

SOUTH SOUND EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume XXII, Issue 9

September 2007

P.O. Box 15014, Tumwater, WA 98511-5014
<http://ssebs.org>

SEPTEMBER 2007 MEETING

The General Meeting will begin at 7PM on Friday, September 14, 2007. The board will meet at 6PM. At 7:30, our guest speaker will be Susan Beauregard of Thurston County Animal Services who will discuss her program as it pertains to birds, and this area's disaster planning for pets.

OCTOBER 2007 MEETING

Dr. Deanna Shafar will be our October 12 program speaker. She will be bringing information from this year's AAV conference.

AUGUST PICNIC

Thank you, Janet Wood (and Max, Cloud, Fluffy, Dust, etc. etc.), for hosting the August picnic

Poop !

Pegg Bauer

Monitoring your bird's bathroom habits may not be the way you pictured spending your time as an owner. However, knowing your bird's normal droppings is critical because they reveal much about the state of his health. Certain changes -- in quantity, color, consistency or smell -- may provide a clue that all is not well, and may be one of the earliest symptoms you will receive.

To make detecting changes easy, the use of newspaper, paper towels or clear wax paper in the bottom of the cage is recommended. No matter what manufacturers claim, do not use commercially sold cage bottom materials such as walnut shavings, corn cob shavings, or pellets. They not only make it impossible to monitor droppings, but can also harbor mold and bacteria that can make your bird sick. Such bedding materials have also been implicated gastrointestinal blockages resulting in deaths, even when placed below a grate.

Keep an eye, also, on your bird's vent area and the cloaca, the sphincter muscle that controls elimination. The vent area should be clean and dry. The cloaca should remain fairly tightly closed, with no odd growths. Moisture, matted stools or extra tissue in the area warrant closer inspection by a vet.

DROPPING PARTS: Droppings consist of three recognizable parts: feces, clear urine, and a white urine called urates. Generally, the feces part of the dropping should be green or brown, solid, and coiled like a snake, segmented or in pieces. The urine portion should be clear and watery. Urates should be an opaque white-beige crystalline material. Normally, the urine and urates are separate, but they may be mixed.

COLOR: Different types of food can change the color of poop. Feces of birds who have been eating a lot of pellets may take on the pellets' hue (usually rust colored). Strawberries can turn the fecal matter dark red. Blueberries, cherries and cranberries can turn it black.

TEXTURE: Watery foods can make droppings appear looser than usual. Sometimes droppings may even be all liquid. However, as long as any fecal matter remains solid, watery droppings are not considered to be diarrhea. They are perfectly normal instances of polyuria, an increase in urine. A varied diet including moist foods such as fresh vegetables, fruits, beans, pastas and cooked grains will produce extra-wet droppings, and indicate the bird is well-hydrated. If your bird receives a scare or experiences stress -- such as a vet exam --

there may be an increase in urine. A seed-only diet tends to produce pass dry and sticky or pasty-looking greenish-black feces – a sign of malnourishment. And then some species have odd-looking poop. For example, some healthy cockatiels have feces tinged a light green.

AMOUNTS: Poops can vary in amount. Many birds hold their poop overnight until the next morning, and then release a larger-than-average dropping that may smell a bit. And many small birds with higher metabolisms such as cockatiels, poop throughout the night and leave piles of droppings beneath their sleeping locations. Laying females drink more water than usual and spend more time in the nest box, where they will hold their droppings. When they leave the box, they expel large, smelly droppings. Baby birds still on weaning formulas also have large droppings, with urine composing a large portion.

A change in volume can be significant. An increase in the amount of feces in each dropping could mean a bird is not digesting its food properly or is having a problem laying. Very small, compact, and dark droppings could mean your bird is not eating enough due to an appetite loss from illness or an internal obstruction.

CHANGES IN FECES: Diarrhea appears as loosely formed feces that are not coiled or solid but watery. Such feces are not the normal extra-wet droppings that come after the consumption of greens or watery fruits reflecting an increase in urine. Neither is this the increase in urine because of diet or nerves. With diarrhea, the feces themselves are watery.

Diarrhea indicates a problem in the digestive tract, many time caused by the introduction of new foods too quickly or the consumption of spoiled food, a foreign object, or a toxin such as lead. Antibiotics also can cause diarrhea as can a bacterial or fungal intestinal infection, parasites such as giardia or roundworm, hernias, eggbinding, or disease. Diarrhea will often cause a "pasty vent" with fecal matter stuck to it.

Birds with diarrhea should be seen by a veterinarian immediately, since dehydration and death can occur in a very short period of time. Even in the absence of diarrhea, you should always be on the lookout for worms such as roundworm or hookworm in your bird's droppings.

Undigested food in the feces – i.e., any bits of seed or pellets – constitutes an emergency. Get to an avian vet! These symptoms could mean parasites, an intestinal infection, proventricular dilation, or a disease of the pancreas or other internal organs

If a change in the color of feces can't be explained by a diet change, it can mean something serious. A dark greenish-black coloration could be a symptom of liver disease. Blood found throughout the stool usually means the bird is bleeding from the lower intestinal tract. This can be a symptom of intestinal infections, poisoning, warts, tumors, ingestion of foreign objects such as parts of toys, parasites, a problem with egg laying, or the ingestion of cuttlebone or mineral blocks. Fresh black feces are a symptom of bleeding in the upper digestive tract. If you suspect your bird is bleeding internally, this is not a situation in which you want to wait to see if it gets better. Later – when the bird shows other signs such as weakness -- may be too late. Blackish, tar-like feces could mean your bird has stopped eating. In small birds (lovebirds, cockatiels, etc.) the feces may turn dark and pasty within 24 hours. It may take 48 hours or longer for larger birds such as African Greys and Amazons to have these dark, dense droppings.

CHANGES IN URINE: The clear, watery urine part of a bird's dropping can change very rapidly according to diet, stress, excitement or disease. If a normal change in diet or emotion can't explain a dramatic or prolonged increase in urine, it could be an early symptom of a metabolic disease such as kidney disease. Poisoning, infections and drug reactions can also cause polyuria. A dramatic decrease in the urine part of a dropping can indicate dehydration, which can rapidly lead to death.

Malnourished birds on all-seed diets often have urine that dries into a white paste. This is not a normal dropping.

Urine is normally clear. Changes in color are obvious and usually a sign of serious disease. The most common change is a yellowy or greenish tinge due to liver disease. Reddish-brown urine may indicate metal poisoning.

CHANGES IN URATES: A dropping's urates - the opaque white-to-beige portion of droppings - change much like the urine does when there's a health problem. Urates that are yellowish, yellow-green, red, or reddish-brown may indicate liver disease or lead poisoning. There is some evidence that yellowish-green urates may also be a symptom of anorexia. More urates than usual may indicate dehydration.

OTHER CHANGES: Droppings that contain bubbles or foam can indicate an infection such as clostridium. Straining to eliminate could stem from a physical blockage caused by a growth or wart or another serious condition such as egg-binding. In either instance, get your bird to an avian vet.

FECAL TESTS: Depending on the bird's age and general condition, there are a number of tests that can be performed. A gram stain on a fresh stool sample (in some instances taken from the bird's cloaca using a swab) should be a part of a complete examination. Gram stains involve smearing a glass slide with feces and staining it to see bacteria under a microscope. A gram stain can be used to check for bacterial and yeast infections. If a problem is detected, additional cultures may be grown on separate plates in order to identify the bacteria. Once identified, the bacteria are transferred to another plate upon which tiny labeled discs using various anti-bacterial agents are placed. This will establish which anti-bacterial agents will do the best job of killing the bacteria so that the appropriate antibiotic can be prescribed.

Droppings can also be used to screen for fungal infections, which are best caught early. A fecal sample can also be screened for parasites by microscopic examination.

Familiarity with your bird's poopy papers is one way to practice preventative medicine. It is a lowly, but important, job that goes with the territory of responsible caretaking.

References: Cher Angelo, "Reading the Newspaper," Parrot Chronicals.com, and many other articles too numerous to enumerate.

Disinfectants: Should You Routinely Use Them To Protect Your Companion Bird?

David McCluggage, D.V.M.

Routine use of disinfectants to clean your bird's cage, cups and toys is both unnecessary and potentially harmful for your companion, yourself, and the environment. It is best to simply keep the environment clean, change water bowls two or three times daily, and keep the cages clean with just a little soap and water.

Why? First, it is impossible to really disinfect the environment. Toys can't be disinfected, as the disinfectants won't work on porous material (chew toys, wood toys, ropes).

There are numerous scientific studies that have shown that soap and water will remove the vast majority of potential problems, and disinfecting will only help a little, at best.

In hospitals, for example, it has been shown that simply cleaning a countertop will remove roughly 95% of the bacteria, viruses and fungi; adding a disinfectant will only remove an additional 2-3%. The same studies have shown that the countertop will return to the previous level of bacterial contamination within as little as four hours after disaffection. The same is true if cleaned with soap and water: the surface will soon return to the same level of microbial content (note we say content, not contamination, since all surfaces have microbes).

In other words, it is not only impossible to sterilize your bird's environment, but you would have to apply the disinfectants several times daily to have any significant effect at all! Second, the bacteria in your bird's cage and environment have mostly been seen by your bird already. They came from your bird's feet and mouth, the food they are eating, and from your hands. Your avian friend is already resistant to infection from these bacteria and viruses. The few new germs that he is exposed to will, in almost all cases, be a healthy stimulant to his immune system, providing immunity for future germs.

Disinfectants are poisons. Read the label. It will tell you that it is harmful if taken internally. Well, your bird does not wear shoes, so if you apply a disinfectant to the cage, the perches, the food bowls, and the toys, your bird will ingest small amounts of the disinfectant all the time. Your bird will absorb these toxins through its feet when walking around, through its tongue and mouth, and by inhaling them into his lungs. This can lead to lots of diseases over time. It is also harmful for you because you are being constantly exposed (through your skin and by breathing the vapors) to these poisons.

The same is true for aviary birds. Perhaps even more so, we over-use disinfectants in place of fresh air, cleaning, vacuuming out the aviary rooms, and cleaning toys, food cups, and water cups routinely.

Finally, recent studies are showing that routine use of disinfectants are creating "super-bacteria" that are more deadly than ever, just like overuse of antibiotics has created bacteria that are resistant to all known antibiotics.

To sum it up, routine use of disinfectants won't remove much more of the germs than simple cleaning. They are toxic to various organs in the body and are known carcinogens. And, finally, although they almost never prevent infections, they are likely to assure that the infection your bird gets is more deadly than a bird that is not exposed to disinfectants.

Disinfectants are so overused that even the conservative American Medical Association recently came out with a recommendation **against** the routine use of disinfectant soaps.

Make it nice and simple for you and your bird: Routine cleaning is great. Keep the cages and perches clean. Even more importantly, keep the water cups and feeding bowls cleaned up twice daily.

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Choosing a Pet Bird

A List of Things Prospective Owners Should Consider

Prospective owners, in choosing a companion bird, should consider the following:

1. Is it possible to tame and touch this bird?
2. How big does its enclosure need to be?
3. How much exercise does it need? Can it take care of its exercise needs within its living area?
4. Does this species tend to bond to one person and resent others, or is it likely to allow and enjoy companionship from several people?
5. What are its dietary requirements and what is involved in daily maintenance?
 6. Are its eating habits and droppings messy?
7. What is its expected life span? 3-5 years? 5-10 years? More than 20 years?
 8. Does this species have a tendency to pick its feathers?
 9. Does this bird have singing ability?
10. What is the potential of this species for screeching, screaming, or chewing?
 11. Is this species known for its talking ability?
 12. Will this bird be a source of disease for my family?
 13. How expensive is this bird to purchase and maintain?
 14. How much time does the bird require?

(Thank you for the newspaper article written by Don Palermo, DVM,
submitted by Barbara Anne Smith)

2007 DATES OF SOCIETY EVENTS

September 14	Board and General Meeting
October 12	Board and General Meeting
November 9	Board and General Meeting
December ?	Holiday Party

SUPPORT YOUR CLUB: COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Each commercial membership includes one business-card sized advertisement in the newsletter. Commercial members may also purchase additional ad space at the following rates:

One half page	\$50.00
Full page	\$87.50

Non-members may purchase ad space at the following rates:

Business card size	\$ 40.00
One half page	\$100.00
Full page	\$175.00

All ads run for a 12-month period. Send camera-ready artwork or neatly printed ad copy to SSEBS, c/o Pegg Bauer, 8008 Ellison Loop NW, Olympia, WA 98507 or to peggb@comcast.net. Copy and payment received by the third Thursday of the month will appear in the following month's newsletter.

Copy change during the current period will be considered on a case by case basis and additional charges – if any – will be determined at the time of request. All ads must be paid in full prior to being published. The SSEBS Board of Directors reserves the right to refuse any advertising it deems appropriate.

Questions? Contact Pegg Bauer at 360/866-4088 or peggb@comcast.net.

Please note: As a society, SSEBS does not endorse the products or services advertised or discussed in its newsletter. SSEBS is not responsible for advertisers' claims or products.

Join !! SSEBS YahooGroup.

This is not a "chat group" as such (a "chat group" generally means that everybody is on line at the same time, "talking" back and forth by typing messages in real-time.) With a YahooGroup, e-mail messages are posted to the group which then distributes copies of the messages to the subscribers, depending on how they want to receive the message copies.

Go to <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/SSEBS/>. You can join by clicking on the "join this group" button on the home page or by sending an e-mail message to SSEBS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Learn how the group works: <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/groups/original/members/> is the place to go.



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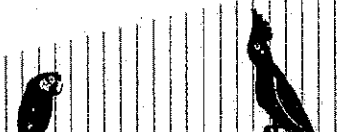
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Deanna Shafar, DVM



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Puyallup, WA 98371

Phone: 253-445-4536; Fax: 253-445-4544;
email: asdhillon@wsu.edu

Pine Cone foot toys:

Gather unsprayed pinecones. Bake in a 250 degree oven for 20 minutes on a cookie sheet or other pan (hint: use aluminum foil or other barrier if you don't want pine sap all over your pan). Hide pine nuts in the cone. Wow!

FOR SALE

Budgies, variety of colors, \$25 a pair or \$15 each

Mature breeders (these are not tame birds; some were pets but were set up for breeding):

- Male Double Yellowhead (proven breeder). Was with older female that died of fatty liver disease.
- Male Yellow Nape (proven breeder). I sold his mate when they started fighting.
- Brotogeris species: White Wings, Yellow/Chevron Wing, and Orange chin.

Proven Pairs: Blue Front \$900; Red Lored \$900

Miscellaneous: I have 3 incubators to sell as a package deal. 2 Turnex (TX6) and 1 original Turnex. All are tested and ready to use. They hold heat very well. I have used the original Turnex as a hatcher/brooder, and the two TX 6s for incubating -- one is a backup in case the one running should fail (best to be prepared for all things). I have an extra brooder ring and extra egg carriers, 3 automatic turners, and dishes that I use for the hatcher/brooder. I also have new wick material for at least one more change. All three units with extras for only \$500.

Bamboo: you dig !!

Contact Smiles: 360-736-3973 (evenings)
sgermeau@yahoo.com

FOR SALE

PETS AND BREEDERS
GOODHART BIRD FARM
Shelton, WA 98584

360-426-6375

kegdharth@hctc.com

PET SITTING

Pet sitting services offered. Home visits for birds, dogs, cats, and small rodents. Price to be discussed depending on how many pets you have, how many visits per day you want, and your location.

Contact 360-455-0697
Sherylle: goffin90@yahoo.com

FOR SALE

Beautiful, proven pair, 5 yr old Rainbow Lorries, plus baby in nest.
\$400

Contact Linda James: 360-491-3216
jamesgang@thurston.com

Do you know someone who is interested in birds? If so, give the editor his or her address, and a complimentary newsletter will be sent.

The South Sound Exotic Bird Society is pleased to grant permission, upon written request, to other newsletters to reprint articles and features appearing in our newsletter. However, to

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

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BOOK NOOK:

D'Arrezo & Shannon-Nunn, Parrot Toys and Play Areas. This book is chock full of easy-on-the budget (free is good) toys and play areas. Recommended by Dr. David McCluggage -- a good companion to your foraging efforts.

SSEBS Officers and Committees

President	Leslie Simpson	360-426-3708
Vice President	Linda Morgan	360-705-0141
Secretary	Pegg Bauer	360-866-4088
Treasurer	Pat Hill	360-357-7865
Members-at-Large	Jackie Cotrell	425-210-4036
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	VACANT	
Membership	Linda Morgan	360-705-0141
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Publications	Pegg Bauer	360-866-4088
Ways and Means	Leslie Simpson	360-426-3708
Education	VACANT	
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Send any suggestions for meeting topics or specific speakers or programs to any board member.

preserve the integrity of the original article, we all articles and features must be reprinted in full, giving credit to the original author and date of publication. Individual authors may reserve the rights for reprinting their articles; please contact those authors for permission to reprint.

A REMINDER: PLEASE NO BIRDS AT MEETING
 Our contract with the Olympia Center requires that we follow its rule of no animals or birds at meetings unless a it is part of a speaker's presentation. This affects the SSEBS insurance policy.

CLUB INFORMATION

- As a general rule, the first half hour of each General Meeting, from 7:00 to 7:30 pm, will be dedicated to socializing. The evening's program will begin at 7:30 pm, and the regular meeting will follow the program.
- For information, call 360/455-0697.
- The SSEBS mailing address is:
 South Sound Exotic Bird Society (SSEBS)
 P.O. Box 15014
 Tumwater, WA 98511-5014
- Please use this address for all club correspondence except for items to be sent to the newsletter editor. Send newsletter correspondence to:
 Pegg Bauer
 8008 Ellison Loop NW
 Olympia, WA 98502

FOR SALE, TRADE OR WANTED

2007 CANARIES FOR SALE:

Bronze, bronze variegated and chestnut Staffords
 \$50 cocks, \$30 hens
 Variegated cinnamon hens \$30

WANTED:

Opal or dominant blue canary hen. Will trade male spice f female spice finch

ALSO FOR SALE:

Hand reared pearl pied cockatiel \$75
 Zebra and Society Finches \$12

Fine Feathers & Fins, 114 Miller Rd., Randle, WA 98377
mews@lewiscounty.com 360 497-2160

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New _____ Renewal _____ Address/phone change _____

NAME(S) _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

PHONES:

Home: _____

Work (if applicable): _____

Cell: _____

EMAIL ADDRESSES: _____

Referred by: _____

Membership type per year:

Junior (under age 18).....\$ 6 _____

Individual.....\$12 _____

Family.....15 _____

Commercial.....\$25 _____

Dues payable to:

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 (Returned checks subject to service charge)

Mail to: SSEBS Membership
 P.O. Box 15014
 Tumwater, WA 98511-5014

Your avicultural interests (please check all that apply):

- African Greys Amazons Caiques Canaries Cockatiels Cockatoos Conures
 Doves Eclectus Finches Lories Lorikeets Lovebirds Macaws
 Parakeets Pionus Roselias Others:

Roster for Refreshments/Door Prizes

Month:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Refreshments:	Linda	?	?	Holiday Party
Door Prizes:	Sherylle	Carol	?	Holiday Party

SSEBS is proud to be associated with:

- NORTHWEST EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY
9594 First Avenue NE, #352, Seattle, WA 98115
<http://NWExoticBirdSociety.org>; Email: Info@NWExoticBirdSociety.org
Meetings on the third Thursday of each month.
- THE WASHINGTON BUDGERIGAR SOCIETY
2126 Bedal Lane, Everett, WA 98208-2439
<http://mysite.verizon.net/resom1a2WBS1.htm>; Email: swanson28s@verizon.net
Meetings on the first Sunday of every month.
- THE BIRD LOVERS SOCIAL CLUB
Dimmitt Middle School, 12320 80th Ave. So., Seattle, WA 98178 (Renton area)
For information, contact: President Julie Corwin, 206-772-1730
Email: blconnection@hotmail.com; birdloverssocial@yahoo.com
http://www.geocities.com/bird_lovers_club/
Meetings on the third Friday of every month.

Note: Upcoming bird show in Bremerton

Saturday, September 15, 2007. Hosted by Olympic Bird Fanciers.

See: <http://olympicbirdfanciers.com>

SOUTH SOUND EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY

Pegg Bauer, Editor

Newsletter address only:

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Olympia, WA 98502

