



# ALASKA BIRD NEWS

## June 2011

Lin Westgard, Editor

Volume 23 – Number 06

Available on-line at [www.alaskabirdclub.org](http://www.alaskabirdclub.org)  
Dedicated to all the current and future parrot owners of Alaska

## Disaster Resilience: How Well Can You Bounce?

Written by Garry Wallan, Bird Club Member and Board Member

In regards to disasters, you probably have heard the words before: "It's not a matter of 'if' but more a matter of 'when'." A dire statement, indeed, but so very true.

In geologically active Alaska, we face a constant threat from earthquakes and tsunamis. Wildfires are an annual occurrence, and sometimes threaten heavily populated areas. Mudslides, rockslides, avalanches and floods isolate Alaskan communities. In a more local, personal sense, we face house fires, local floods, gas leaks, utility outages and a host of other emergencies that can turn our lives upside down for hours, days or longer.

Being prepared can reduce fear and anxiety that comes with disasters. We should each have a general idea of what to do in a disaster, how do deal with basic medical needs, and be ready to evacuate quickly if the needs arises. These skills apply to our human and non-human family members.

Preparing your family disaster plan comes first, followed by preparations for your pets. A good place

to start is on our website by clicking the "Emergency Preparedness" link on our main menu on the left side of the page.

We have parrot-specific information online, and links to other resources, including valuable preparedness checklists and planning tools from FEMA.

Be prepared, be resilient, and don't let disasters push you around!



# 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  
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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](mailto:akbirdclub@yahoo.com)**

Or visit our website:  
**[www.alaskabirdclub.org](http://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. 1<sup>st</sup> 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

# Bird of the Month

# Meet Ducky!

Submitted by Bird Club member  
MJ Riemann

*Pyrrhura m. molinae*, a native of Brazil,  
Bolivia, and Argentina—Conure



Conures (also called parakeets in some books and international websites) are small to mid-sized, long-tailed, New World parrots. The normal measurements given are about 10" long, and weight is about 60-90 grams. Ducky fits into these measurements. Ducky was labelled a "Fancy" Green Cheek Conure at the store; you will also see them called Cinnamon, or Pineapple Conures if you search online. "Pineapple" conure is just a color mutation of the green-cheeked conure. It's not a separate species.

The International Conure Association defines the Conure personality as follows: "The Green-Cheeked Conure, being of the *Pyrrhura* genus are among the conures with softer voices. They are sweet and loveable." We have certainly experienced that with Ducky. When we first got him he was given lots of time outside his cage, crawling around on it, and we started with teaching him to step up on a stick

before offering closer contact. I still like to carry him around on a short stick because I want him to keep that skill. My daughter has Ducky on her hand, arm or shoulder, and Ducky certainly enjoys that. He can say his name with his gravelly little voice, and he talks back to us they way we talk to him, imitating our sounds. This is not language he uses with the other Pineapple Conure who lives right next to him, so I think it is very clever on his part!

Ducky eats heartily every day - good-quality pellets, seed mixes, vegetables and fruits, and occasionally scores small treats from our food, such as cooked pasta, cheese, even salmon. It is important to remember how small a serving he needs of these other foods. I learned this from the Alaska Bird Club. His water dish is cleaned and filled about 2-3 times a day. Even though I offered a separate bathing dish he likes to bathe in his water bowl, and only with clean water please! So on a bath day, every 2 or 3 days, I put fresh water in, he bathes, and I change the water again.

Ducky loves his fuzzy bed for rest time and for sleeping in at night. It is sort of like a little cave (open at both ends), and he can lay down in it if he wants to. I read that Conures sometimes like to lay down, so I personally recommend these beds.

I don't have an aviary outside, but Ducky's cage is on wheels, and during warm sunny afternoons I wheel his whole cage outside to the back deck. He loves this. I know because Ducky has a distinctive "happy" sound he makes, usually for favorite food, and he makes the same sound when we go outside.

Ducky adds love and laughter to our family, and his special connection to our daughter has improved her self-esteem.

-MJ Riemann-

## 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](http://www.alaskabirdclub.org)

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wmichaelstanton@gmail.com  
\$.25 of every pound donated to the Bird Club !!

## Website of the Month

[www,the-oasis.org](http://www.the-oasis.org)

The Oasis Sanctuary

Get involved. Get a reality check on how many parrots are being surrendered.

## 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](mailto:akpeac@gmail.com).

## Comfy Clawth Blankets for Birds

See [www.comfyclawth.com](http://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](mailto:birdieblankets@comfyclawth.com)

**P E A C**  
**(Parrot Education & Adoption Center)**  
[www.akpeac.org](http://www.akpeac.org)  
929-BIRD

TBD - watch their website for updates!

Printing costs for this newsletter  
were donated by:  
Konica Minolta Business Solutions, Inc USA  
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## THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PO Box 101825 Anchorage, AK 99510-1825  
[www.alaskabirdclub.org](http://www.alaskabirdclub.org) e-mail: [akbirdclub@yahoo.com](mailto: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!**

# It's a PICNIC!



**JUNE 25TH, SATURDAY NOON- 4:00PM - ABBOTT LOOP COMMUNITY PARK  
8101 Elmore Road Potluck!**

Every year, the Alaska Bird Club holds a picnic to celebrate parrot ownership. This event lets us celebrate family and friends that supports our love for our feathered friends. Bring them along and let's have a good time!

We will have games and a BBQ - so if you have a favorite lawn game or favorite thing to grill, let our grill master, bird club member and board member Garry Wallan grill it up for you! And just a reminder, we love our birds, but this is not an event to bring them to. This is a parrot-loving-people event only.

This event, like any other bird club event, is open to the public. Please invite anyone you know that has a love for parrots. Even if they don't own any, but are interested in them, this is the place to be! All our board members will be there to help answer avian related questions all afternoon. Between them and all of our bird club members, there is a wealth of information at this one event.

Who: Parrot loving People of all ages  
What: Pot-Luck Picnic  
Where: Abbot Loop Community Park  
When: Saturday, June 25th, Noon to 4:00pm



Bring a potluck food or snack or just come and have some fun. Lawn chairs are encouraged. Fun is mandatory. Hope to see you there !!

**Meeting Information:**

June 7, 2011  
7:00-9:00pm  
Emergency Resilience  
With Garry Wallan

Be Prepared.  
In an Emergency, do you really  
have things together enough  
to survive? Come find out!

**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 is also be deadly and to remove birds to be safe during the entire process.

Fabreeze products have also been related to bird deaths. If you are unsure of products and chemicals, research on-line before using them.

## **ADOPT-A-BIRD Update - Available Birds**

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

**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.

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

**Sun Conure** - Sam. Likes to be on your shoulder. Owner is moving and can't take him.

**CONTACT THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB IF INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE BIRDS. CALL 868-9070**

# President's Perch

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

The Memorial Day holiday has passed. As a retired Army helicopter combat pilot I spent most of that time remembering the sacrifices that living and deceased service men and women made serving this country. John F. Kennedy's inauguration speech came to mind-"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". In a way, the Alaska Bird Club fits somewhere in this dialogue: Ask not what your Bird Club can do for you, ask what you can do for your bird club. I completely realize ours is a club made up of many volunteers with diverse backgrounds of experience and knowledge. Our existence of 25 years was, and still is, compounded of companion parrot lovers and those fascinated by these feathered marvels of the bird world. The Alaska Bird Club is just such an organization composed of members with a richly textured background of eclectic interests, motivated by a desire to present our experiences for the public benefit and its members.

The Alaska Bird Club has a dedicated cadre of parrot lovers who make its existence possible. From the core membership we derive our participants, our committees and board members. That step or space from membership to actively supporting the operation and purpose of this bird club is invisible, yet so essential to its vitality and sense of purpose, duty and education of us that eventually benefits the public at large. And yes, I do believe that sometimes the right person steps up to the plate to volunteer. That moment can have a pivotal and important impact on the life and purpose of The Alaska Bird Club. That moment breathes fresh ideas becomes motivational fuel that impacts the well being and success of our club.

Individually we know only a little; collectively, we can know and do a lot. I suspect we remain members of the bird club because we want to share our knowledge and have a certain hunger, a certain desire to learn more and new things and ideas from others. The essence of any special interest club is to remain dynamic, seek knowledge, and remain tuned in and flexible to incorporate new ideas and perspectives that benefit its members and its community. Making new members feel welcomed, volunteering for empty committees, providing respite and assistance to core staff members to avoid their burnout are just some of the ways and means of getting our 25 year old Alaska Bird Club to hopefully have another 25 years of worthy and significant achievement.

Volunteering takes only a few hours a month. Volunteering for those committees can free up members who are multi-tasking big loads to breathe and focus on club responsibilities. Volunteering is not all drudgery-it is enlightening, challenging and rewarding-the comradeship, the stories, the "aha's!!!!" you will experience will make for fine memories and good laughs. I know you can do it-merely, I know we can do it together. Now find that pen and sign up at the next meeting. Our feathered friends are depending on us! Thank you!

# Ouch! That hurt! Whyda' do that??

Written by Lin Westgard

People usually ask me why I own parrots that bite. I tell them that ALL parrots bite and it's the nature of the beast. No pun intended. Over the years however, I have learned what triggers my birds to bite and now consider myself a master at *avoiding* the bites. That way I can enjoy my parrots! It took a lot of patience and understanding, and "schooling" on my part, but eventually I got to a point where I understood where my parrots were coming from. All that talk about parrot hormonal behaviors contributing to biting started to sink in. All that advice from my avian vet about nutrition and how it makes a difference in a parrots demeanor was starting to make sense and after all the consultations, seminars, classes etc. on foraging toys and shredding toys, sleeping cages, bathing, etc, it became obvious. My parrots were responding much better to it all. I spent many years putting all of the above together, often doubting various aspects of it, but trusting those that new. And it's all true.

I think it was during my home consultation with Liz Wilson, who is a contributing writer for Bird Talk Magazine and one of the nations more notorious certified parrot behavior consultants, that paid off the most. She made a statement to me many years ago, at the onslaught of my parrot ownership adventure that "it's all about being aware". Be aware of what works and doesn't work and be very aware of what each individual parrot is trying to tell me. After several years of parrot ownership and numerous boxes of Band-Aids, I thought back to Liz' words.... Aware? Aware of what? Then I remembered she said to journal and watch the patterns. I began to journal my birds hormonal periods and became aware of them. I modified how I handled them during this time and what I fed them. What a difference this made. My parrot was less angry and I

was getting bit less. Instead, I was aware of this cycle that is so trying for parrots, and tried to help them through it. My reward was less bites. I understanding their hormones and what that meant (don't mess with "their stuff!" during this cycle— they hate that!) They can be very territorial and moody.

I then looked closely at his diet and thought about another thing Liz asked me during her consultation (it finally made sense). She asked me what I fed my parrot. And when I squared my shoulders and proudly said "Harrison's pellets, a tad bit of seed, fruits and vegetables" she then asked "now tell me what he *eats*". My shoulders slumped and I had to fess up... he was eating people food and seeds... that a lot of carbohydrates and empty calories. He wasn't getting a good balanced diet, which was causing numerous problems. I hadn't been aware of this at the time. We had bouts of feather plucking, we had temper tantrums, we had stubbornness' in coming in/out of the cage, etc. Then I had to make this whole new effort to change his diet and finally fix it. I had to make him eat differently and boy, am I glad I did! In order to get him to eat healthier, the foraging toys came into play and happier healthier birds were emerging. CBC blood test results from the vets each year starting staying steady and healthy.

It was a complicated transition, but the reward was wonderful. I have a "nicer" relationship of companionship between my parrots and I that I finally enjoy. Do I still get bit? Yes. But instead of weekly, I can count the months between the bites and when I do, I can usually spot the problem areas that caused the bite (I had disregarded a warning or I pushed a button I shouldn't have or my bird was over stimulated and I reached for him anyway, etc). I hope this helps you think of ways to improve your odds of not getting bit! It can be done!



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### Parrot "No-No's"

**Alcohol  
Avocado  
Caffeine  
Chocolate  
Rhubarb  
Fabreeze  
Air Fresheners**

Do your research and find out what else not to feed your parrots. There are some great lists on what is safe and what is not.

You can also find toxic and non-toxic house plants on the web!  
Difffenbachia and Ivy's are the most common houseplant that is toxic to your parrot.

# The Association of Avian Veterinarians

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***Surgery of the Avian Beak***, R. Avery Bennett, DVM, MS, Dipl ACVS, Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61802.

## **Anatomy and Physiology**

The upper and lower beaks are composed of bone covered by a horny sheath called the rhamphotheca. Just like skin, there is a constant turn over of the keratin on the surface of the beak. The stratum germinativum produces cells that migrate to the surface. Combined with the effects of transitional cells, a specific pattern of cell migration develops in columns at various angles toward the cutting edges of the beak. The growth migration pattern is generally from the base of the beak to the tip.

The bones of the upper beak include the premaxilla and nasal bones. The upper beak is hollow in most species and contains the rostral diverticulum of the infraorbital sinus. The bone itself is quite thin, its strength derived from the special keratin produced on the surface. In psittacine species, the upper beak is attached to the skull by the craniofacial hinge, which is a synovial joint allowing the upper beak to move independently of the skull.

The base of both the upper and lower jaw bones is covered by normal skin with or without feathers, depending on the species. Birds may generate very high pressures when they bite, with pressures potentially exceeding 200 p.s.i. in macaws.

## **Beak Trauma**

Most traumatic injuries to the beak can be classified into 4 types: simple fracture, depressed fractures, fractures with bone defects, and avulsion fractures. Beak injury can be difficult to treat because of some inherent problems. The bone is quite thin so bone attachment to fixation devices is limited. The blood supply to the dermal bone of the beak is tenuous. There is very little soft tissue coverage to protect the bone. Fractures are difficult to stabilize, especially in light of the extreme forces they are subjected to. And they are often contaminated with a high potential for infection, which will affect healing.

Crush injury to the beak is most commonly associated with bite injury from another bird or household pet. They are often associated with missing fragments and depression fractures. They are not only contaminated by environmental and endogenous flora, but also the bacterial flora from the animal that caused the injury. And the bite can be associated with vascular compromise from the crushing effects of the bite. This type of injury is best treated using temporary stabilization until the tissues are healthy. Treat the site as an open wound and apply stabilization after the tissues are healthy.

Simple, clean fractures can be treated primarily if the tissues appear healthy and minimally contaminated. Successful healing depends on the ability to stabilize the fragments against the forces applied to them.

Methods of stabilization that have been applied successfully to bird beaks include pins and orthopedic wires, modified external skeletal fixation devices, and bone plates and screws. Bone plates and screws have not been used much because the bone of the beak is so thin and has virtually no soft tissue coverage. The thin bone of the beak in most birds does not provide adequate screw purchase.

Plates may be used in large birds with fractures of the caudal mandibular beak where the bone is thicker and covered by muscle and normal skin. Another potential application would be on top of the keratin surface of the beak. Used in this manner the plate acts more like an external fixator because the device is outside the body tissues while the screws into the bone maintain reduction. Necrosis of the epidermis under the plate is likely, but if the fracture heals quickly the epidermis will potentially resurface the bone. Interfragmentary wires alone are inadequate to counter the forces acting on the fracture; however, they will hold fragments in opposition. Interfragmentary wire alone is generally inadequate for beak fractures. One technique using pins and wires that works well in some beak fractures involves placement of a pin across the fracture and a figure-of-8 wire around the pins. Applied to the tension side of the fracture, this type of stabilization can result in fracture compression

External skeletal fixation is readily applicable to beak fracture stabilization. Because of the thin bone of the avian beak, fixation pin purchase is not good. It is best to place fixation pins through both sides of the beak using the unaffected side as an anchor for improved pin purchase and better fracture stabilization. This is generally not possible for caudal mandibular fractures because of the tongue. Threaded pins also offer improved purchase.

Beak bonding is similar to dental bonding. The upper and lower beaks are wired or cemented together using the unaffected beak to support the fractures. An esophagostomy tube must be placed first as vomiting or regurgitation can result in life-threatening aspiration pneumonia.

Some fractures have devitalized or missing pieces of beak. The unhealthy tissue must be removed. With contaminated injuries, closure should be delayed until the tissue is healthy.

A split mandible is a common beak injury occurring most often in small psittacine birds. The mandible splits at or near the rostral midline. This type of injury is very difficult to get to heal primarily. Most commonly, the 2 halves heal separately and never unite. The epithelium migrates over the fracture ends, resulting in 2 separate halves of the mandible. Because of the poor prognosis for fracture healing, it is difficult to recommend orthopedic intervention. Fortunately, these small birds recover from this injury quickly and learn to eat with a permanently split mandibular beak. Some birds may need nutritional support until they are able to eat on their own. Pain medications are also indicated and may speed recovery.

Beak avulsion is another common traumatic injury. It usually occurs when one bird tears the beak off of another bird at its base. Attempts to reattach the beak are unsuccessful because the torn segment has no intrusive blood supply left.

Most birds adapt and are able to function missing either the upper or lower beak. They may require nutritional support, including a feeding tube, until they learn to eat with the defect. Though some birds may fail to adapt and it seems they do better missing the mandibular beak, it is worth giving them a chance.

### **Beak Deformities**

Scissor beak (lateral deviation of the premaxilla to the right or left) and mandibular prognathism (mandible longer than the premaxilla) are the 2 common types of beak deformity encountered in birds. Proposed etiologies include malposition in the egg, syringe feeding on only one side, genetics, and nutritional imbalances. Scissor beak tends to occur primarily in macaws, while mandibular prognathism occurs primarily in cockatoos. Physical therapy can be successful in correcting the problem if instituted early enough, when the bone is still pliable before it is well mineralized. It involves repeatedly and frequently applying pressure to oppose the abnormal growth. For example, if the beak is deviating to the right, pressure is applied on the right side toward the left side. For scissor beak, it is recommended the bird be fed consistently on the opposite side until the deviation is corrected.

If the bird is too old or physical therapy fails, intervention is required. There are 2 basic methods that can be used to correct scissor beak. Your veterinarian will be able to research the procedures.

The younger the bird is the more rapidly the defect will correct. As the bird matures and the beak mineralizes, it takes more time to correct the deviation. These procedures must be closely monitored. Owners should also be educated to check the device to assure it is secure, functioning properly, and that the bird is developing properly. Once the beak is properly aligned, the device must be removed to prevent over-correction.

### **Prostheses**

Prosthetic beak replacements are often considered for birds missing part of the beak. There are various reports of methods for creating beak prostheses. It would be ideal to be able to create a permanent prosthesis that would function normally for the life of the bird. Unfortunately, none of the supposed permanent beak prostheses can claim long-term success. The strong forces acting on any type of beak prosthesis will eventually result in failure. Prostheses applied to the surface of the beak will eventually be lost due to the natural turnover of the keratin surface. Prostheses implanted into bone will eventually fail due to cycling resulting in bone resorption and/or implant failure. If there is bone resorption, subsequent attempts to apply a prosthesis will generally fail more quickly because there is less bone stock. At the present time, there is no known permanent beak prosthesis applicable to birds. Temporary prostheses may be used if needed.

Prostheses secured with implants such as screws or threaded pins will generally last longer. Unfortunately, they result in bone resorption and are predisposed to infection because the implants are placed through a contaminated surface (the surface of the beak) into viable bone tissue.

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