

# **SOUTH SOUND EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

Volume XXIV, Issue 4

August 2009

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

*(The newsletter is now published every other month)*

**August 14, 2009**

Program:

**What the Heck is My Parrot Doing?**

Behavior is a component of an endless reciprocal interaction among an individual's genetics, behavioral history and environment. Behavior is nothing if not complex. When it comes to the complex behavior of our companion parrots, we definitely have our hands full. With the potential for screaming, screeching, calling and shrieking . . . feather plucking, picking, shredding and clipping . . . and who can forget to mention biting, nipping and clawing, reducing problem behavior seems especially complicated.

If we hope to improve our ability to understand and positively influence our parrot's behavior, we need an approach that provides an organized, trust building as opposed to trust destroying, process that simplifies the seeming complexity that threatens to obscure our view.

Enter a Ph.D in psychology named Susan Friedman at Utah State University. Her interest in parrots and other species of non-humans led her to look into her field of study for answers to how to understand specific behaviors in them. When we can clarify the related components of different types of behavior, the path to creative, positive solutions and teaching plans becomes more clear. The approach she has brought to the parrot world is known as ABC Analysis.

Our speaker this month, a student of Dr. Friedman, will show us how the ABC Analysis tool can be used to positively impact our relationships with our birds

**October 9, 2009**

**Program**

**Avian First Aid**

Accidents and illnesses occur suddenly. And it seems to be the rule that this will occur at 6:30 PM, on a holiday, or on the weekend (usually a 3-day weekend). And as some of us have discovered, our access to emergency avian veterinary care during non-business hours may be severely limited, if available at all.

Dr. Greg Bennett has graciously agreed to present a program on first aid for birds.

He has a great deal of experience, not only with parrots, but also raptors.

Saving this date might ultimately save your parrot.

# **Top Ten Bird Killers**

## **1. Water Deprivation**

- Water bottle malfunctions due to ball stuck in delivery tube or object stuffed into the tube. Water bottles should be checked, washed, and refilled every day.
- Water bowl going unfilled for days. Should be washed and refilled twice daily because of bacteria.
- Most birds will die if water is withheld for three days, unless lots of moisture-laden foods are fed.

## **2. Unclipped Wings.**

- If a bird is given freedom outside cage, wings should be clipped enough to inhibit flight, but allow it to glide gracefully to the ground.
- If a bird is frightened, it may mistake a window or mirror for an open space. Contrary to popular belief, birds RARELY break their necks with such an injury. They can, however, suffer potentially deadly injuries such as concussions, bleeding inside the brain, fractures, lacerations, ruptured air sacs
- If fully-feathered, birds may fly out windows or doors, even if they have never successfully flown before. Even indoors, they may fly into pots of boiling water, open commodes, windows, mirrors, fondue pots and active fireplaces.

## **3. Toxic Fumes**

- Non-stick cookware and other household items (drip pans, irons, ironing board covers, heaters, ovens, hair dryers, and heat-lamps, to name a few) possessing a non-stick surface made from polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) can be toxic. If overheated (temperatures over 530 degrees F), the gas released is extremely dangerous to birds and can result in death. Even with normal usage, some fumes may also be released. Get nonsticks out of the house.
- Passive inhalation of cigarette, cigar and pipe smoke – causes chronic eye problems, skin irritation and respiratory disease resulting in coughing, sneezing, sinusitis and conjunctivitis. Birds exposed to chronic second-hand smoke may develop fatal secondary bacterial infections
- Common disinfectants and household cleaning agents release fumes that can be toxic or fatal. Chlorine bleach, phenols and ammonia can all have dangerous vapors that can cause irritation, toxicosis and even death.
- Common aerosol products (such as perfume, deodorant and hairspray) can cause respiratory problems, resulting in severe inflammation and difficulty breathing. If the exposure is large or direct enough, it can cause death. Any pump spray or aerosol using a propellant should not be used around birds.
- Natural gas leaks can cause sudden death. Any type of heater, used improperly or with inadequate ventilation can be deadly. Carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas, can also be fatal. Have a working carbon monoxide monitoring device in the home, preferably in the room where the birds are kept.
- Second-hand smoke from marijuana -- can cause severe depression and regurgitation.
- Burning foods, overheated cooking oils and smoke from a fire can cause fatal inhalations.

## **4. Trauma.**

- Stepped on, closed in doors, vacuumed up, or squashed by recliners or fold-out beds when on floor.
- Electrocuted by electrical equipment or electrical wires.
- Sat on when hiding under sofa pillows.
- Drowned in washing machine as a result of playing in pile or basket of dirty clothes; killed after climbing into open clothes dryer.

## 5. Other Animals

- Never ever leave birds unsupervised outside of the cage if other animals, including other birds, share the same house.
- Even if a pet dog or cat has acted completely trustworthy around a pet bird, do not trust it.
- Birds may also injure each other, and may nip off toes where bleeding may be serious or fatal.
- With the onset of puberty, even birds that previously got along together may begin fighting.
- Any animal bite should be considered extremely serious, possibly life-threatening. The bacteria found in the saliva and the mouth of a mammal can cause fatal septicemia (infection in the bloodstream) of a bird in very short order. Cat bites should be considered the most dangerous, as the *Pasteurella* bacteria commonly found in the feline mouth, are extremely hazardous to birds. Even a simple puncture by a tooth can result in a fatal infection. Scratches from claws are also extremely dangerous, as the risk of infection is very real. See a vet immediately!!!

## 6. Toxic Food or Plants. Some foods are very toxic to birds.

- Chocolate -- digested in a different way by birds. The metabolite, theobromide, is very toxic to them. Baker's chocolate and dark chocolate are the most toxic, and milk chocolate is a little less toxic.
- Caffeine -- also metabolized differently in birds. It results in toxic compounds.
- Some varieties of avocado are toxic to birds, with perhaps the skin and pit being the most dangerous.
- Onions -- can cause a fatal hemolytic anemia in dogs and cats, but since birds' red blood cells have a nucleus, this may protect the cells from the severe injury that occurs in other species. This topic is not well-studied in birds. Until it is, it is best to not feed onions to birds.
- Plants. Lists of potentially toxic houseplants are well-published.
- Certain outdoor plants such as oleander can also kill.

## 7. Hand-Feeding Mistakes

- Unweaned baby birds should not be sold or given to inexperienced hand-feeders. It is not necessary for a baby bird to be hand-fed by the family purchasing it in order for it to become "bonded."
- Feeding formula may be mixed incorrectly, stored incorrectly, fed at wrong temperature. Other hazards include dirty utensils, forcing food into the baby resulting in aspiration pneumonia, injuring the mouth or crop with feeding equipment, and poor husbandry techniques (keeping the baby at the incorrect temperature, not practicing good hygiene, indiscriminate use of antibiotics).
- Most commonly, babies are kept at the incorrect temperature, or the food is fed at too low of a temperature, resulting in a slowed down gastrointestinal tract, which can be fatal, if not corrected in time.
- A baby forced to eat may struggle and end up inhaling the baby formula, resulting in aspiration pneumonia.

- Infection is common in hand-feeding babies that are not cared for properly. Bacterial infection, fungal infection and polyoma virus infection are the most common infectious diseases in baby birds, and all can prove fatal.
- Hand-feeding is best left up to those with experience.

## 8. Owner-Caused Diseases

- Although it is fun to take baby birds to bird shows, swap meets and club meetings, it is very dangerous for the babies. Many diseases can prove fatal to babies, especially polyoma virus. Adult birds are also at risk from exposure to other birds from the same sources, as well as from trips to the pet store.
- Taking birds to parties can also spread disease such as proventricular dilatation disease (PDD), chlamydiosis (psittacosis), Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (PBFD) and pacheco's disease. Diseased birds may appear healthy.
- Giardia, a one-celled protozoal organism, can be spread by a bird ingesting food or water contaminated by the droppings of an infested bird.
- New birds should be quarantined for at least one month, preferably two, before they are introduced into the existing bird area. No exceptions.
- Direct contact with owners' mouths. Humans carry bacteria and fungi that can cause serious infection, or even death, in birds. Birds should not be allowed any contact with human teeth, tongue, lips or saliva.

## 9. Heat Exposure

- Exotic birds, while from warm, tropical climates, cannot tolerate excessive heat. Do not leave in cars.
- A bird in direct sun outside or by a window with no place or shade to escape may rapidly develop hyperthermia and die. Overheated birds pant and, with panting, will also begin to get dehydrated. Birds suffering from hyperthermia may try to get out of the sun and bathe to cool off. If its body temperature rises high enough, it will seizure and die.
- Hyperthermia can also occur in baby birds if a brooder is set at too high of a temperature, or if the brooder malfunctions.

## 10. Sleeping With Birds

- Birds should sleep in their cages. Birds sleeping in bed are at serious risk for suffocation or life-threatening trauma.
- If there is a chance you might doze off while reading or watching TV, return the bird to its cage.

Reference: <http://www.exoticpetvet.net/avian/topten.html#Wings> (Margaret A. Wissman, D.V.M., D.A.B.V.P.)

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Scheduled to be in Olympia Monday, Nov 16, 11-2.

Point of Contact: [peggb@comcast.net](mailto:peggb@comcast.net).

## **LIVE AND LEARN**

### **Spaghetti**

If your bird likes spaghetti, but you have doubts (as you should) about feeding a processed wheat product, check out the gluten-free section of your favorite store. DeBoles makes a Gluten Free Multi-Grain Spaghetti pasta.

#### **Ingredients:**

Whole grain brown rice, white rice flour, rice bran, organic amaranth flour, organic quinoa flour.

Both the Co-op and GF Joes (in strip mall across from Costco) carry this product.

### **Bird-Safe Candles**

Available from [www.Avitech.com](http://www.Avitech.com)

(Also carries heat panels that can be used with a thermostat, which have been, literally, a life saver in my house.

### **Safe Disinfection.**

Use a combination of vinegar and hydrogen peroxide as an anti-bacterial disinfectant for produce or cage washing. Don't combine the two. Store the hydrogen peroxide in an opaque spray bottle since light degrades it. First one is sprayed, and then the other – doesn't matter what order. Don't rinse in between, but wait until both have been applied. Then rinse with clean water. Use also for cutting boards, counters, etc.

### **Cotton Rope Toys**

Can't generally be left to air dry because mold can develop.

Place in dryer on low setting to ensure a complete dry.

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### **News:**

Dr. Dhillon retired on 6/30/09. We send him our best wishes. His replacement is:

*Rocio Crespo, DVM, MS, DVSc, Dip. ACPV  
Associate professor, Department of Veterinary Microbiology and Pathology  
Branch Chief, Avian Health & Food Safety Laboratory-WADDL  
Washington State University  
2607 West Pioneer  
Puyallup, WA 98371*

*Phone: (253) 445-4536  
Fax: (253) 445-4544  
E-mail: [crespor@wsu.edu](mailto:crespor@wsu.edu)*

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**"TO THAT WHICH YOU TAME, YOU OWE YOUR LIFE"**

Stacey O'Brien, Wesley the Owl

FOR SALE  
PETS AND BREEDERS  
GOODHART BIRD FARM  
Shelton, WA 98584

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**6 parent raised 1 yr. old**  
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**FOR SALE**

**Star Finches \$50/mated pair**

**Contact Linda James:**

**360-491-3216**

**jamesgang@thurston.com**

**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

**SSEBS Officers Needed**

**Officers are needed for calendar year 2009.**

**If you are interested in serving,  
please contact Pegg Bauer.**

**peggb@comcast.net or 360/584-6495.**

**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 [subscribe@yahooogroups.com](mailto:subscribe@yahooogroups.com). Learn how the group works: <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/groups/original/members/> is the place to go.

**SUPPORT YOUR CLUB:  
COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING**

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

One half page \$50  
Full page \$87.50

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

Business card size \$40  
One-half page \$100  
Full page \$175

All ads run for a 12-month period. Send camera-ready artwork or neatly printed ad copy to SSEBS, P.O. Box 15014, Tumwater, WA 98511-5014 (please do not use a little piece of scrap paper). Copy and payment received by the third Thursday of the month will appear in the following month's newsletter. Copy changes during the current period will be considered on a case-by-case basis and additional charges – if any – determined at the time of the 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 inappropriate. Questions Contact Pegg Bauer, Editor.

**2009 Meetings**

**February 13**

**August 14**

**April 10**

**October 9**

**June 12**

**December Xmas party (date tba)**

As a Society, SSEBS does not endorse the products or services advertised in its newsletter. SSEBS is not responsible for advertisers' claims or products.



**FINE FEATHERS  
& FINS**  
Cage Bird & Aquarium  
Supplies  
114 Miller Road Randle, WA  
360 497-2160  
[mews@centurytel.net](mailto:mews@centurytel.net)

**FOR SALE**

**Lineolated parakeet babies:**

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Lucienos -- \$200  
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**Fine Feathers and Fins**

114 Miller Road, Randle, WA  
360-4997-2160 [mews@centurytel.net](mailto:mews@centurytel.net)

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**SSEBS is proud to be associated with:**

- NORTHWEST EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 47377, Seattle, WA 98146  
<http://NWExoticBirdSociety.org>; Email: [Info@NWExoticBirdSociety.org](mailto: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](mailto:swanson28s@verizon.net)  
Meetings on the first Sunday of every month.
- THE BIRD LOVERS SOCIAL CLUB  
(Renton area)  
For information, contact: President Julie Corwin, 206-772-1730  
Email: [blconnection@hotmail.com](mailto:blconnection@hotmail.com)  
[http://www.geocities.com/bird\\_lovers\\_club/](http://www.geocities.com/bird_lovers_club/)  
Events and Educational Programs only – no meetings

**SSEBS Meeting Time/Place**

SSEBS meetings are NORMALLY (but not always!!) held in Room 103 at the Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St NW, Olympia, WA 98501-8208 on the 2d Friday of each month. This can, however, vary – check your newsletter and the website. From I-5, take the Capitol exit, which comes out onto 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Follow 14<sup>th</sup> through the tunnel and turn right at the stoplight after you come out of the tunnel onto Capitol Way. Follow Capital Way to State Street. The Olympia Center is just past this intersection on the left (light-colored 2-story building).

**SOUTH SOUND EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY**

Pegg Bauer, Editor  
Newsletter address only:  
8008 Ellison Loop NW  
Olympia, WA 98502

