

EPPA GAZETTE

Newsletter of the Edmonton Pet Parrot Association

March-April 2006

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Above: Ara, the blue and gold macaw, who belongs to Gloria and Alex M. Above Right: Quaker parrots Emma and Storm. They belong to Paula S.



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Meetings:

Last Wednesday of each month, except for December, June, and July.

Club News: Past and Upcoming Events

February's Meeting: The parrot of the month for February was Ara, the blue and gold Macaw, who belongs to Gloria and Alex M. Carol M. also spoke to us about parrot nutrition, and the text of her talk is now available on the website. Carol also brought a beautiful statue of a Black-headed Caique, which was donated by Hagen (<http://www.hagen.com/hari/welcome.html>). We had a raffle for the statue and the winner was Janie R.

Thanks to Carol for her talk and to Gloria and Alex for bringing Ara!

We also had elections for the executive positions (president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary). Louise W., Petra K., and Jessie Z. remain as president, vice-president, and secretary, and Carol M. is our new treasurer. I'd like to welcome Carol to the executive.

March's Meeting: March's meeting will be on Wednesday, March, 29th at the Muttart Conservatory (9626 96A Street). The parrot of the month will be Shylo, an African grey, and we will also be watching a video on parrot behaviour.

New Library Books: We have added a few more books on parrot care to our library. These are:

- Parrots for Dummies* by Nikki Moustaki
- Birds for Dummies* by Dr. Brian L. Speer and Gina Spadafori
- Cockatiels for Dummies* by Diane Grindol
- The Conure Handbook* by Anne C. Watkins
- The African Grey Handbook* by Mattie Sue Athan
- The Second Hand Parrot* by Mattie Sue Athan
- The Parrot Problem Solver* by Barbara Heidenreich

We have several more books, and a complete list is available on the club website. We also have four videos: *Parrots: Look Who's Talking* (VHS), *Teach Your Parrot Beginning Tricks* (DVD), *Preventing and Solving the Most Common Parrot Behavioral Problems* (VHS), and *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* (DVD).

If you would like to borrow any of these books or videotapes, please let Petra know (pkh@telus.net) and she can bring it to the next meeting. If you have any suggestions for a good book or video to add to the library, please let someone on the executive know.

Parrots of the World Show: Our annual "Parrots of the World" show will be on Sunday, May 28th from 11 am until 5 pm. Please let one of the executive know if you would like to bring your parrot.



Above: Lineolated parakeets Pedro and Bella. They belong to Paula S.

Upcoming Events of Interest

*Note that these are not hosted by the EPPA.

Canadian Parrot Symposium: This year's symposium will be held from May 20th to 21st 2006 at the Dunsmuir Lodge in Victoria, B.C. The two-day registration costs \$225 and a one-day registration costs \$110. This includes lunches, and a banquet/auction. More information can be found at <http://www.parrotsymposium.com/> or by writing to: Canadian Parrot Symposium P.O. Box 35065, Hillside Postal Outlet Victoria, BC, V8T 5G2, Canada

Parrot Behavior Seminar: A course in applied behavior analysis entitled "Living and Learning with Parrots: A First Course in Applied Behavior Analysis" is being offered in Calgary at the Executive Royal Inn Hotel and Conference Center on June 10th and 11th, 2006. The course will run from 8:30 am-5:00 pm both days, with a lunch break each day. The cost for the course is \$225, unless you register before March 31st, in which case it will be \$200. More information can be found at <http://www.parrotdisperch.com/> or by phoning Tamara at 888-243-2194.

International Parrot Conference: The VI International Parrot Convention is being held this year in Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife (Canary Islands), Spain from September 27th-30th. This conference is held every four years. For more information, visit <http://www.loroparque.com/>

The Eleven Demandments (submitted by Deb B)

- 1. I am a parrot.** I am king of the avian world. I am king of the **WHOLE** world.
- 2. I demand your devotion:** Your entire devotion. It is impossible to adore me too much. If your attention to me wanders, I will retaliate.
- 3. I demand a castle in which to reside.** It matters not to me where or how you reside.

I must have a castle commensurate with my attitude, not my weight.

- 4. I demand time out of my castle.** Though I care not about your castle, it is also mine and I reserve the right to conduct daily inspections thereof.
- 5. I demand toys, lots of toys:** Toys that I can wreck, toys that I can fling, toys that I can ring and toys to help me swing. They are **MY** toys and I will decide which ones to play with and when. The fact that you have decided to bestow another toy upon me is meaningless to me. I shall ignore it for as long as I choose.
- 6. I demand food. A LOT of food:** Food that I can wreck and food that I can fling. It must be good food and come in wide and plentiful varieties. If you want me to eat it, however, do **NOT** explain that is good for me. This is useless information and will result in said food being permanently shunned, or otherwise flung onto the walls of your castle.
- 7. I demand maid service on a 24/7 basis.** It is my job to create a mess. It is your job to clean it up. Get used to it.
- 8. I have the inalienable right to express myself,** when, where and however I choose. Though my vocal abilities are limited, my mind is not. Mine is the only opinion that matters.
- 9. I demand your constant protection,** from all things real and perceived. If I decide I am in danger you must remove the danger. It is entirely up to you to figure out what that danger may be. I am not obliged to draw you a picture.
- 10. I demand expert medical attention** whether I think so or not. I will not tell you if I am ill. As in all things, you must guess. It would behoove both of us for you to pay close attention.
- 11. Scritchies on demand,** they're my right and your responsibility.

In Memory: Scooter and Mr. Green Jeans

Sadly, members Linda and Vic lost two members of their flock recently. Below are photos and a tribute submitted by Linda in memory of lineolated parakeets Scooter and Mr. Green Jeans.

Mr. Green Jeans was a beautiful green lineolated who just wanted to be part of life.

He suffered from diabetes and finally lost the fight on Jan. 23, 2006 at 5.35 p.m.

He was very much loved and will be never forgotten. He was very special.

Mr. Green Jeans has now gone to Rainbow Bridge where he will be with his Daisy. He will be very much missed.

Angel Wings

Unseen, unknown they hover near
Eager to help to calm our fear
In the joy of friends in a heart that sings
You'll hear the sound of angel wings.
When sadness overwhelms your heart,
and there is no one to take your part,
In the silent isolation brings
You'll hear the sound of Angel Wings.



Last year Scooter lost his best friend, Peanut - a pacific parrotlet. He was so lost that we put him in with his sibling, Milo, and the two of them bonded for a short time.

It hurts to loose a bird, but it heavies the heart even more to loose a bird that has been sick for a long time. Milo is also suffering from diabetes. He was our last diabetic.

Milo will miss Scooter, but Scooter had gone to be with Peanut; his best bud since birth. His human parents will miss him very much. He died in his mom's hand leaving behind a gaping hole in her heart. Scooter, you will be missed.



Left: Mr. Green Jeans. **Top:** Scooter. **Bottom:** Scooter and Peanut.

Parrots in the News

-The following two items were submitted by Linda L.

Flu Fear Makes People Dump Their Parrots in the U.K.

23 unwanted birds were handed in to the National Parrot Sanctuary in Friskney, Lincs (United Kingdom) in one week. Parrot owners are dumping their birds in panic at the threat of bird flu. One cockatoo was left outside with a message reading, "Please look after Barney. We have got a little child and don't want to get bird flu". "People are dropping cages and driving off before we speak to them. A pet parrot in a living room isn't going to get bird flu because it has to be in contact with another bird with flu - and that isn't going to happen to a cage bird kept indoors", - said Neil Jacklin, one of the keepers at the Sanctuary.

Source: Mirror.co.uk

Dating Service...For Parrots?

Rita Ohnhaeuser from Germany has brought together 100 desperate feathered clients knowing they will never split up because parrots mate for life. Her matchmaking service started off with one lost bird desperate for a mate and now she has 150 parrots who are "getting acquainted". But Rita admits that it is not always love at first sight. Sometimes it takes two to five weeks or even three or four months to find Mr. and Mrs. Right.

Source: Channel 4 (www.channel4.com)

Karate Experts Hired to Control Parrots

Keas (*Nestor notabilis*) are a parrot species native to New Zealand and they are infamous for destroying cars at ski resorts. They often pull off wiper blades, peck at the cars and tear off any rubber they can find.

However, a vintage car rally was held at an alpine village on the South Island, and naturally, nobody wanted their valuable vehicles destroyed. So, about 40 members of a local karate club were hired to protect the cars. They did not, however, touch or harm the birds. Their job was to scare the parrots away.

However, a local wildlife manager, Ray Bellringer, said that this would be unlikely to deter the Keas.

"They will fly around and laugh," he said, and added that squirting the birds with water pistols is the best way to deter them from playing on cars.

Source: Associated Press, Feb. 2, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=1574389>

Famous Parrots Face Eviction in California – Telegraph Hill

A flock of wild parrots that took up residence on a hill overlooking the San Francisco Bay, and becoming the subject of a documentary and best-selling book, are searching for a new home after one of their perches was cut down and two others faced a similar fate.

Mark Bittner, who brought attention to the birds that have delighted tourists for years, halted a crew this week before they cut down three cypresses whose owner wants them removed because they pose a hazard.

"I would be a horrible human being if I wasn't helping my friends out, and they are my friends," Bittner, 53, said as he stood outside his cabin near the lone cypress stump and the surviving pair of trees.

(Article by Justin M. Norton, AP writer, from March 2006 issue of Psittascene)

Parrot Saves Man from Fire

A deaf man was saved from a fire at his home when his parrot ran up and down his legs to wake him after he failed to hear a smoke alarm in West Yorkshire.

Peter Taylor, of Mirfield, had taken his hearing aids out and was asleep when the fire broke out, so Merlin, his African Grey parrot, raised the alarm.

Mr. Taylor said he owed his life to the bird who has also learnt to mimic the sound of the smoke alarm siren.

Their home has since been fitted with specialist alarms by the fire service.

"Sometimes when I'm cooking he'll come out with the noise," said Mr. Taylor.

"I have to tell him that there isn't a fire and he'll stop doing it then. But he's got it perfect."

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue said there were a number of alarms that incorporated flashing lights and vibrating pads alongside traditional sirens for people with hearing impairments.

(Source: BBC news, March 24, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bradford/4838364.stm>)

Illegal Trade in Parrots Difficult to Stop in Namibia

Conservationists and bird lovers want to go into cooperation with the Protected Resources Unit in Namibia to clean up the illegal trade in parrots.

While the Grey Headed Parrot is under tremendous pressure at the moment, due to an increased illegal capture and trade, another species which is endemic to Namibia, the

Ruppell's Parrot, went out in thousands some 10 to 12 years ago.

Studies indicate that between 600 and 1 000 Ruppell's birds that are near endemic to Namibia, are illegally smuggled out of Namibia every year.

The survival rate of these birds is low because of the bad conditions and transportation, which sees 70 to 80 percent of the smuggled birds die in transit. Most of the birds who survive end up with collectors in South Africa or Europe.

Ruppell's Parrots only occur in Namibia and Angola and it is estimated that their population is about 10 000. Grey-Headed Parrots are endangered in the wild.

This illegal trade in the birds that are exported to South Africa and other European markets is considered one of the biggest threats to the species' population in the country.

Parrots that are seized from smugglers at border crossings are taken to the Namibia Animal Rehabilitation and Education Centre where they are treated for malnutrition, any injuries they may have sustained, and for any illnesses or parasites they picked up. They are then released back into the wild.

(Sources: allafrika.com, as quoted from The New Era [Windhoek], and PsittaScene, February 2006 issue.)

Good News for Wild Parrots

The European Union has extended the trade ban on wild parrots until May, 2006. The World Parrot Trust estimates that two million wild birds (including parrots and finches) have been spared from being caught and shipped overseas for the European pet market from this temporary ban.

(Source: Gilardi, J. Fly Free:Europe Extends Import Ban. PsittaScene, February 2006.)

Species Profile: The Quaker Parakeet

Appearance: The Quaker, or monk, parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) is a medium bird (about 30 cm tall) that is mainly green with a grey forehead, cheeks, throat and chest. There is some blue on the flight and tail feathers. The beak is horn coloured and the eyes are dark brown. Males and females are identical, and a DNA test is needed to sex a Quaker.

Several colour variants exist in captivity, including blue, cobalt, lutino, albino, pied, grey, cinnamon, and cinnamon blue. Most of these mutations, except blue, are quite rare and all are typically more expensive than the wild-type green Quaker.

In the Wild: Quaker parakeets are native to subtropical and temperate parts of South America and range from Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and southern Brazil south to Patagonia in Argentina. They generally occur in large flocks and prefer open habitats of woodland savannahs, but they will nest in orchards

Wild Quaker parakeets are generalists when it comes to their diet and will eat a variety of seeds, fruits, berries, nuts, buds, insects, and cultivated grains. They seem to prefer to eat grain. They are the only species of parrot that builds large communal nests, although in captivity they will breed in nest boxes with shavings or twigs to use as bedding. In the wild, up to twelve individuals will lay eggs in one large nest. Young Quakers often stay with their parents for a few years before they start their own families. These young birds will assist parents in rearing young by helping build nests and acting as sentinels.

Introduced Quaker Parakeets: Since they are such adaptable birds, Quaker parakeets have colonized many areas outside of their natural range. In the United States, naturalized colonies exist in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware,

Illinois, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Texas, Rhode Island, and Virginia, and possibly in Colorado, Missouri, Ohio, and South Carolina. They also occur in Puerto Rico. Most of these parakeets are likely the descendents of wild-caught birds that were released by their owners or who escaped from aviaries or shipping crates.

In Spain, there are populations of Quaker Parakeets in Barcelona, and sightings of single wild Quakers have been reported in many other Spanish cities. They also live wild in the Canary Islands. Sightings of wild Quakers have also been reported in England, Germany, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Holland, Austria, and Italy. They also live wild in Japan. To date, there is little evidence that wild Quaker populations outside of their natural range have done major damage to native wildlife species, as they tend to occur in urban areas.

Since they are such adaptable parakeets that have formed wild colonies, many states in the USA have banned the keeping of Quaker Parakeets. These include California, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, New Jersey (strictly regulated), Georgia, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

Quakers as Companions: Quakers are very intelligent birds and can be excellent companions if cared for well. They are active and need a large cage, many toys to play with and chew on, and lots of time outside of the cage. Some will even build nests out of things like sticks or straws.

The Quaker is probably the best talking species of the medium-sized parrots. Most of them learn at least a few words and some end up with impressive vocabularies and even learn to use words in their proper context. Mattie Sue Athan, in *Guide to Companion Parrot Behaviour*, notes that Quaker Parrots over one

year old average between 50 and 60 words, but that many individuals are difficult to understand.

However, some individuals may not choose to talk at all, so a Quaker should never be obtained solely because the purchaser wants a talking bird. Quakers can also be noisy at times, so they are not the best pets for noise-sensitive people. Mature birds can also be territorial around their cages.

Quakers can be very friendly parrots, but some individuals can become “one-person birds,” and this is more likely to occur if only one person cares for and handles the bird. Birds that are socialized well while young and are handled by a number of people are more likely to become friendly adults. Quakers are generally very outgoing birds that are not prone to excessive shyness or fearfulness.

Caring for a Quaker: If cared for well, a Quaker Parakeet can live to be 20-30 years old. They are prone to fatty liver disease, especially if fed an all-seed diet. An all-seed diet is too fatty for most pet parrots, although seeds can be given as treats and may make up part of the diet. A pet Quaker’s diet should be varied and can consist of pellets, supplemented primarily with vegetables, fruits, and grains, along with some seeds and nuts.

Pet Quakers need a shower at least once each week (preferable more in dry or hot weather) to prevent dry skin and feathers. This can be done by misting the bird with a spray bottle, or by offering the bird a shallow bowl of water to bathe in.

Most parrots need more sleep than people realize. A pet Quaker should get about 10-12 hours of sleep each night; otherwise they could become tired and irritable. Most parrots like to have a nap in the afternoon as well.

Quakers are very smart, curious parrots, but this can make them prone to accidents in the home. A Quaker should be given time outside of the cage each day, but this should be well-supervised.

Conclusion: The Quaker parrot has all the attitude, intelligence and talking ability of a large parrot in a more compact, easy to manage size. They can make interesting, fun companions for a parrot-lover looking for a friendly, active companion. These are, however, high-maintenance pets, so potential owners should be sure that they have the time needed each day to spend with a Quaker.



Above: This Quaker parakeet belongs to Marie and Dwayne C. The photo was taken at the Northern Alberta Cage Bird Society show.

Further Reading:

Guide to the Quaker Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan. (Note: this book is in the club’s library).

Parrots in the City: One Bird’s Struggle for a Place on the Planet by Jon-Mark Davey, Jo Ann Davey, and Mattie Sue Athan.

www.quakerville.net
www.qp-society.com

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-Also for sale: same cage as above with a crack in one of the 2 trays and is brass with brown bottom ; asking \$100.00

Contact Linda at (780) 486-3868 or
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