broccoli and other green veggies, and helps to slow the loss of nutrients.

There are three different blanching methods that can be used to slow the enzyme action that will continue during freezing: water blanching, steaming blanching over boiling water, or microwave blanching. There are many different opinions by experts of which method is the best, the safest, and results in a minimum of nutrient loss.

Water Blanching: For home freezing, the most satisfactory way to heat all vegetables is in boiling water. Use a blancher, which has a blanching basket and cover, or fit a wire basket into a large pot with a lid. Use one-gallon water per pound of prepared vegetables. Put the vegetables in a blanching basket and lower into vigorously boiling water. Place a lid on the blancher. The water should return to boiling within 1 minute, or you are using too much vegetable for the amount of boiling water. Start counting blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil. Keep heat high for the time given in the directions for the vegetable you are freezing. Water blanching is not

recommended, by some experts, because of the loss of the water soluble vitamins and minerals.

Steam Blanching: You can use a commercial steamer, or a pan with a steam basket/stainless colander that holds the food at least three inches above the bottom of the pot. Bring about 1 to 2 inches of water to a brisk boil and drop in sliced vegetables. Cover and steam until vegetables are heated completely through, but not cooked. Start counting steaming time as soon as the lid is on. Approximately, one-third of the time required to cook them thoroughly. The vegetables should still be crunchy. Drain.

Microwave Blanching: Prepare vegetables in the same manner as steam blanching. Place them in a microwave-safe dish, cover and cook on high for about one-half of the time required to completely cook the fresh vegetable. You may want to stir once to help achieve a more even blanching. Microwave blanching may not be effective, since research shows that some enzymes may not be inactivated. This could result in off-flavors and loss of texture and color. Those choosing to run the risk of low quality vegetables by microwave blanching should be sure to work in small quantities, using the directions for their specific microwave oven. Microwave blanching will not save time or energy.

Cooling: As soon as blanching is complete, vegetables should be cooled quickly and thoroughly to stop the cooking process. To cool, plunge the basket of vegetables immediately into a large quantity of cold water, 60°F or below. Change water frequently or use cold running water or ice water. If ice is used, about one pound of ice for each pound of vegetable is needed. Cooling vegetables should take the same amount of time as blanching. A properly blanched vegetable is brightly colored all the way through, when sliced with a knife. Drain vegetables thoroughly after cooling. Extra moisture can cause a loss of quality when vegetables are frozen.

Properly blanched frozen vegetables will maintain high quality for 12 to 18 months at 0° F or lower.

Some suggested blanching times:

Asparagus - 3 minutes  
Broccoli spears - 4 minutes  
Brussels sprouts - 3 minutes  
Carrots (1/2" slices) - 3 minutes  
Cauliflower (florets) - 2 minutes  
Corn - 3 minutes  
Corn on the cob - 7 minutes  
Green beans - 2 minutes  
Green peas - 2 minutes  
Okra - 4 minutes  
Spinach - 2 minutes  
Zucchini (slices) - 2 minutes  
Winter squash - 5 minutes



Easy Sprouting:  
Part Three of Three  
By Regina Jankowski

I have been busy sprouting up a storm

Sizing Toy Parts For Your Birds  
By Kim Perez

What's the worst that could happen if I  
give my bird a toy that's too big or too

this past month. It is easy to do, yummy (okay...yes, I tasted them!), and the birds are loving it! We have our seeds and EasySprouts from Parrot Toy Angels, so let's get started!

First you will need to wash your EasySprout prior to use. I washed mine in dish detergent. You can soak your Sprouter in a bleach solution for 10-20 minutes if you chose. Use 1 tablespoon of bleach per pint of water and then scrub it thoroughly.

Put the amount of seeds you are ready to sprout in the Inner Container. This is the container that sits inside the larger one (hence the name) with the little slits at the bottom. If you are using very small seeds, there is an Alfalfa Insert that goes in the bottom of the Inner Container. This will keep your seeds from escaping. (Figure out how to keep your parrot from escaping and be sure to let us all know!)

Rinse well until the water runs clear. Use the water you provide to your birds. For example, I use filtered water and some use bottled. Whatever water you soak these seeds in will be absorbed by the seed and ultimately fed to your bird.

Put your Inner Container in the Outer Container. Make sure to rotate the Inner Container until it sits all the way inside the Outer Container. You want it to sit as low as possible and the two outer rims should be level. If you cannot attach the lid properly, it's not low enough. Add enough water to cover your seeds by several inches. No need to fill the container. Ultimately you should have 2-3 parts water to 1 part seed.

Attach the Vented Lid to your EasySprout. You will want to place it in a location with good air circulation. This is important. I tested this theory myself. It took 24 hours to sprout on a kitchen corner counter with no circulation in comparison to 12 hours in a more open area. You want the seeds to open. Some will open and some will grow little tails. You do not want long tails, like those of lovely alfalfa sprouts we see so often. Any growth, no matter how little, proves the seed awakened. Once it is awakened and alive, it has reached its full nutritional value. Longer tails does not mean more nutrition. Start with soaking for

small? Well, not surprising to anyone who has had birds for many years, a bird can get injured or even die because of an incorrect size of toy.

When you are looking at toys for small birds, you need to be aware of the openings of any of the toy parts. If there are rings that look like they are just the size of your bird's head, they are not the right size for your bird. If your bird can fit its head into a ring on the toy, they can possibly get their head stuck. What is the appropriate size? Either much larger than the bird's head so they can get their head in and out very easily or much smaller than the bird's head so there is no chance they could get their head in it.

You also need to look at the openings on all of the toy parts and think about whether your bird might get their toe, foot or leg caught. The parts to check out include plastic and metal chain, wiffle balls, large beads, etc.

Be aware of long rope or exposed lengths of chain. Any rope or chain that is longer than 3" is really unnecessary and could become entangled around a bird's neck causing strangulation.

Some ask if there are any "rules" or guidelines that you can follow. Honestly, they aren't the same for every bird as every bird is different in the way that they play with toys. Watch your bird(s) with toys and see HOW they play with them. You will learn their habits, likes and dislikes. If they become obsessed with strings dangling from a toy and try to wrap themselves up in it, you know that you have to be wary of rope. If your bird tries to insert its head into every nook and cranny of a toy, you know that the sizing of open parts is of concern for that bird.

I have previously been asked to publish a guideline for plastic chain sizes to be used by bird types/sizes. It is impossible to be accurate with such a thing just because of each individual bird's playing technique.

The openings in plastic chain usually do not pose any threat, and I use all different sized plastic chain with all birds. Some have had problems with a bird getting their toes or legs stuck into the openings.

12 hours and increase if you feel needed.

After your seeds have sprouted, rinse them again. Shake the water out best you can. The Inner Container makes this job very easy to do. Leave them in their Inner Container and this time place it raised in the Outer Container so it is elevated from the bottom. If you did it correctly, the bottoms will not touch and the lid will not snap into place. Sit your sprouts in a well ventilated area and let them dry for another 12 hours or so to drain completely. Storing wet sprouts will spoil them. They do not need to be completely dry. I learned that moist versus wet was the best way for me to judge.

Now they are ready to feed to your birds! Any left over sprouts may be refrigerated for several days.

This is so simple to do that when you realize how many sprouts your birds can consume in one day, I recommend sprouting daily. Fresh is always best and we all know our birds deserve the best! My birds tend to drive that point home on a daily basis, if not more often. Your EasySprout comes complete with directions and even some recipes for humans. They look delicious, but one contains chocolate. I guess I'll just let my cockatoo eat that recipe page!



Again, you need to watch your bird with each item to see what they do with it.

I think the best bells to use with your birds are the pipe bells or tube bells. I call them Parrot-Proof bells. If you have a large one, and your bird's head can fit into it, you must acknowledge the possibility of your bird getting its head stuck in it. Definitely be careful of bells with clappers. If your bird is strong enough to remove a clapper, it can pose a threat to big birds that can swallow the clapper. A small bird wouldn't be strong enough to remove it so it wouldn't be a problem.

When you are checking toys for your bird, I would recommend that you look particularly at the following parts: balls with holes/slits, plastic or metal rings, plastic or metal chain, lengths of rope, string or chain and bells. Look at all of the components of a toy and use your experience with your bird and how he plays with toys dictate whether or not it will be safe for him.



### Angels Wanted!!

Have these stories got your toymaking talons twitching? Do you want to help make a difference in somebirdie's life? Come join our ranks! We have Angels from all different backgrounds and walks of life, and there's always room for another generous heart.

Click here for: [Angel Application](#)



Click to join Parrot Toy Angels Yahoo! Group:



Not a toy maker? Come join our Facebook Group:

## 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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