

# Alaska Bird News

The Alaska Bird Club



Volume 25, Number 6

## Human Avian Insanity Reaction Syndrome: Part One by Garry J. Wallan

Inside this issue:

Does your bird have annoying little habits and seemingly innocent behaviors that get under your skin? Behaviors that, through repetition, timing, or unmitigated audacity, make you want to scream? If so, take relief in knowing you are not alone! Thanks to countless minutes of research, I have been able to identify various discreet behavioral modes used by our avian "friends" to maintain control over us through madness.

Welcome to the world of Human Avian Insanity Reaction Syndrome, or HAIRS.

**THE GREAT TOE HUNT:** In this behavior an avian subject of any size chases human feet with the ferocity of a wiener dog on crack. This is an especially impressive activity when performed by a large bird which can assume maximum fluffage, such as a Moluccan Cockatoo. However, this behavior generates more avian entertainment and human embarrassment when performed by a Parrotlet or Budgie. Humans seem to have an instinctive need to protect their toes and will perform interesting dances and vocalizations in an effort to avoid a painful beaking.

**THE GARBAGE TORNADO:** In this behavior, the avian subject flaps its wings to produce violent air movement while holding tightly with their feet to a perch. The end result is a whirlwind of debris from the bottom of the cage. This is an activity which is usually launched just after the appearance of the "Vacuum Of Death" and frequently results in the "Dance of Frustration" or the "Chant of Hard—Consonant Words" on the part of the human victim.

**THE FECAL FOUNTAIN:** A disgusting behavior, reserved for those special moments when guests are admiring the "pretty bird." The trigger for this behavior is usually a phrase such as "Are they messy?" Within seconds a fecal presentation is delivered which appears to rival the mass of an African termite mound. Some special variations, exercised at the discretion of the avian overlord, include: pooping for distance; special aromatic overtones; and saving the presentation until placed on the arm of the curious guest. The probability of an occurrence of the latter option is directly proportional to the cost of the guest's clothing and the guest's social importance.

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[Check out the Alaska Bird Club's Website!](#)

Find out about our latest *Lost and Found* birds, our *Adopt-A-Bird* program and other articles and videos. See what's up and coming and stay in touch at

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

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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 at 7:00PM on the first Tuesday of every month at Serendipity Adult Day Services in Anchorage. Location: 3550 East 20th Ave (off of Northern Lights Blvd & Nichols St).

*The mailing address is:*

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[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.

*Dedicated to all the current and future bird owners in Alaska.*

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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 Avenue  
(907) 276-6016

### **Alaska Pet-ography**

9130 Elim Street  
(907) 868-1680

### **Chester Valley Veterinary**

1571 Muldoon Road  
(907) 333-6591

### **College Village Animal Clinic ✓**

Dr's Basler & Nicholson  
2036 E. Northern Lights Boulevard  
(907) 274-5623

### **Diamond Animal Hospital ✓**

Dr. Doty 24-Hour  
(907) 562-8384

### **Hillside Pet Clinic ✓**

Dr. Bluestone  
Dr. Fredrickson  
2101 Abbott Road, Suite #1  
(907) 344-7913

### **Petco**

8621 Old Seward Highway  
(907) 365-550  
3090 Mountain View Drive  
(907) 277-3826

### **Pet Emergency Treatment Center**

2320 E. Dowling Road  
(907) 274-5636

### **The Pet Stop ✓**

Dr. Riley Wilson  
1921 W. Dimond Boulevard  
(907) 522-1006

### **The Pet Zoo**

901 E. Dimond Boulevard  
(907) 3442966

### **VCA Alaska Pet Care**

3900 Lake Otis Parkway  
(907) 562-PETS (7387)

### **VCA Alpine Animal Hospital**

12531 Old Seward Highway  
(907) 345-1515

### **VCA E. Anch Animal Clinic**

2639 Boniface Parkway  
(907) 337-1561

## EAGLE RIVER

### **Ravenwood Veterinary Clinic ✓**

Dr. Cuthbert  
11525 Old Glenn Highway  
(907) 694-9665

### **The Pet Zoo**

12046 Business Boulevard  
(907) 622-2966

## WASILLA

### **All Creatures Veterinary Clinic**

Mi 7.4 Palmer-Wasilla Highway  
(907) 376-6016

### **The Pet Zoo**

1481 E. Parks Highway  
(907) 357-7335

## PALMER

### **Far Country Animal Hospital**

2701 N. Liahona Drive  
(907) 746-7297

### **North Star Animal Hospital**

840 S. Cobb Street  
(907) 746-7387

### **Palmer Veterinary Clinic**

Mi 39 Glenn Highway  
(907) 745-3219

### **The Pet Zoo**

10201 E. Palmer-Wasilla Highway  
(907) 746-0056

## FAIRBANKS

### **Mt. McKinley Animal Hospital**

800 College Road  
(907) 452-6104

## President's Perch by Amber O'Neill



Wow, is summer here or WHAT? The season in Anchorage sure did start with a bang. Record highs and lots of beautiful sun!

This is great weather for some outdoor bird time... with precautions. It's always a good idea to have pet birds caged, harnessed, or tented. I have a small travel cage from which Twiggy, my CAG, loves to watch, and comment on, the world. Remember that your bird is not the only animal you have to worry about once you are out of the safety of your home. There are dogs, cats, and wild birds that would love to get to know your parrot a little better.

The worst offenders seem to be magpies. I have gotten many calls from folks who have found a bird that was being beaten up by what was probably a gang of juvenile magpies. Once, a budgie was snatched from the claws of death-by-magpie; its whole front, under the feathers, was purple and blue from bruising. The bird made it, but it endured a week of antibiotics and painkillers as well as a couple of weeks of R&R. This is

why i always cage mine.

Another idea is bigger: a mesh tent! Set it up, carry your bird in (in a cage, of course), and let it hang out on a play stand or something right in your yard, or at your campsite, etc. It's fresh air, a little natural light... and you can set in stone your neighbors' impressions of you as a crazy bird person!

Let's all get outside! But please play carefully; you don't want to have to call the club's lost & found team.

### 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.

[eblankets@comfyclawth.com](mailto:eblankets@comfyclawth.com)



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## Enrichment for the Companion Parrot by Carol Melasky, RVT

Anyone that owns a companion parrot knows that they are smart. Sometimes too smart for their own good! Enrichment for your bird is a general term that applies to many different methods of keeping your bird's mind occupied in a positive manner, and that makes their life better in some way. There are many benefits to keeping your bird's life enriched. Not only will your bird be happier, it can be a great bonding experience to use some of

these methods of enrichment. Also, bored birds can develop behavioral problems like feather picking and other destructive behaviors.

### Foraging

In the wild, birds forage daily (and almost constantly) when they are looking for food. This provides exercise, stimulation and entertainment. Duplicating this for birds can be simple and cost-effective.

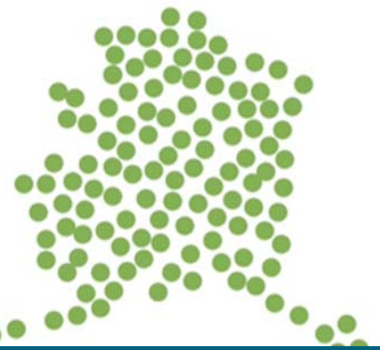
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## Birds Available for Adoption

See [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) for details



### Baby, Cockatoo

Baby is about 8 years young and we have had her since she was about 6 months old. She is a wonderful bird and is part of our family and we need to re-home her due to allergies and exhausting all options. It is hard to part with her and I want to be sure she goes to an awesome smoke free home that can allow her the independence she is used to. I would like to continue to be a part of her life, or at minimum get some updates on how she is doing. I will be here to help and give insight to some of her quirks or any questions that you may have. I would be willing to do bird sitting and if there ever any problems or things don't work out ever, no matter how far down the line, I would be willing to take her back. I have 2 cages that I am willing to sell and the fee is situational negotiable.



### Caesar

Male Double Yellow  
Amazon in Fairbanks

[www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)

### Suzie

Female Blue-Fronted  
Amazon  
Fairbanks



### Alex **Alexandrine Parrot**

He is about 10 years old and comes with cage, toys, food. Alex is hand-tame and very sweet once he gets to know you. If interested, please contact the Alaska Bird Club at [akbirdclub@yahoo.com](mailto:akbirdclub@yahoo.com) or 907-868-9070



## Birds Available for Adoption, continued...



### Chic Chic *Scarlet Macaw*

Chic Chic is a close to 30-year-old, pretty mellow, scarlet macaw. She has a small, clear vocabulary. Chic Chic "dances" to music with a good beat, and a lot of the time displays rhythm, too! She started plucking her chest at about 10 when her first owners separated her from and then sold her "mate." (They thought both were boys at the time.) She is pretty much bald-chested, full-time. She lived with her new scarlet buddy, until his death 9 years ago. If not another macaw buddy, then she primarily prefers male humans, but occasionally feels a female is acceptable. Thought the best placement would be with another "buddy" macaw, but she might potentially be a pet bird again with the right person, (most likely a man,) and a lot of work. Although she is well cared for, she lives a pretty boring life, as she doesn't play much with toys, chew much, or connect with other non-macaw parrots. For more information about her, contact 696-6800.

### PeeWee *Conure*

PeeWee is very vocal, his wings are not clipped, and he was allowed to fly around our apartment, although he's pretty lazy and would only occasionally fly. He likes to hang out on our shoulders and enjoys being in the shower. He has on several occasion bitten me fairly hard on my ears, but never my husband. He has a pretty large cage that would go with him, as well as all his toys and any food that we have left."



### Reiko *Greenwing Macaw*

He is 7yrs old, prefers women and is very affectionate once he gets to know you. He loves cuddling your feet and playing peekaboo. He also really enjoys taking showers. He has a large vocabulary. Some of the things he says are "momma", "come here", "bye-bye", "hello", and "come in". He needs to be rehomed because of a baby and we do no have the time to spend with him that he deserves.

(MUST have large bird handling experience)



## 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).

**P E A C**

(Parrot Education & Adoption Center)

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## HAIRS

**THE WORD:** This is a favorite avian behavior which, like the Fecal Fountain, also tends to appear in the presence of guests. It is denoted by the avian presentation of: a word or phrase of startling vulgarity; the suggestion of a technically improbable physical act; the imitation of an embarrassing human gastrointestinal noise; or the loud, lusty imitation of human lovemaking. The vocalization usually involves a word, phrase, or sound never heard in the household prior to the moment of utterance (parrots seem to be able to share these special audible information collections in an unknown and mysterious way). This randomness tends to maximize the embarrassment of the human host because no amount of incredulity or bleating of earnest statements such as "Pastor Smith, I don't know where he learned those sounds!" can mitigate the resulting social fallout.

**THE HYPERSONIC SCREAM:** All psittacines, regardless of size or temperament, have the ability to create a high pitched scream, screech, or cry that can be tuned to the nervous systems of their human victims. Utterance of this sound can result in any or all of the following in a human: hair loss; spontaneous projectile vomiting; loss of bladder or bowel control; the sudden urge to perform unspeakable acts of violence; and the desire to run for public office. The sound has been described variously as a cat being attacked by a belt sander; a demon being attacked by a belt sander; and a belt sander being attacked by a flaming cat demon with a chain saw attached to a velociraptor.

**To Be Continued in HAIRS-2!**

## Enrichment for the Companion Parrot, *cont'd*

Dixie cup and putting a bit of a treat in it (something small that is the bird's favorite - such as a preferred nut) and then crushing the cup a small amount so the treat is only partially obstructed. Your bird should be watching you perform this entire process and should be aware that you are placing a treat into the cup. This first part is all about introducing the bird to the process of foraging. As you progress with your bird, you can crush the cup around the treat so that they have to really work to get the treat out. Several of these cups can be utilized and placed around the cage, some with treats and some without.

Another easy and cheap way to make foraging toys is to use newspaper. Treats can be similarly placed in newspaper and rolled into a long tube that can be woven in between the bars.

There are commercial toys available for those birds that have mastered some of the more simple techniques. Some require the bird to solve little puzzles or move an obstacle to get to the treat.

With any foraging toys, pay attention to how much in total treats is being given during the day. Wouldn't want to put on too much extra weight!

### General Enrichment

Enrichment can be anything that captivates your bird's attention and doesn't scare or intimidate him/her. It doesn't necessarily have to be something that they physically interact with. Monotony is your bird's biggest enemy when it comes to boredom. When introducing any new type, always start slow and watch your bird for signs of fear or anxiety.

### Examples

- Balloons of different colors (for visual enrichment only, not to be directly interacted with)
- Television/radio
- Training your bird to do tricks
- Supervised time outdoors (in a travel cage)
- Time near a window with a bird feeder on the other side that will attract other birds\*\*
- Cage/environment enrichment: this could include different sizes of perches that are made of different materials and/or toys that are changed and rotated weekly
- Colorful pictures of birds the same species as yours hung around the cage (but not too close!)
- Move the perch to another location in the cage

\*\* Never give your bird more than visual access to wild birds. Also take care that the bird is not in prolonged direct sunlight or in a drafty location.

Some of these methods are going to need to be introduced in stages. Watch your bird for any negative reactions. If you've never done anything to change your bird's routine, sudden and abundant change can be too overwhelming or stressful. For these kinds of birds, introduce things gradually and one at a time. Once your bird gets used to the idea that change is going to be normal and fun, more things can be added.

### Additional Resources:

Captive Foraging: The Next Best Thing to Being Free by M. Scott Echols, DVM, Dipl ABVP (Avian) Training DVDs by Barbara Heidenrieck found on her website: <http://www.goodbirdinc.com/>.

## There Will Be No July TABC Meeting

The annual picnic is happening so late in the month of June that it will informally replace the July meeting.



# David Jensen Photography

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David Jensen has been the Alaska Bird Club volunteer judge for several years now.



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