



Angel Wings

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

May 2011
Volume 6, Issue V

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Angel Toys For Angels

May's Featured Toys



[Angel Roll](#)

Small - Medium Birds



[Hands & Bells](#)

Small - Medium Birds



[Wee Snuggli](#)

Small 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](#) ♥

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥

Spring Auction

June 9 'til June 19, 2011

There's still time to get your donations in!!

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!!

Here's just a few of the goodies we'll have up for bid.....updated often!

Recycling, Angel Style
Super Saucer Shredder
By Wyspur Kallis



Supplies you will need:
1 large brown paper bag
2 non waxed paper plates
Bowl full of natural raffia
Scissors & Hole Punch



Using the hole punch, punch holes around both plates.

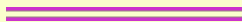


Using scissors, cut long thin strips from the paper bag.



Invert the paper plates. Using the thin paper strips, start wrapping the strips through the paper plates. Tie a knot in the strings and continue wrapping.

Auction Preview



PTA COUPON

10% off anything
on the site!

Use Coupon Code
pta511

Expires 5/31/11



Leave enough of the plate open to stuff the natural raffia inside. Weave the rest of the paper strips through to close the plate.



Now that you've made this awesome shredder, introduce it to your birds and watch the fun begin!



Featured Fid ~ Crimson Bellied Conure

By Delta Holder



Kaylee, Crimson Bellied Conure who owns Delta H.

Crimson Belly conures are roughly 9 - 10 inches in length and weigh in at 85 - 94 grams. They are an average sized member of the pyrrhura family of conures.

Their coloring consists of mainly green with tips of their feathers and underside of the bottom part of the bottom being a dark shade of beautiful blue. They have light green cheeks with black and the blue shading on the head. They have a greenish/grayish neck ring and bright red belly area. As adults they look like they have a harness on. When they are babies they are mainly green with specs of red and the more they mature the more the red comes in. I found that Kaylee, my crimson belly, had her full belly of red by the time she was a year old, but some may take longer to develop. They have a dark black beak with black feet and dark eyes with the famous conure white eye ring. They truly are a stunning bird and the beauty cannot be justified with a camera lens. They are definitely a bird that must be seen to be appreciated.

These birds originate from the Amazon River basin in Northern Brazil and Northeastern Bolivia. They feed on small fruits, figs and flowers and my research indicates that the species in the wild is diminishing due to loss of habitat. They can lay 4 to 6 eggs and possibly breed from August to November and again from April to June.

They are a playful and very intelligent bird and when talking are not very loud at all. I find that Kaylee tends to almost whisper and if she does talk more clearly, it is a higher pitched voice. She can be loud and does a flock call often. She is not as loud as some of her larger conure cousins, but not as quiet as the other smaller cousins. I find she is a good mix and very easy on the ears. Kaylee is extremely active and requires lots of things to keep her active and occupied. She enjoys toys of all kinds, but I have had Kaylee from a baby so she was exposed to a variety of items. This should be done with any other crimson belly as well. I find she is probably one of the most energetic of the conures that I've experienced yet. She loves to chew, so a variety of toy parts such as wood, shreddables, beads and such should be available to them. Crimson bellies should also have a variety of perches, swings and activity areas to play on. Kaylee loves to hang upside down off my curtains and play with a set of chimes in my window. No matter what toy I make for her, these chimes are her favorite item.

I would recommend a cage size to be no less than 24 x 22 inches in measurement and preferably bigger if funds allow. They are very active and like to be in the center of all that is going on.

As with any parrot, a good diet is very important. Kaylee enjoys anything that I give her. She will try anything and often goes back more than once for something. They make good eaters if exposed to many things from a baby. They love water and will bathe when the mood arises, sometimes once a day, sometimes twice a day. A dish available to them all the time would be sufficient. Kaylee does not like a spray bottle but others may enjoy it.

There really is not a lot of information regarding the crimson belly. Much of what I am passing along is from what I have learned from Kaylee. She can be very cuddly, which I am assuming a bird given lots of love and attention can also be capable of. I do find she is shy with strangers and is very specific about who she will go to.



Crimson Bellied Conures
Photo Courtesy of Jerrie Galliant

Editor's Note: For more information or to hear their call you can follow this link:
www.parrots.org/index.php/encyclopedia/profile/crimson_bellied_conure



The Harvesting and Handling
of Nuts
By Lori M. Nelsen

Sign Language, Communication and
Intelligence
By Jan Lewis

Walnuts are harvested as they fall from the tree. For light-colored kernels, hulling is done right away. With darker kernels or black walnuts, the hulls remain and are allowed to partially decompose. After hulling, they are washed thoroughly and dried for two to three weeks. After the drying, they are stored in a dry, cool place.

Cracking walnuts, to get to the kernels, can be made easier by soaking them in water for 1 to 2 hours, draining, and then storing in a closed container for 10 - 12 hours. The kernel absorbs enough moisture to become tough for cracking, but the kernel will be loose in the shell.

Pecans are harvested very much like walnuts, as they fall from the tree. They normally fall from September through November. Pecans should have a uniform color. Shells (light tan) that are filled out, from the bud end to the tip, are indication of a good nut. Pecans that are mature and filled out make a distinctive solid sound when rattled. Hollow sounding pecans are not likely to be filled out.

When a crop is ready, the outside shell (or hull) of the nuts often start to split on the tree; a sign that picking can commence. Tree-shaking devices can aid in getting the nuts to the ground. In some cases, the nuts fall to the ground unprompted.

Time is of the essence once the nuts are picked. They must be hulled promptly for proper dehydration. If the outer shell is left on too long, the quality of the nut will decline. The edible, inside part of the nut (the kernel) can become moldy and rancid if exposed to too much moisture.

First-grade kernels are processed for sale at retail. Depending on the type of nut and its intended use, some batches are roasted (dry or wet), while others are kept raw.

Recently I've had some health problems that resulted in my being away from my birds. Since I've returned home, I have been spending more time with them and have noticed some changes with my Moluccan cockatoo.

He has always been a good boy, but when I had to move back home with my family for a while, he quickly became trained to yell for attention. Whenever someone came to the door or someone was on the phone, he would start screaming, so I had to stay with him to keep him quiet. I knew at the time that we were reinforcing a bad behavior, but my parents just wanted him quiet. That was several years ago, but he still reverts to that behavior when someone comes to the door. Fortunately, he has stopped yelling when I'm on the phone.

When I was in the hospital, I was concerned that Tory, my Moluccan cockatoo, would think that I deserted him, so when I came home I expected him to be mad and display his displeasure with me. I was met with everyone screaming for my attention which continued every time they heard a sound or movement in the house. Tory is the flock leader of my avian family, so when he yells, everyone thinks they are supposed to join in.

I recently started using hand signals or my own sign language to help re-train him to control his screaming. Talking to him even quietly seemed to keep him in excited mode with more vocalizing. Actually, it has been less than a week since I've been using only signs to tell him to be quiet. Yesterday, each time he started to get too loud with his vocalizations I simply put my hand up in the "Shhhh" sign and he immediately got quiet. I was so excited because not only did Tory become quiet but the other birds soon got the idea that they were to be quiet too.

Tory is very jealous and whenever I give the other birds some attention he gets loud until I give him attention. I have been using the "Shh" hand signal and if he doesn't get quiet I simply close the bedroom door and completely ignore him until he does get quiet. I will still talk to the other birds telling them how good they are for being quiet or doing as I ask. As soon as Tory becomes quiet for a few minutes I praise him and get him out for a little love with mom, or give him a special treat that the other birds don't get. Now, most of the time all I have to do is give him the "Shh" hand signal and he quiets

In the case of almonds, the kernels must be pasteurized (by steam or propylene oxide) per a 2007 U.S. Department of Agriculture regulation. Minimizing the potential for aflatoxins in almonds is an industry wide effort that starts in the orchard by managing the navel orangeworm, then removing mummy nuts and having a prompt early harvest. Research has proven that conditions at in-hull almond storage stockpiles, which have a total moisture content of more than 9% moisture, can lead to problems of Aspergillus fungus and aflatoxins. These stockpiles of in-hull almonds, near orchards, have become a common occurrence as a result of larger crop sizes and the need to extend the processing season.



down.

I am still amazed as to how quickly he learned the hand signal. Positive reinforcement is a wonderful tool when teaching birds, children and almost any living creature with the ability to learn. It takes time, patience and consistency in order to progress. If you haven't taken Dr. Susan Friedman's Living & Learning with Parrots (LLP) course, you might want to check it out. Here's the link: www.behaviorworks.org/html/comp_professional_overview.html. It is an excellent course to help you learn to understand your bird better and how to teach your bird through positive reinforcement. I took LLP with Dr. Friedman many years ago and still use that knowledge daily with my birds. This course can be a life changer for you and your birds, and is so much fun that I would love to take a refresher course.

Editor's Note: Dr. Susan Friedman is a psychology professor at Utah State University who has pioneered the application of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to captive and companion animals.



Yet Another Cautionary Tale

By Jenny Drummey

Editor's Note: This article is being reprinted with permission from its author Jenny Drummey who is an adoption coordinator and teacher for the [Phoenix Landing Foundation](http://www.phoenixlandingfoundation.org). She is the author of two books, *Project Parrot: A Behavior Guidebook for You and Your Bird*, and *Biting Matters: Living Bite-free with Your Parrot*. Visit www.projectparrot.com to learn more about Jenny and her work.

Lories are brilliantly colored, playful, high-energy birds: easy to love, but difficult to clean up after. I've fostered lories in the past, but never adopted one. Their nectar-heavy diet results in frequent, sticky droppings. Too much work for me.

But, on the rare occasion that we have one relinquished to us, I am always curious about the bird, and wish I had enough time to care for one properly. The bird recently relinquished to Phoenix Landing sounded wonderful: friendly, and he'd even had an exam with an avian vet a few weeks before. He was being given up to Phoenix Landing for the same reason that 80 percent of the birds that come to us share: The caretaker no longer had the time to care for him. Remembering that Debbie, our MD adoption coordinator, had mentioned a family looking for a lory, I sent the information on, and very soon afterward, we had found a foster family.

We arranged for the lory to be dropped off at a recent event held on a Saturday, and I met the relinquisher outside. She was obviously distressed, sad to be giving up her companion of almost 10 years, but she knew it was for the best. She brought out bags of supplies for him, including lots of toys. He also had a powdered lory nectar diet, and she emphasized that he only consumed in the liquid form, it couldn't be served in

powder. She also said that he had increased his regurgitation lately, and that it was sexual behavior, and that the problem had gotten worse the less time she was able to spend with him.

I looked at the incredible, gorgeous creature in the sunlight. He looked to be the picture of health. I envied Jane and Pete, his new foster family, getting to share their life with something so splendid.

He regurgitated when I looked at him. He pretty much regurgitated any time someone came up to the cage. I guess he just likes everyone, I thought.

Jane took the bird home, and I thought we'd had yet another happy landing. I was certain they would adopt the lory, and I hoped she'd send out pictures soon. I really wanted to get a chance to paint a picture of that bird.

The next morning, Debbie called with some bad news: The lory was being rushed to Pender Exotics in Fairfax. He hadn't eaten or passed food since Jane had picked him up, and he was constantly vomiting. I was confused: the relinquisher had told me the behavior was sexual, so that's how I'd seen it. The foster family had not had the bird for even a day. But could we all be overreacting? Was this bird just stressed? He had looked so healthy.

The more Debbie and I talked about the bird's behavior, the more alarming it sounded.

Once the bird made it to Pender, I started communicating with the vet on-call, Dr. McDonald. She suggested we start with an X-ray, to see if anything was obviously blocking his digestive tract and preventing food from getting through. The results of the X-ray were inconclusive: It appeared as though there was some strange gas patterns visible in his digestive tract, but that was all.

The next test to run was a barium series.

A barium series is a set of X-rays taken of a bird's digestive system as a dye passes through it. Using this test, vets can see how much and how quickly food passes through the bird, and if there are any obstructions. The test takes hours to run, but it was crucial to find an obstruction (if one existed) before proceeding with medication to help food pass more quickly through the bird.

Late Sunday afternoon, Dr. McDonald called with the results: the lory was passing some, but not all, of the barium. She suspected a probable hernia and possible ulcerations in the stomach, as the syringe used to give the lory the barium had some blood on it after she administered the medicine. However, they wanted to keep the lory overnight and have Dr. Davis pick up care in the morning.

The next day, Dr. Davis called, and, after reviewing the results of the barium test and the X-ray, and considering the fact that the bird was still vomiting, she recommended exploratory surgery.

This was a really hard call to make. The surgery would be over \$1,000, and both Debbie and I agreed that we needed more information and another opinion before we could pursue this option. Jane kindly offered to help do whatever it took to get the little bird well, as she'd already come to care for him, and though the financial investment was a

concern, it wasn't my biggest one.

Surgery was risky, introducing additional stress on an already compromised animal, raising the chance of infection, and then there was that word "exploratory." The surgery was no guarantee the vets would be able to help the bird get better. Frankly, it didn't sound to me like he would make it through the procedure.

We decided to move him to a vet closer to Jane, and, in the process, get a second opinion. We needed a few days to arrange a space at the next vet hospital. Dr. Davis said that they could keep him stable for a day or two.

We made arrangements to get him moved, and hoped for the best.

Phone calls in the middle of the night are never good, and, sadly, Pender Exotics called to tell me the lory died in his sleep at 3:30 on Tuesday morning. Phoenix Landing had not had this bird in legal custody for three full days yet.

I talked to Dr. Davis early Tuesday, and she said he was an incredibly sweet and well socialized bird who they were very sorry to lose.

But now, we had to make a choice, should we do a necropsy? We had already spent \$900 on care for this bird. But we had to know why the lory died, to make sure it was nothing contagious, even though Jane had practiced good quarantine in her home. It was vital for us to learn what had claimed this beautiful bird's life.

Dr. Davis performed the procedure Tuesday afternoon, and then she called me with the results.

A parrot's digestive tract starts with the mouth, goes into the crop, then into the stomach, which has two parts, the glandular proventriculus, and the muscular ventriculus (also called the gizzard). A massive wad of thread or material filled the bird's proventriculus entirely, and partially filled the ventriculus as well, causing a hernia as the GI tract was squeezed and forced into an unnatural position. His kidneys, brown in a healthy bird, were white and had an excess of uric acid crystals. Dr. Davis said there was nothing that could have been done to save this bird.

Dr. Davis said she has seen this happen to other birds too, those that like to pick on thread or fabric. If the bird ingests tiny pieces, a mass can form that plugs the bird's stomach. Unfortunately, he would not have survived any surgery, and the condition had been around for a while.

This experience has been heartbreaking, but it's taught me many important lessons.

Don't be so quick to accept that a description of a condition is the only possible explanation. What had been identified as sexual regurgitation was clearly not that to Jane. She saw a bird who is vomiting, and she reacted exactly the right way.

It has also taught me to be more vigilant about fabric, thread and material in general. Jane looked through the bird's toys, and did see an obvious culprit, a small dishtowel hanging in the cage like a toy.

Know your bird. Watch what he plays with, and how he plays. If toys are missing pieces, find the pieces. If you don't find the pieces, throw the toy away, no matter how much it cost you, or how much he likes it. My guess is that the washcloth was the bird's favorite toy.

Know the difference between regurgitation related to sexual behavior and vomiting. Foster parent Pete who helped transport the lory to the vet, reported that the bird was trying desperately to eat, but vomited everything. If the bird isn't ingesting any food and isn't producing any droppings, the problem is serious. We have no way of knowing how long this bird had been swallowing the bits of fabric that filled his stomach and eventually killed him, but it was probably months.

Finally, I am always amazed when I think of all of the "behind the scenes" work at Phoenix Landing. It takes dedicated volunteers, lots of time, and lots of money to help parrots.



Mexican Cornbread
By Toni Fortin

- 1-1/2 cups cooked barley
- 4 cups yellow stone ground corn meal
- 4 cups graham flour (I used Hodgson Mill)
- 4 Tbsp. baking powder (non aluminum)
- 4 Tbsp. ground flax seed
- 2 Tbsp. crushed red pepper
- 16 oz. bag of frozen corn
- 5 large organic carrots, washed and shredded
- 3 medium zucchini, washed and shredded
- 4 cups Kale, washed and chopped
- 6 eggs
- 25 oz. natural applesauce
- 1-1/2 cups plain yogurt
- 16 oz. of homemade salsa (or store bought)
- Sesame seeds to sprinkle

Mix all dry ingredients together. Add everything else to dry ingredients. Spray large baking sheets 12" wide X 16 -3/4" long that have sides with

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, Why does Daddy get so mad when I try to pick off those little spots on his arm?
Signed, Spot Chaser

Dear Spot Chaser, Those spots on your Daddy's arm aren't seeds or grains, they are moles. Moles are attached to your Dad's arm. A lot of adults have moles. When you pick on them, it's painful and can cause bleeding. If you are really into spots, have your Dad get you some dice or dominoes to put on your toys. Hopefully this will take care of your fetish with the spots on your Dad's arm. It helped me.



Rikki, Why does Mommy give me strange looks when I dip my pellets in my water? Doesn't she know they taste better?
Signed, Soggy Pellet Lover

Dear Soggy Pellet Lover, Dipped pellets are yummy. Human moms don't know this. She knows you are making a big old mess

cooking spray. I bake both pans at the same time. When time is half way, rotate pans. Bake in 350 degree oven for 40 to 45 minutes.

Yields: 32 bars per pan. I cut the bars in half for the birds.

NOTE: The corn, carrots, zucchini, and kale were all put in the food processor.



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♥ ♥ ♥

Angel Tips

Easy Deviled Eggs

Put cooked egg yolks in a zip lock bag. Seal, mash until they are all broken up. Add remainder of ingredients. Reseal. Keep mashing it up, mixing thoroughly. Cut the tip of the baggie, squeeze mixture into eggs. Just throw bag away when done.

Getting rid of ants

Put small piles of cornmeal where you see ants. They eat it, take it "home" and can't digest it so it kills them. It may take a week or so, especially if it rains, but it works and you don't have to worry about pets or small children being harmed!

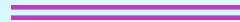
♥ ♥ ♥

and while she's at work all day your water is full of bacteria. You can get sick drinking and eating this. This is why you are getting those looks. Tell Mom to get you some water bottles that you can use during the week while she's working. When she's home in the evenings and on the weekends, she can let you have your water bowl and monitor when to pull it from your cage.

♥ ♥

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

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

♥ ♥ ♥

Toy Safety: Household Items
By Kim Perez

Most of us use household items to entertain our birds. Some of them are safe and some are not. I hand junk mail

Sweaters for Feathers
By Angel Savannah

Recently, a customer came into the vet clinic with her little Chihuahua for a checkup. As I removed his little sweater, it dawned on me

and phone books to my birds when they are playing on the floor to keep them happy and away from my furniture!

Cardboard is a favorite shredding material for birds, but we have already learned that cardboard is made with a chemical process that the manufacturers told me is not safe for our birds. For people who do not heed this chemical warning and still give cardboard to their birds, paper towel tubes are put together with a safe glue. Toilet paper tubes are essentially safe in their glue too, however it is not safe to use something that has the ability to absorb the bacteria which comes from the nature of what toilet paper is used for with our birds.

Any product made for use in direct contact with food is safe, but you do not want to give anything with a wax coating to your birds. So you will need to check paper plates and cups for coatings. Snow Cone cups and paper condiment cups are excellent shredders for birds, as are napkins and paper towels. Straight wooden clothespins, plastic curlers, chopsticks, wooden spoons, plastic baby cups, spoons, and toys are also great fun for your birds.

Many of the household items I give to my birds are items I buy new and would highly recommend that you also buy new. So many of these items are available at your local dollar stores that it doesn't make sense to give something used to your bird.

Of course, you can turn any interesting household item into an even more interesting toy by putting it in a paper bag and making a foraging toy out of it. I like to put plastic chain in bags for the birds to play with. When we are playing with the blue and golds, we put about 10' of 3/4" plastic chain into small plastic bags, and they love to toss them around. They make a big game out of it and see how many times Daddy might go chase the chain bag around the living room.

I do not like giving any clothing to the

that this little guy was about the same body size as an African Grey we have at home with a vengeance for self-mutilation. I stopped at a local pet store on the way home and bought one for Gizmo, the Grey. It took a little modification to tailor it to Gizzy, but it did fit him and the results have been surprisingly good. This Grey, who has had to wear a bubble collar since his owners gave up on him and gave him to us, has now been spending his time preening the dog sweater (and yes, we have gone through one a month, so they do not last forever) and not picking on his chest. One half of his chest has pretty new feathers all over it and the other half is baby-bottom-smooth. He had eaten all of the skin off of that side of his body, so it is not surprising that he will probably never be able to have a feather there again. There appear to be no feather follicles present.

Since this has been working so well for Gizmo, I have been looking into other products which might offer the same protection and help for him and birds like him. Avian Fashions, who makes the Flight Suits and birdy diapers people love on their birds, are now making something called Feather Protectors. We just got some in to try them on Gizmo the next time we change his sweater. They look interesting and like they will be much easier to get on the birds. There is a Velcro closure over the back and we won't have to try to lift up Gizzy's wings to get them into the sweater again.

Avian Fashions also makes a protector for more severe pluckers, but it looks like it would make the bird pretty warm. I have not seen one in person.

There are other types of sweaters on the market for birds and my family has looked at and/or bought several different ones over the years to donate to rescues or to give to friends with plucking birds.

One that we bought is called the [Sock Buddy](#). This is a protective sweater made from a fuzzy sock. Along with getting two of them in the mail for \$30, you also get the pattern to make your own. The proceeds from this purchase go to rescue birds, so the cause is definitely a worthy one. This is one we bought for a friend who had a plucking bird. It worked very well, and with the instructions to make more, the cost was minimal.

birds to play with because the stitching can cause problems. Also we have learned that any non-flammable fabric is really bad for the birds. Knowing that the loops in fabric could pose problems, I do let my birds play (supervised) with carpet remnants which are made of carpet that is deemed safe for babies to be on. I have an African Grey who is totally enthralled playing with carpeting. She acts like she is grooming her nails - like a cat with a scratching post.

Baby toys, plastic bottle caps and plastic food containers are really a great source of fun for our birds. If you are using used ones, please clean them first. If they are dishwasher safe, that is a great option. Otherwise, I like to use a bleach and water solution or Shaklee's Basic H cleaner with water.



I have found several other products. One is Parrot Wrapz, whose site has no prices listed and the shopping cart they tell you to visit for size and prices is not there! There are several bird sweaters on Chirp n Squawk's site which appear to be made by them. There are a lot of small web sites out there with homemade sweaters and feather protectors, and they are all around \$30-\$40. As far as price goes, the new Feather Protector line by Avian Fashions is probably the least expensive. As far as coverage goes, the sock buddy covers the most area of the bird.



The Wild Bird Trade

By George Goulding

The wild bird trade in parrots and related species threatens the survival of these birds in the wild perhaps as much or more than any other activity of man. Only loss of habitat may be more damaging. Although some of the commercial wild bird trade is legal, it is still harmful, but more damaging to the species is the illegal wild bird trade. In the last two issues of this newsletter we published a two part series focusing on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 (United States). In that series we focused on global legislation to protect wild parrots and related species along with specific United States legislation and enforcement of the laws by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. In this issue we will focus on some of the current issues involving the illegal wild bird trade which exists on a global scale. In the next segment we will focus on how various organizations are helping to end this cruel and disastrous trade.

The first question we might ask is what drives the wild bird trade? It is clearly driven by profit which in turn is driven by demand. These birds have long been a favorite domestic "pet" because of their beauty, personalities, ability to mimic the human voice and other sounds, and intelligence. The demand causes their retail value to be high enough to make the trade lucrative. Prices for wild parrots can range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. While the wild bird trade has been effectively controlled in the United States and the European Union countries, as well as most other developed nations, it remains a critical and difficult to control issue in some of the developing nations, especially those in Africa, Central and South America, and Asia.

As we reported in parts one and two of this series, today all but a few of the roughly 372 species making up the order Psittaciformes (Parrots and related species) are categorized by IUCN as being seriously endangered in the wild, and it is not unreasonable to assume that many of these birds will become extinct within the next few generations without serious intervention. According to the *Parrot Status Survey and Conservation*

Action Plan 2000-2004 published by IUCN, 36 of the 95 species they considered at that time to be in danger of extinction were threatened as a direct result of the wild bird trade. These numbers have changed over the years, but they clearly show the impact of trade on the species survival. Whatever the numbers are currently, the facts remain that the wild parrot trade (legal and illegal) still exists, that it is extremely harmful to the birds, that it threatens the survival of many, and that it is difficult to completely eliminate despite the passage of legislation and the tireless efforts of conservation groups.

Over the past year alone there have been several incidents in the news involving the wild bird trade, especially in Africa, Asia, Central America, and South America, but the most glaring (and saddest) are reports coming out of Africa during the past year involving African Grey Parrots. A CNN article dated January 12, 2011 reported that 130 African Greys were seized in Uganda at its border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A woman was smuggling the valuable birds from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Uganda where they were to be shipped ultimately to lucrative European and Asian markets where the going price is between \$300 - \$700. What makes this incident so glaring is that the birds had been fed alcohol-laced sugarcane to make them drowsy for the journey.

In one of the largest recent seizures in Africa last year, more than 500 African Greys were confiscated by authorities at the Kavumu airport in DRC. These birds were bound for the Singapore black market. 29 of the birds died shortly after arriving at a rescue center in Lwiro. It is reported that many of the birds had been tied to one another by one wing and had had no food or water for some period of time. Efforts to rehabilitate these birds and release them were underway aided by efforts from World Parrot Trust and other organizations, but, astonishingly, a group of armed men raided the sanctuary and took all of the surviving birds. It appeared that these men were actually DRC government agents seizing the birds with intent to return them to the original smugglers.

The saddest incident of all comes out of Africa as well. Over 700 African Greys were shipped on a flight from the DRC to Durbin, South Africa. Upon arrival, nearly all of these birds were found to have died during the flight. The cause of the deaths could not be determined as other animals on board the same flight survived. The lax government controls in DRC allowed this shipment to take place, but the importation into South Africa was legal. It is unfathomable to think that a developed nation like South Africa has not yet put an end to the wild bird trade.

An article in the February 2011 *PsittaScene* magazine (published by World Parrot Trust) reported another very large seizure took place in Cameroon involving another 700 Greys. In December of last year the Cameroon government seized these birds which were destined for shipment to Nigeria. The birds were in bad condition and 48 died. Their captors had placed all 700 in 11 small crates with no food or water. The same article noted that an official from the World Wildlife Fund described the illegal parrot trade in Africa as profitable as the illegal trade in ivory.

The United States is not immune to the illegal parrot trade, but it has declined dramatically thanks to the Endangered Species Act and the Wild Bird Conservation Act and enforcement efforts by USFWS. Most of the birds smuggled into the U.S. come from Mexico where a very large domestic and international illegal trade still flourishes. The Spring 2009 issue of *Defenders of Wildlife Magazine* reported that more than 65,000 parrots are illegally poached in Mexico every year, mostly for the domestic market, but some are exported as well. During the 1980's as many as 150,000 parrots each year were shipped illegally across the border into the United States. Today, that number has been reduced to an estimated 10,000. A Reuters news article dated March 29, 2011 reported the seizure of 762 illegally trafficked parrots and other birds by Mexican officials during 3 days of raids throughout that country. Many of these would have been sold to the domestic black market, but some would have ended up smuggled into the United

States or other countries. This illegal trafficking has so seriously impacted wild parrot populations in Mexico that 80% of the parrot species smuggled out of Mexico are now endangered there.

Other Central and South American countries are also struggling to end the wild bird trade. To illustrate the frustration of both governments and NGO's the following was reported by Bird Life International in a 2007 news article appearing on their web site: "In 2004, a national monitoring study in Nicaragua found parrot numbers had decreased by 69% compared to previous monitoring exercises in 1999. The decline was put down to habitat loss and exportation for trade. As a result of the study, CITES, the convention governing international trade in species, recommended a ban on all parrot exportations in Nicaragua." This is typical of the challenges facing many countries in the developing world.

World Parrot Trust reported a very sad occurrence from Brazil in October last year. Around 300 Blue-fronted and Yellow-faced Amazon chicks were seized from wildlife traffickers. Apparently harvested from nests in the wild, some of the chicks were less than 15 days old. The Brazilian organization SOS FAUNA took on the task of helping the chicks, and after receiving emergency first aid from university students, they were sent to a government rescue center to recover. Unfortunately, only 200 chicks survived, but the survivors will be eventually released back to the wild.

The Belize (Central America) newspaper *Amandala* reported in June of last year that the Scarlet Macaw was being threatened with extinction in Belize's Chiquibul Forest area which is one of the birds' last remaining havens there. The article reported that smugglers are taking the birds and transporting them to Guatemala where they sell at prices around \$1,000 in the local markets. Much of the illegal harvesting in this area has involved chicks.

According to Bird Life International, a recent study of pet markets in Santa Cruz, Bolivia found that over 22,000 wild caught birds involving 31 parrot species, were illegally traded every year. This occurs despite the fact that Bolivia has adopted CITES and does have laws prohibiting such trade. This level of trade is comparable in other Bolivian cities.

There is no easy solution to ending the wild bird trade. As long as it remains profitable and governments remain unwilling or unable to control it, wild parrots will continue to be exploited and, for many species, be brought closer to extinction. It is clear that whether the wild bird trade is legal or illegal, the consequences for these birds are tragic. The good news is that there are many fine organizations devoting tremendous resources to ending the trade and restoring populations of parrots in the wild. As individuals who have a keen appreciation of these marvelous birds, we should support these organizations, and we should encourage those who profit from the pet bird trade (pet bird supply manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers, as well as breeders) to support the efforts of these groups.

Sources:
World Parrot Trust
World Wildlife Fund
IUCN
Birdlife International
Defenders of Wildlife
Species Survival Network



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