



Angel Wings

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

May 2012
Volume 7, Issue V

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Help Us



Happy
Mother's
Day!

Whether you have skin kids, fur kids or feathered kids,
Happy Mother's Day from our nest to yours!

Angel Toys For Angels

May's Featured Toys



[Frogs & Friends](#)
Large Birds



[Perch Pacifier - 3" or 4"](#)
Small to Large Birds



[Come Back Around](#)
Medium to Large Birds

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

Calling All Writers!!

Have you ever wanted to see your Bird's name in "lights"?...Do you have a story to tell about how you and your bird met?

Over the years you have read our stories, seen our photos, looked at our toys and how we make them, hopefully shared some of our recipes with your feathered children. You have gotten to know us, well; we'd like to get to know you too.

Do you have a story to share?? Do you have a super easy toy you'd like to share instructions for? A recycled toy idea? How about your birdie's favorite recipe? A cute story? A sad story? We'd love to run it in an upcoming edition of Angel Wings. Please submit it to: editor@parrottoyangels.org.. (By submitting your article(s) you agree to allow the Angel Wings Committee to make any editorial changes deemed necessary.)



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



ON THE SITE:

♥ [New Items](#) ♥

ANNOUNCING

We're gearing up for our
2012 Spring Auction.
We appreciate any and all donations.
Help us make this the best auction yet! All donations are tax deductible.
Contact us at:
donations@parrottoyangels.org
if you'd like to donate.

From the Angel's Toy Chest
By Wyspur Kallis

This is the first article in a new Angel Wings feature. Each month we will highlight a different toy offered for sale on the Parrot Toy Angels website.



Stiks-N-Balls is a chew toy for small birds. This toy measures approximately 7-1/4" long and 4-1/4" wide strung on stainless steel wire with 42 thin wood popsicle sticks. Each row of wood popsicle sticks has six colorful popsicle sticks divided by small colorful wood beads. A small plastic pacifier is added to the bottom for your bird's enjoyment. This small toy is suitable for parakeets, lovebirds, conures, cockatiels and other small birds similar in size. Nickel plated hardware is used on this toy and all wood

Auction Preview



pieces are colored with food grade dye. Stiks-N-Blocks is available for sale at www.parrottoyangels.com



Won't You Join Us?

Won't you come join the *new* [Parrot Toy Angels Volunteers](#) Facebook group. The group has been established for our supporters who are not toy makers, and would rather donate funds to help with our projects. Each of our projects are carefully chosen. The project/situation will be announced on this group, along with the types and numbers of birds involved. You can decide then if you would like to donate. A "ChipIn" link will be provided for you to use to easily donate. Or donations can be sent via Paypal to: parrottoyangels@sbcglobal.net. There doesn't have to be an active project for you to donate. Every donation is appreciated whether it is \$1 or \$50. The donations together will help make a difference in a bird's life.

100% of the donations go towards purchasing toys, food, etc. for the birds. There are no paid members of PTA. We have dedicated ourselves to "making a difference, one bird at a time" by providing over 17,000 toys to 100+ organizations/individuals since 2005. If you are a toy maker, you can join our yahoo group to help make toys for those in need at [Parrot Toy Angels](#)

We look forward to seeing you there!



Parrot Cookies
By Toni Fortin

1/2 cup cooked 5 grains (I used wheat berries, quinoa, barley, brown rice and millet)
3/4 cup cooked pumpkin
1 tsp. ground flax seed
1 cup soaked, cooked lentils, drained
1 egg
1 cup whole wheat flour
2 tsp. baking powder
Sesame seeds

Mother Parrot's Advice to her Children

Ganda, Africa Translated by A.K. Nyabongo

This poem is reprinted with permission from the good folks at [The Parrot Society UK](#)

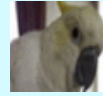
Never get up till the sun gets up,
Or the mists will give you a cold,
And a parrot whose lungs have once been
touched will never live to be old.
Never eat plums that are not quite ripe,
For perhaps they will give you a pain:
And never dispute what the hornbill says,
Or you'll never dispute again.
Never despise the power of speech:
Learn every word as it comes,
For this is the pride of the parrot race,
That it speaks in a thousand tongues.
Never stay up when the sun goes down,
But sleep in your own home bed,
And if you've been good, as a parrot should,
You will dream that your tail is red.

Mix all in a bowl, except sesame seeds. Batter will be thick and soft. Roll out and use cookie cutters. I used the parrot and star cutters. For the logs, pinch off enough dough to make 1" balls. Roll to get the log shape and then roll in the sesame seeds. Use a straw to make a hole in some of the parrot heads and in the stars and string on hemp.

Spray cookie sheet lightly with non-stick spray.

Bake in 300 degree oven.

For the parrots, bake for 18 minutes.
For the logs, bake for 14 minutes.
For the stars, bake for 12 minutes.



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



Featured Fid ~ Lear's Macaw By George Goulding



The two photos show Macaws belonging to the genus *Anodorhynchus*, a family of rare, blue Macaws. Can you identify both of these beautiful birds? Most parrot enthusiasts would have a hard time correctly distinguishing them, although it is obvious that one is a Hyacinth Macaw. But which one? If you guessed that the one on the left is a Hyacinth you would have guessed incorrectly. The one on the left is the Lear's Macaw, the other is the Hyacinth. The Lear's (*Anodorhynchus leari*) is a spectacularly colored parrot, but somewhat paler than its cousin, the Hyacinth. The Lear's is indigo or cobalt blue with gold around the eyes, pale yellow around its beak, and hints of greenish blue throughout. The Lear's was named for the British poet, author and artist, Edward Lear, after he

published his painting of an individual of this species in his book, *Illustrations of the Family of the Psittacidae, or Parrots* (published in 1832). At the time of the painting, however, the bird was incorrectly identified by observers as a Hyacinth. Lear's book is a truly magnificent collection of paintings of parrot species. It has been digitized and can be viewed online at the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections web site.

Interestingly, the Lear's Macaw was only accepted as a valid species in 1978 after the naturalist, Helmut Sick located the wild population. You can read more about Sick's work [here](#).

The *Anodorhynchus* genus to which this bird belongs is a family of blue Macaws consisting of three species, although one is thought to be extinct in the wild. The others are the Hyacinth (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) and the Glaucous (*Anodorhynchus glaucus*) Macaws. The Glaucous Macaw is thought to be extinct. While the Glaucous Macaw is a paler shade of blue, both the Lear's and Hyacinth are brightly colored with striking blue and yellow or gold facial features. The Lear's has larger and more prominent yellow lappets bordering the lower mandible. The Lear's and Glaucous Macaws are somewhat smaller than the Hyacinth (27.5 vs 39 inches long). The only other blue Macaw is the Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) which exists only in captivity and which was reported on in an earlier issue of Angel Wings.

Specifics on coloration can be found at the World parrot Trust web site here [Lear's Macaw](#).

These birds are rarely found as pets and according to World Parrot Trust, are only suited for experienced keepers. There has been limited success breeding the Lear's in captivity. In 2010, two females were hatched and raised at the Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation in Qatar (this facility has also had great success breeding the Spix's Macaw as reported in our earlier article on the Spix's). The Lear's lifespan is thought to be around 60 years which is common for Macaws. They are considered to be critically endangered (Appendix I) on the CITES list. Their range is confined to the Raso da Catarina plateau, NE Bahia, Brazil. As with most similar species the main threats to their survival come from humans -- habitat loss, hunting and the wild bird trade. Total wild population as of 2007, was around 750 according to American Bird Conservancy.

In the wild they may be observed in groups of 8 to 30 birds and sometimes in pairs or smaller groups. Their habitat is primarily dry, arid regions in open and partially open areas with scruffy vegetation and nearby sandstone escarpments where they roost in hollows and crevices.

Although critically endangered, the good news is that thanks to conservation efforts in Brazil and elsewhere, the Lear's Macaw is making progress toward recovery. It is protected by the Brazilian government and its primary breeding area is now part of a preserve. As late as the 1987, there were only 70 of this species surviving in the wild. As noted above, its numbers had grown to 750 by 2007, according to the American Bird Conservancy. The conservation effort is led by the Biodiversitas Foundation which, since 1989, has been coordinating the Lear's Macaw Conservation Program for the preservation of the *Anodorhynchus leari* in the municipality of Canudos, Bahia State, Brazil. This effort is similar to the work being done in the Pantanal of Brazil by Neiva Guedes, who, with support from the University for the Development of the State and Region of the Pantanal, created the Hyacinth Macaw Project in 1990.

These blue Macaws are arguably the most beautiful of all of the parrot species, and it is encouraging to see that with the continued support of conservation groups such as those noted above, as well as the American Bird Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund, the Lear's and the Hyacinth both now have a much better chance of continued survival in the wild.

SOURCES:

[World Parrot Trust](#)

[Avian Web](#)

[The Guardian](#)

[American Bird Conservancy](#)



Parrot Rescues and Sanctuaries --
The Differences
By Leigh Anne Stewart

There are many differences between a parrot rescue and a parrot sanctuary. The parrot rescues generally bring in birds, rehabilitate them and then they are placed up for adoption. The birds are placed in a foster home type of setting so that they get human and flock interaction. They are observed for any health or behavioral issue and are rehabilitated if necessary. Their stay in rescue could be from a few weeks to a few months. Occasionally the birds will be in foster care for a year or more. I find that some people judge birds because of the lack of feathers or baldness.

I remember one case where the person wanted to adopt a Quaker parrot that she saw on the website. This Quaker was fully feathered. The adopter lived 2 hours away from where the bird was being fostered. The bird was transported from point A to the home where she was going to be adopted. When the bird arrived, she had plucked several feathers during her car trip. Because the bird wasn't perfect, the lady changed her mind, said that she wanted a bird with all his feathers intact. I adopted that little Quaker, and love her for her beauty and her cute little personality. This is only one reason why birds sit longer in a parrot rescue.

Parrot Sanctuaries are a different story. Most of the parrots that are brought to parrot sanctuaries are not adoptable for various reasons. The sanctuary keeps every parrot that is brought in for the remainder for the bird's life. They are not adopted out. These

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, I know that Mom is different than me because she has hands and feet. I have wings and claws. Plus she wears clothes. But sometimes I get a little 'fraid of what she wears and you know what happens when a birdie can get scared? Last week, she had on some white things on her feet. I'm all white too and I didn't know what they were. When she opened my cage, I hopped onto the floor and attacked them. Mom got mad because she said it was a sock and I bit her toe. What can I do so she's not mad at me?
Signed, Sad 'Too in OH

Dear Sad 'Too, I hope your Mom is all right and she's NOT mad at you anymore. It was just an accident. Humans wear different clothes every day including shoes and socks. Maybe your Mom can try to figure out which items scare you the most and not wear them around you. She could also give you a treat or toy so you can focus on that while she has your cage open for feeding. Good luck!

sanctuaries are generally set up on several acres. They build huge flight cages where the birds can fly free, and become a member of a flock, just as they would do in the wild. They are monitored daily for any health issues or behavior changes. They are vetted prior to placing them in a flock situation. It takes several volunteers to care for and feed all of these birds on a daily basis. Many times they log how each bird is doing. That way, there is a record. Sanctuaries will take breeder birds, or birds that other parrot rescues say are unadoptable. They have human and parrot interaction daily. Most of the parrots are very happy being in that type of situation. The people that run parrot sanctuaries are caring, educated and are experts about parrots. They have a vet on their staff who examines each parrot that comes to the sanctuary.



Snickers, my adopted Quaker



Rikki, My Parronts used to let me share their breakfast with them. Then they read in a book that I shouldn't eat some of the things they eat or drink some of their drinks. Now when they eat, they keep me locked up in my cage. What's a bird to do?
Signed, Miss Breakfast

Dear Miss Breakfast, Tell your parronts that they are part of your flock, and you like to eat with them. Ask them to fix you a plate of food that is good for you. Then all of you can have your own plate of food and eat together. There are many recipes for healthy birdie bread. There are fruits and vegetables and there is even something called mash that lots of birds like. Every month there's a yummy recipe in the Parrot Toy Angels Newsletter.



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



Training A Bird For Wing Clipping & How To Clip

By Delta Holder

Before I begin, I would like to express that wing clipping is a very controversial subject in the avian world. There are many situations in which owners feel it is required and other situations in which an owner feels it is not necessary. I can talk about these in another segment. Clipping or not clipping is a personal preference and I am not expressing an opinion either pro or con here. This is only an educational article.

Training a bird for wing clipping can have many variations. This can depend on the bird you are trying to train, as well as the training techniques that you prefer. Some people prefer clicker training. Clicker training is the means of using a clicker and treats as a reward for accomplished behavior. I do not use clicker training as I feel snapping my fingers has the same affect. I also do not use treats as I feel that attention and praise are the biggest rewards to a parrot. These techniques are different for everyone and every bird.

The easiest technique is with a new baby bird that has come into your home. Once they are settled and comfortable with their environment and you and want more attention, this

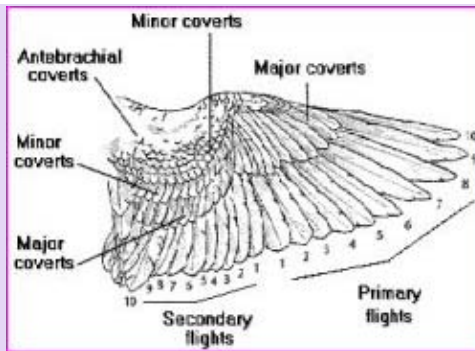
is the time to start. If they enjoy being touched, just slowly slide your fingers under their wings. Do not force the issue, but if they allow, rub and make them feel good while praising and telling them how good they are. If they refuse this, then continue to do it little by little until you can get completely under their wing. The time it takes for your bird to feel comfortable truly depends on the bird and their trust level with you. Be consistent and don't give up. Once you've reached the level where they allow this, then you can move the next step of gradually lifting their wing away from the body. This move is similar to when they raise their wings above their back to stretch. The wings are not spread out at this point. Take the same steps as before and do it when the bird is comfortable with lots of love and praise. Once this is accomplished, you can then work your way towards spreading the wings out as if they were flying. Do not grab the ends of the feathers and try to pull the wing out as this is not a natural form of extension for them. I normally slide my fingers under the shoulder section and slowly and easily pull outwards. Go easy and allow the wing to expand in a natural way. Continue to do this the same as the above until your bird is comfortable with it. Once you have the wing at a complete extension, praise the bird and say things such as "oh look how pretty" or "eagle bird" or other type of phrase that the bird can associate with spread wings. This may need to be done on one side at a time or you can do both at the same time if the bird will sit on you and allow it. You can also give treats if you feel it is necessary, but be careful to not give too many treats that could fatten up your bird and cause health issues.

I would also suggest exposing the scissors you plan to use. Leave them laying somewhere that the bird can see them and get adjusted to them being around. As the training progresses, I would also suggest letting the bird seeing you hold the scissors and touch the scissors. Show the bird that the scissors are not a threat and this may mean rubbing the scissors, talking to the scissors, or whatever is necessary for your bird to know they are okay and will not cause them any harm.

Once you've accomplished the steps up to the wing expansion and the acceptance of the scissors by your parrot, it is then time to show the bird that the scissors and wing being together are also fine. This may take time and the same techniques as before. Once this is all accomplished and you feel you are now ready to do a wing clip, it is now important to know where to cut and how much to cut. Please remember that forcing the issue with a bird who is not comfortable will only cause the training to take steps backward. What you might have gained in trust can quickly be lost by forcing the issue.

These techniques can be used with an older bird, but if the bird comes to you not wanting to be touched, then you need to take the time to gain the trust of your parrot first in accepting you and allowing you to interact with them.

Below is a diagram to explain the wings of a bird and to help better understand the clipping process:



To view larger diagram, click [here](#).

Your goal is to clip the primary flights. This is what impedes your bird the ability to fly. There are some who may clip the secondary flights but I feel you have better control with the primary flights.

I like to clip about 3 - 4 feathers first. This would be 7 to 10 on the diagram. I then let my bird try to fly. If I find they are still gaining height, then I would clip one at a time until I get the desired effect. Remember when clipping your bird that you do not cut too many so that your bird cannot glide to safety. If too many feathers are cut, the bird will fall like a rock and could possibly crack or break their keel bone which could mean death or serious injury.

When clipping, I use the major coverts as a guide for cutting. DO NOT cut into the major coverts, usually below them is where a good cut line would be. Make sure to use sharp scissors as to get an even and clean cut on the feathers. Any feathers that are cut uneven or split could cause discomfort to your bird.



Fly In My Soup?

By Angel Savannah

So there is no fly in my soup, but have you ever had bugs in your bird food? If someone asked me that question, the answer would be "no." I have lived in a home with birds since I was born. There has never been any buggy food in our house. I have seen plenty of them in other people's bird food. Clients are commonly bringing in small bags of food with squirming larvae and what resembles cob webs along with their food mixes.

What to do? Common belief is that if you place the bag in the freezer, the bugs will die. Some believe that you can keep the food in an airtight container and the bugs will suffocate and die. Some think you can dump the food into a container and merely toss out the bugs and they will be gone.

Squishy Toys -- Safe or Sorry?

By Kim Perez

Because birds love such a variety of textures, we all do our best to make sure they have fun and interesting toys to play with. They love soft things that they find easily chewable. What about foam beads, paper parts, and soft plastic?

Paper is, for the most part, safe. White paper, colored paper, construction paper, etc. These products are all safe for chewing. You can use these in fun ways to create more textures for your birds. You can roll up some paper and maybe make fringe at the ends of the rolls with scissors. Condiment cups and snow-cone cups make great toy parts, too. The two paper types to avoid are crepe paper and tissue paper. These two types of paper will clump together when wet and cause a lot of issues. They are not to be used on

In reality, not one of those methods is completely effective.

You can freeze a bag of food and the bugs will appear dead. In as little as 48 hours, you may notice more wiggling in the bag. The freezer doesn't always kill the bugs or their undetectable eggs. The biggest problem is that the larvae excrement can be harmful to our birds. It is highly recommended that you discard any bird food that has been infested with any type of bug or moth.

Since bugs require a very small amount of oxygen, an airtight container most likely will not suffocate them. In fact, many people report bugs and moths in sealed food bags.

If you separate the food from the bugs, you still have food with insect residue all over it. There is also a high probability that there are more eggs on the food which will hatch shortly and cause a re-infestation.

If your bird eats an insect, it is not generally a problem. In fact, insects are a necessary part of many birds' diets. Mealworms are a common choice.

How is it that I have never had any bug-infested foods? I get my seed from my Mom who buys direct from 'the' feed mill that supplies most others in the surrounding states. I believe since we pick it up from the mill where it is packaged, it is fresher. It's amazing how fast it can sprout! The mill claims to clean and re-clean their seed prior to bagging. They bag it quickly, once cleaned, and we get the most recently bagged product. We buy each seed separately and then mix our own mixes. The birds love the fresh food and we add pellets and a lot of fresh foods. Our method seems to bypass the possibility of bugs and has made our birds exceptionally healthy according to our long-time avian vet.

bird toys for anything.

Foam is available in a variety of forms. You will find foam beads, thin foam sheets, really large foam tubes called "noodles," packing peanuts and more. Foam parts are something that each bird owner must make a personal decision on whether to use for your birds. I personally would never use any foam part with any of my birds. Because foam is easy to chew and destroy, any size of pieces can be chewed off of them and if they are ingested, they will not go through the bird. They will sit in the crop and possibly work their way into the proventriculus (entrance to the stomach) or the intestine and cause blockages, ultimately causing a bird to starve to death. Their crop will not be able to empty and they will not be able to process any food taken in. It simply is not worth the risk to me, although I have read of a lot of people using these parts with their birds.

Rubber is another squishy item that people would like to use with their birds. This is another of those personal discretion issues. For all of the reasons listed above for foam parts, I would not use rubber parts with my birds. The biggest difference is that rubber is more difficult to chew off. If ingested, it would be nearly impossible to get out of their system other than through surgical options.

There are many plastic parts which have a rubbery feel to them. Porcupine balls are a prime example. The little tentacles are stretchy and the shape is such that birds are drawn to them. These little tentacles are easily chewed off of the balls and if ingested, would cause all of the same problems discussed with foam parts. The one difference is that with a porcupine ball, the size of the tentacles would be a constant factor. You would know the size of the risked item. Many people give these to their birds. Again, I do not use these with my birds, but it is a personal choice each bird owner must make.

With all squishy parts, bird owners should make informed decisions as to what each feels is safe with that item. Watch your



bird when trying out a new part on a toy and see exactly what it is that your bird does with each part.



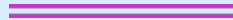
Help Us Help the Birds...

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



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