



ALASKA BIRD NEWS

April 2011

Lin Westgard, Editor

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Available on-line at www.alaskabirdclub.org
Dedicated to all the current and future parrot owners of Alaska

Parrot Perfecting... Making their Cage a Home.

Making a parrot's cage a home is easy if you know what you are striving for. Since most parrots actually find comfort in being in their cage, it's important to make it suit them. Let's go through some very basics.

Cage Size: Get the largest cage you can that fits your species. Some species, like cockatiels for an example like cages more horizontal than vertical (like Budgie cages). So know your species. Your bird should be able to stretch his wings and turn in a full circle without touching cage bars. That's the minimum. If you have small birds, double that wingspan. Location of the cage can mean a lot to you parrot! Be aware.

Bar Spacing: The thickness of the bars depends on the strength of your parrot's beak and the spacing should species specific— birds should not be able to fit their heads in between the bars. This is impor-



tant. Also, the bars should be made from stainless steel or a powder coated metal. Other metals can cause metal toxicity while the bird is beaking his way around the cage. Good cages will have both horizontal and vertical bars to aid in "climbing" and promoting exercise.

Feeder Cups/Bowls: Most cages for medium to large parrots have feeder doors designated specifically for feeding dishes

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CLUB INFORMATION

The Alaska Bird Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in the State of Alaska. It meets the first Tuesday of every month at Serendipity Adult Day Services in Anchorage at 7:00pm. Location: 3550 East 20th Ave (off of Northern Lights Blvd & Nichols St).

The mailing address is:

THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB
P.O. BOX 101825
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-1825
(907) 868-9070

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Adopt-a-Bird Chair Person: Open

Hospitality Chair Person: Jody Brien

Membership Chair Person: Open



You can e-mail the Alaska Bird Club at:
akbirdclub@yahoo.com

Or visit our website:
www.alaskabirdclub.org

We welcome any comments, articles or any ideas for the club or the newsletter. Current issues and extra copies of previous editions of The Alaska Bird News are available at the monthly meetings.

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The following locations have copies of our newsletter if you need extra. We have also noted the clinics that have avian vets by the 🌟

ANCHORAGE:

Alaska Mill & Feed
1501 E. 1st Ave.
276-6016

Alaska Pet-ography
9130 Elim St.
868-1680

Chester Valley Veterinary
1571 Muldoon Rd.
333-6591

🌟 College Village
Animal Clinic
Dr's Basler & Nicholson
2036 E. Northern Lights
274-5623

🌟 Dimond Animal Hosp
Dr. Doty
562-8384 (24 hour)

🌟 Hillside Pet Clinic
Dr. Bluestone
2101 Abbott Rd. #1
344-7913

Petco
8621 Old Seward Hwy

Pet Emergency
2320 E. Dowling Rd.
274-5636

🌟 The Pet Stop
Dr. Riley Wilson
1921 W. Dimond Blvd.
522-1006

The Pet Zoo
901 E. Dimond Blvd.

🌟 VCA Alaska Pet Care
Dr. Frederickson
3900 Lake Otis Pkwy
562-PETS (7387)

VCA Alpine Animal Hospital
12531 Old Seward Hwy
345-1515

VCA E. Anch Animal Clinic
2639 Boniface Pkwy
337-1561

EAGLE RIVER:

🌟 Ravenwood Veterinary
Clinic
Dr. Cuthbert
11525 Old Glenn Hwy
694-9665

The Pet Zoo
12046 Business Blvd.
622-2966

WASILLA:

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic
Mi 7.4 Palmer- Wasilla Hwy
(907) 376-6016

The Pet Zoo
1481 E. Parks Hwy
357-7335

PALMER

Far Country Animal Hospital
2701 N. Liahona Dr.
Palmer
(907) 746-7297

North Star Animal Hospital
840 S. Cobb St.
(907) 746-7387

Palmer Veterinary Clinic
Mi 39 Glenn Why
(907) 745-3219

The Pet Zoo
10201 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy
746-0056

FAIRBANKS:

Mt. McKinley Animal Hospital
800 College Rd.
Fairbanks, AK 99701

(Continued from page 1)

and can be accessed from the outside of the cage. Every species needs at least three bowls: one for water, one for dry food (pellets, seeds) and one for fresh food (healthy fruits, veggies and perhaps a favorite “people” food). Be sure to clean bowls regularly (remove the sticky goo on the sides of your water bowl, not just change out water) and make sure they are strong enough to avoid destruction by bigger bird beaks. Bowls should be made on a non-porous substance (like crocks or stainless steel).

Perches: Perches can be broken into three different areas: Size, Texture, and Location. Let’s start with size. Parrots should be able to wrap their feet 3/4 around the perch. Too small and they can get sores. Too large and they can fall off. So for main perch locations, try to abide by this rule. And then vary your perch size in the cage in order to exercise the feet. Give your parrot multiple textures to experience. For example, a rope perch (soft) is good for the ones that your bird sleeps on (high in the cage). Cement are good for some birds to trim toenails and sharpen beaks with. Wood is fun for them to chew. We use a lot of un-treated birch and willow limbs for these here in Alaska. In regards to location, watch your parrot. Avoid locations over food dishes or toys (poop factor). Put the rough surface perches by feeding dishes - they tend to spend the least amount of time

there and can groom their beaks on them after eating.

Toys: Toys are so important to your parrots physical and mental being. They need toys to stimulate them and keep them entertained and those that challenge them. The usually can be thought of in types (like foraging toys, shredding toys, plastic puzzle toys, and foot toys). It’s fun to have a toy cabinet by your parrots cage in order to rotate toys every 2-3 days to prevent boredom. All parrots should play and have access to toys. There are many websites that teach you how to make toys at home with supplies and items from around the home. One excellent website is www.parrotenrichment.com. You’ll find wonderful enrichment ideas on this site and she covers nutrition as well. I have seen people put wicker baskets right inside of cages that hold wonderful foot toys that parrots can dig out and play with and even destroy the wicker basket. Parrots think it’s fun! You can get creative, but remember, think bird safety (entrapment, strangulation, ingestion dangers) when giving any toy to your bird.

It’s so very important to have a great “home” for your parrot. They rely on us to keep it clean and enriched. They should be comfortable in it and safe in it. Believe it or not, some behavioral problem are sometimes rectified once changes are made to a birds cage... which you have now made a “home”.

Check out the Alaska Bird Club's Website!

Find out about our latest Lost and Found Birds, our birds that are available in our Adopt-A-Bird program and other various articles and videos. Advertise your un-wanted cages via newsletter and website! See what's up and coming and stay in touch!

www.alaskabirdclub.org

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wmichaelstanton@gmail.com
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Website of the Month

[Www.onthewingonline.com](http://www.onthewingonline.com)

Car-Toons! Breed specific decals made of white outdoor vinyl and are easy to apply to the outside of your rear car window. Several breeds to choose from with prices ranging from \$2.00 to \$5.00.

Parrot Behavior Consultations

Need help with any of the following?

Aggression
Excessive screaming
Inappropriate vocalizations
Feather Destructive Behaviors
Diet
Environmental Enrichment

Contact Karen Webster
to schedule your consultation today:
929-BIRD (2473) or akpeac@gmail.com.

“RIO” - A 3D movie coming out that features animated parrots is coming out April 15th! Birdchannel.com/Rio

Comfy Clawth Blankets for Birds

See www.comfyclawth.com for Alaskan made bird blankets that can be used to train your parrot to be toweled in a safe and comfy environment.

birdieblankets@comfyclawth.com

P E A C
(Parrot Education & Adoption Center)
www.akpeac.org
929-BIRD

Seminar Schedule
Advanced Registration Recommended
(note new starting time!)

April 12 6:30—9:00pm
Wild About African Greys

THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PO Box 101825 Anchorage, AK 99510-1825
www.alaskabirdclub.org e-mail: akbirdclub@yahoo.com phone: 868-9070
Non Profit Club EIN# 92-0134866

The Alaska Bird Club's mission is to promote responsible avian ownership through education and when possible, to provide rescue and adoption services for abandoned and unwanted birds in communities across Alaska.

We are a statewide 501(c)(3) [non-profit] educational club. All money collected as dues is used to provide educational training and activities to assist people in caring for companion birds. Our main activities include convening educational monthly membership meetings, producing a monthly newsletter, offering an annual seminar featuring experts in avian care and managing a website. Additionally, The Alaska Bird Club manages a statewide Adopt-A-Bird Program offering placement referrals, emergency/foster care and rescue services. The Alaska Bird Club also has a Lost/Found-Rescue Committee that aids in the rescue and capture of lost birds. There are numerous other activities and services that The ABC offers. You do not have to attend the meetings to be a member.

MEMBERSHIPS:

Membership is due annually, and runs from January 1st—December 31st. (rate discount of 50% applies to members joining in August and later). New members receive membership packets and free newsletter mailings.

_____ Single: \$20.00 _____ Family: \$25.00

**Mail Payment and Form to:
The Alaska Bird Club, PO Box 101825, Anchorage, AK 99510**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address _____

Type of Companion Birds you live with and their names:

How would you like to receive your newsletter?

US Mail ____ E-mail ____ Web ____ At membership meeting ____

Would you like to be listed on a registry that is available to other members? Yes ___ No ___

Would you be interested in carpooling from the Valley with other members? Yes ___ No ___

Would you like to be on a committee? Yes ____ No ____ and if so, do you have a preference?

Adopt-A-Bird: ____ Lost/Found-Rescue Committee ____ Hospitality Committee: ____

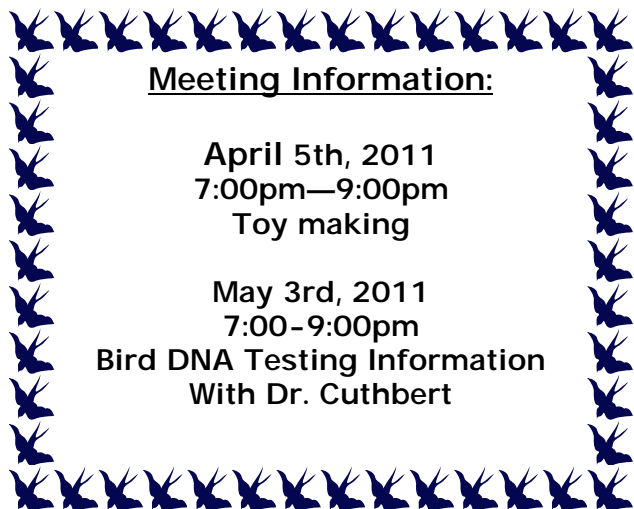
Membership Committee: ____ Educational Committee: ____ Seminar Committee: ____

Emergency Services Committee: ____ Other: _____

The Bird Club uses e-mail as the preferred method of communication. Do you wish to be included on this mailing list or not? Yes ____ No ____

Comments: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Meeting Information:

April 5th, 2011
7:00pm—9:00pm
Toy making

May 3rd, 2011
7:00-9:00pm
Bird DNA Testing Information
With Dr. Cuthbert

WARNING: Teflon and other non-stick finishes are deadly to your bird. Do not take chances. Bird deaths have been recorded when nonstick cookware was used even at low temperatures. This includes looking at ALL non-stick surfaces (irons, bread making machines, waffle makers, etc). Also be aware that using the self-cleaning option on your oven can also be deadly and to remove birds to be safe.

Calling for 2011 Volunteers!

The Alaska Bird Club is seeking
volunteers for the following
positions on the perch:

Adopt-A-Bird - Administrative volunteers needed. This program is one of the strongest assets of the Alaska Bird Club and offers a tremendous amount of help for people that must re-home their parrots and for those that are wonderful enough to consider adoption over buying a bird. Help is needed to handle the logistics of a bird once it is placed into the program (helping facilitate the relinquishment and adoption) by helping with paperwork and interviewing. This is probably the most rewarding position in the program. Adopt-A-Bird chairperson, Amy could certainly use the help. It's a long process to find the perfect home and we need help!

ADOPT-A-BIRD UPDATE - AVAILABLE BIRDS

Mealy Amazon— 50 yrs old. Needs a family (preferably a woman as his primary care taker), dedicated to his care that doesn't have any other parrots.

Two Cockatiels. Each cockatiel has personalities of their own and needs some love and care.

Two flock bonded Sun Conures - these guys can be loud! Must enjoy that! They come together as a pair.

Rose Breasted Cockatoo - Probably would be best with a male as the primary care taker.

Goffins Cockatoo - Experienced only, funny and wonderful cockatoo, but should not live with children.

An Umbrella Cockatoo, age unknown. This male Umbrella will require an experienced bird owner and a home visit/inspection is required prior to adoption.

A Blue Front Amazon - Adopted!

African Grey - This little gal needs some TLC. She's plucked, but very beautiful in spirit. Nine Years old.

Derbyan Parakeet—Loves music and is an escape artist. He will need some TLC, but is a fun bird.

Princess of Wales Parakeet— Skittish but friendly. Two years old, Female (DNA sexed) Also vet tested.

Contact the bird club at akbirdclub@yahoo.com if you are interested in adoption or fill out the adoption application located on our website at www.alaskabirdclub.org.

Bird of the Month!



Elliot Lester Westgard, Approximately 13 years old, Medium Sulphur Crested Cockatoo. DNA tested Male.

In May, the Alaska Bird Club is having Dr. Cuthbert come to our meeting to explain the benefits of DNA testing. Pictured above is a great example of the need to DNA test. Elliot came to me from a woman who bought him from a local pet store (one that sold birds, but fortunately is no longer in business). The receipt said he was a female Eleanora Cockatoo, so we always assumed he was a female. He had the chocolate brown eyes - not the dark black eyes where the pupil is hard to see - and he had a cute petite beak and was smaller than what we had thought a male would be. My vet indicated we couldn't really tell and to test his DNA was the way to know for sure, but even she had an inkling he was a female.

We did the DNA test, and the long-awaited results came back about ten days later. "She" was a "he". DNA proven. Wow...we would have to rename him since he couldn't go through life with a name like "Ellie", so we brainstormed and came up with El-

liot. It was a natural. The months went by and since Elliot was a feather plucker, he spent a lot of time at the vet getting tested for this and that to rule out any medical reasons for his plucking. During one of these visits, I asked my vet if it was crazy to retest him. He just LOOKED like a female to me. She obliged and the results were the same.

I then convinced myself that Elliot flourished when we began telling him he was "handsome", and not a "pretty little girl". I gave him masculine foot toys instead of pink beaded things. While he seemed to enjoy having his gender correctly identified, perhaps that was all my imagination.

Regardless, something clicked. Ellie became Elliot, and he's all boy. He plays like one, he eats like one, and I know how to handle his hormone cycle more accurately now. So yes, I'm a firm believer in getting your bird DNA tested. - Lin



Editors Note: If you are interested in your bird being the Bird of the Month, please e-mail us at akbirdclub@yahoo.com. Include a picture and story about the parrot that owns you.

President's Perch

Submitted by: Michael Stanton, President 2011, The Alaska Bird Club



Let me tell you, dahlings-this Umbie has climbed the walls, floors, and ceilings of my owners' cabin and I WANT A CHANGE AND I WANT IT NOW! I am tired of the wind, the snow, the cold, and the dark of winter. Bring on the sunshine, the lure of growing gardens and trees; let me feel the sun on my face; grass to dig with my feet, birch branches to snap with my beak, and throw in a couple of small washed river rock pebbles to push around **my** house (emphasis on who owns the place). When will I feel the summer breezes flowing through my cage?

Feathered pet owners, beware! Your little bundle/s of joy are antsy. As warm weather is in the wings (pardon the pun), now is the time to be vigilant. Hormones are active--knowing the sex of your bird/s and species-specific behavior should alert you to be extra cautious. Spring can lure a household into complacency—don't let this happen to you: cleaning open windows with no screens, doors open to the outside,

open cage doors, risky cleaning products, rotating ceiling fans, in and out visitors (nearby birds near frequently open doors). As you take precautions against burglary of your home, don't let nature claim a preventable loss of companion birds.

The Bird Club is postponing the DNA bird-sexing topic until the May meeting. Guest speaker Dr. Lorelei Cuthbert of Ravenwood Veterinary Clinic, Eagle River, will do a presentation regarding the latest information on DNA sexing, why it is important to know your bird/s' sex, important behavioral issues surrounding a bird's sex, and major psittacine diseases facts and research, plus handouts from renown Avian specialist Dr. Scott Ford regarding the above. Lin Westgard will bring her cockatoo, Elliot, who con-founded veterinarians, with the traditional methods of identifying its sex by eye coloration.

A final thought on our toy-making meeting. The Alaska Bird Club has several parrots in foster care - any toys you make and donate, would delight our ABC birdies and foster families.

The devastating earthquake and Tsunami that wrecked part of Japan has created much heartbreak and sorrow with pet owners there. We share their sorrow. Take this time to evaluate your own preparedness. Work on your evacuation plans, your supplies and be prepared.

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Spring is in the Air... Make Sure your Parrot ISN'T!

It's that time of year when we can almost feel the warmth of the sun and we want to open our windows and doors and let it in! But in preparation for spring, protect your parrot as well. Windows need screens when you own a parrot. That's a must. And screens need to be checked so that they are secure in place. The Alaska Bird Club had a three day macaw rescue one year due to the bird hitting the screened-in window, but it fell right through as it wasn't secured into the casing. It's easy to custom make screens, so there is no excuse. See a hardware store for a kit.

Please consider clipping wing feathers. The beauty of clipped wing feathers is, if done properly, it allows most birds enough "flight" feathers to fly from point A to point B in most homes, but it does not give them the "lift" if they are to get outside by mistake. Four flaps on a flighted Macaw can mean two city blocks. With clipped wings, they will typically go to the nearest tree and sit there. It's even more important on the smaller birds. No matter how much you trim the feathers they can still fly. However, they can't fly for long amounts of times nor as high with clipped wing feathers which helps tremendously in a rescue. Cockatiels and Budgies especially need wing feather clips.

If you have outside cages.... it's MUCH safer to have a cage that you can load them into inside like in a closed garage and then open the door and push them out to sun themselves. That's the safest way.. Load inside and move outside. No having to "transfer the bird". But if you do, and you have an outside cage or aviary, don't risk carrying your bird on your hand. A myriad of things can happen and off they go. The best thing you can do for your parrot is carry them by a carrier. Your outside cage should be big enough to put the whole carrier inside the cage or aviary and let them crawl out. Take no chances!!! If you are interested in helping our Lost/Found-Rescue committee, call Amber at 351.2762. Amber needs a team of spotters and watchers when she is trying to get back a parrot that has flown the coop. Consider volunteering! Thank you!

More *Alaska Style* from David Jensen Photography

Visit David's website at: www.alaskaportraits.com

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David

(907) 868-1680 david@alaskaportraits.com

David Jensen has been our volunteer judge for our
Photography contest every year at the Alaska Bird Club
for six years now.



Photo by David Jensen



The Alaska Bird Club
P.O. Box 101825
Anchorage, AK 99510

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