

SOUTH SOUND EXOTIC BIRD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

(The newsletter is now published every other month)

FEBRUARY 13 MEETING

Deanna Shafar, DVM, will be the program speaker for our February meeting. She will bring us up to date on all that is going on in the avian veterinary world. Because of the number of people expected, the meeting will be at the Olympia Center.

SEE YOU THERE!

UPDATE ON BamBam

A number of you have asked about BamBam, my B&G macaw, who I adopted with grand mal seizures. He was featured in an early publication of this newsletter in an article on "Seizures."

BamBam is doing well. Recent months have brought about what I think might be an important development for him.

Not too long ago, one member of the Feeding Feathers Yahoo Group noted that Harrison's pellets had brought on a "chewing frenzy" in her parrot. It brought me out of the "lurkers" shadows to actually post some of my own recent experience with BamBam – some of you may have seen it. I thought I would expand upon it here.

For those of you who remember, I adopted BamBam from a rescue about 6 yrs ago. He came complete with simply horrible tonic clonic (grand mal) seizures that, according to his prior owner (when she tracked me down) started when he was about 3 yrs old. The seizures were very serious when I adopted him, and he was generally so ill he couldn't perch without falling. He's always tended to overpreen and chew his feathers, and this would be exacerbated before seizure activity.

I've worked with a number of avian vets to help eliminate the seizures, which were life-threatening, and have had as many diagnoses as vets. He turned out to be toxic – metals and probably nicotine and other substances. Although no one initially expected him to live, he's still very much here. He's improved with liver support treatment and diet, but the seizures, although now not as severe and for the most part nocturnal, have persisted.

No one has ever thought about estrogen.. Yet if the terms "seizures" and estrogens or photo-estrogens (which mimic the effect of estrogens in the body) are Googled -- which I did in recent months -- you will get an absolutely obscene number of "hits" (over 341,000 in the English language alone). It appears that it is fairly well accepted that there is a high correlation between seizures and the ingestion of estrogens and photo-estrogens.

So, I have recently begun cleansing BamBam's diet of estrogens/photo estrogens. Soy and peanuts are way up there in estrogen, so Harrison's pellets (soy and peanuts are major ingredients) went first, and I now use only TOPS, Nature's Formula Spicers Blend, and Roudybush Rice Diet pellets. BamBam immediately improved -- seizure activity slowed in that they were not as often or as severe, and he was definitely calmer. Googled "natural estrogens" and "foods." Turns out lots of other things I was still feeding him were high in estrogens, including sunflower seeds and dates, so those were totally eliminated. I discovered some of his meds included soy, and these were reformulated. BamBam was better still.

Then I thought I'd give him some beautiful organic flax seed. What a disaster! He suffered 5 very severe tonic/clonic seizures within 48 hours. Turns out flaxseed and oil is sky high in estrogen. So the flax went in the trash. Then no seizures for 30 days -- a huge milestone !! And what I did not expect -- he's no longer chewing on his feathers!!!!!!

There are lots of estrogens in the food that parrots like and need and that are generally thought of as being good for them. And there are some foods that contain estrogens or photoestrogens, but also have other hormones like progesterone (e.g., sweet potatoes/yams) that may or may not counter the estrogen effect and so might be alright. I don't know at this point because of my own lack of knowledge. There are also foods that are estrogen inhibiting (e.g., buckwheat groats, cruciferous vegetables, most fruits (with a few exceptions such as apples), figs, citrus, squash, - see list below), so these are now becoming a part of BamBam's diet. BamBam does not care for greens, but luckily he will eat the Nippon cabbage in his mash.

I have not been able to determine relative values of estrogen in different foods, so am still mucking around in the dark on some of this. For instance, lots of grains -- like barley -- have estrogen, but they apparently don't have as much. Some foods appear on different lists (high estrogen or estrogen-inhibiting) depending on the website, so there is apparently not total agreement on how these values are to be calculated. For example, some sites say millet is high in estrogen, and others say that it is anti-estrogen. I don't know yet what is right. BamBam seems to do alright with it. I'm just learning from trial and error what BamBam's major triggers are and how to change his diet around to lower what I'm now assuming is an estrogen overload for him.

What triggered me to think about estrogen? One of Al Plechner, DVM's recent books, Pets at Risk, got me involved in what Dr. Al has identified an endocrine-immune balance that involves damaged/insufficient adrenals. Under his theory, high estrogen in the system is a huge part of the equation (damaged/insufficient adrenals release adrenal estrogen, even in males, and high estrogen foods can exacerbate the overload). While there is a blood test for this imbalance for dogs, cats, puppies, horses, and humans, one does not yet exist for birds, even though Dr Al believes the imbalance also affects them. Although many in the vet community don't accept Dr. Al's theory (there have been no double-blind studies by academia), others have embraced it with a huge amount of success. Dr. Al has been helping me with one of my dogs who has the imbalance, and there is no question he has saved her life.

It is important to note that TooBird, my U2, seems has none of these issues -- seizures, plucking, etc. -- and seems to be able to pig out on any of the high estrogen foods (soy, peanuts, sunflower seeds, flax etc) without any ill effects. So, this is apparently animal-specific and, if Dr. Al is correct (which I firmly believe he is), high estrogen in the diet will affect those parrots with insufficient or damaged adrenals. Such birds -- many of whom will have feather, behavior (think PMS!), or other serious health issues -- may greatly benefit from lowering the estrogen load in the diet.

I'm just learning, and it's a little early in the game to predict if we will be able to totally eliminate BamBam's seizures just with a change in diet. But I'm certain at this point that estrogen overload, for him, is part of the equation. I'll keep you posted.

Below are a number of foods and herbs that are said (at least on many websites) to be sources of natural estrogens:

Alfalfa	Eggs	Potatoes
Animal flesh	Eggplant	Pumpkin
Anise seed	Fennel	Red beans
Apples	Flaxseeds	Red clover
Baker's yeast	Garlic	Rhubarb
Barley	Hops	Rice
Beets	Licorice	Sage
Carrots	Oats	Sesame seeds
Cherries	Olive oil	Soybean sprouts
Chickpeas	Olives	Soybeans
Clover	Papaya	Split peas
Cowpeas (black-eyed peas)	Parsley	Sunflower seeds
Cucumbers	Peas	Tomatoes
Dairy Foods	Peppers	Wheat
Dates	Plums	Yams
	Pomegranates	

The following are thought to be estrogen inhibiting:

Berries	Green beans
Broccoli	Melons
Buckwheat	Millet
Cabbage	Onions
Citrus Foods	Pears
Corn	Pineapples
Figs	Squashes (except pumpkin)
Fruits	Tapioca
(except apples, cherries, dates, pomegranates)	White rice
Grapes	White flour

SEEDS – MAKING YOUR OWN MIX

One problem with seed mixes is that birds most always tend to pick out favorites and leave much of it behind. Seeds should only make up a small amount of the total diet. If you visit a health food store (think Co-op in Olympia) you can usually find lots to choose from. Possible grains for a dry mix: millet, hulled barley (not pearled), wheat, spelt, kamut, quinoa, whole oats, sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, flax. Organic hopefully non fortified cereal could be added, whole grain pastas if small amounts. You can also add some dried unsulphered fruits and veggies.

Grains are lower fat than seeds and nuts but still contain lots of calories. The most ideal way to offer a dry mix is to soak it overnight (do not soak milo or sorghum) at least and to go another step further to sprout it...probably ready in about 24 hours.

If for some reason the bird will only eat a dry seed mix, it can be tossed in oil such as cold pressed flax seed oil or palm oil and then powdered alfalfa, wheat or barley grass added and a little powdered kelp (all seed diets are well known to be nutritionally deficient) and stored in the fridge for up to a week. Use 1 TBS oil to 1 lb. of seed mix.

ON AVOCADOS

Avocado contains persin, a fatty acid derivative that is toxic to some animals, and in sufficient quantity can cause death. Birds including parrots seem especially sensitive to persin. Leaves are the most toxic, but persin is contained in the fruit, stems and seeds as well. In mammals susceptible to persin, it causes myocardial necrosis, not sure about birds. There was a study done with Budgies, and when they were fed one gram of avocado fruit they became agitated and began pulling feathers. When fed 8.7 grams, death resulted within 48 hours. Humans in general don't seem to be affected, except for an occasional person with a sensitivity.

(from Feeding Feathers Yahoo Group)

Estrogens, Flax and Chia Seeds

No one argues the benefits of Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs). They are found in flax, fish and evening primrose oils. But some new research is emerging on flax seed oil and its possible link to estrogen dominance, which perhaps makes it a questionable oil to consume on a regular basis.

There is evidence that estrogen dominance is becoming a huge problem all over the world because we're consuming way too many estrogens from both obvious and hidden sources which is elevating our estrogen levels by way too much. And it's not just a female problem either. This is a problem no matter what gender you are because men naturally have the estrogen hormone too, and damaged adrenals can produce adrenal estrogen.

Plastics are thought to be the biggest culprit of all containing a lot of hidden estrogens. And unfortunately plastic is everywhere and we use so much of it everyday. All plastic contains estrogens, and the more flexible the plastic the more estrogen it contains.

If you can, store your food in glass containers, use a glass drinking bottle, and *never ever* heat your food (or your parrot's food) in a plastic container. Flexible plastic sandwich and freezer bags also contain a lot of estrogens. There is increasing evidence that estrogens from storage containers can get into your food or liquid.

Flax seed is in fact "linseed" which is what linen is made out of. Linseed contains a very high amount of plant based estrogen and phytoestrogens.

Whether or not flaxseed oil raises your natural estrogen levels is very controversial. Some say that the plant based estrogens in the oil mimic the natural estrogens in our body and therefore raise our estrogen levels. Others believe that the phytoestrogens actually level out any estrogen imbalances we have in our body. However, when I gave BamBam -- for the first time -- flax seed about a month ago, he suffered five grand mal seizures within 48 hours. We use no more flax in this household.

Another and better alternative to flax is chia seed. Chia, is familiar to most of us as a seed used for the novelty of the Chia Pet™, clay animals with sprouted Chia seeds covering their bodies. Little is known, however, of the seeds tremendous nutritional value and medicinal properties.

Chia is an ancient superfood that is very similar to flax, but without the estrogen and phytoestrogen element. It is a just as good, if not better source of EFA, so will do wonders for both health and skin.

Chia seeds were originally used by the Mayans as an energy supplement. The running messengers used to carry a little pouch of the seeds around with them. So, chia has been called the "Indian running food".

Here are some additional facts. Chia seeds contain:

- 2 times the protein of any other seed or grain
- 5 times the calcium of milk
- 2 times the amount of potassium as bananas
- 3 times more iron than spinach
- and of course, copious amounts of omega-3 and omega-6

If you try mixing a spoonful of Chia in a glass of water and leaving it for approximately 30 minutes or so, when you return the glass will appear to contain not seeds or water, but an almost solid gelatin. This gel-forming reaction is due to the soluble fiber in the Chia. Researchers believe this same gel-forming phenomenon takes place in the stomach when food containing these gummy fibers, known as mucilages, are eaten. The gel that is formed in the stomach creates a physical barrier between carbohydrates and the digestive enzymes that break them down, thus slowing the conversion of carbohydrates into sugar.

In addition to the obvious benefits for diabetics, this slowing in the conversion of carbohydrates into sugar offers the ability for creating endurance. Carbohydrates are the fuel for energy in our bodies. Prolonging their conversion into sugar stabilizes metabolic changes, diminishing the surges of highs and lows creating a longer duration in their fueling effects.

One of the exceptional qualities of the Chia seed is its hydrophilic properties, having the ability to absorb more than 12 times its weight in water. Its ability to hold on to water offers the ability to prolong hydration. Fluids and electrolytes provide the environment that supports the life of all the body's cells. Their concentration and composition are regulated to remain as constant as possible. With Chia seeds, you retain moisture, regulate more efficiently the body's absorption of nutrients and body fluids. Because there is a greater efficiency in the utilization of body fluids, the electrolyte balance is maintained.

Unlike flaxseed, chia seeds can be stored for long periods without becoming rancid and don't require grinding (whole flaxseed is tough to digest). Chia provides other important nutrients, including, phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, copper, niacin, and zinc. You may want to soak the seeds – 9 parts water to seeds will produce a slimy gel. But the seeds are very small, so I simply throw them dry into BamBam's mash.

Chia seed is available at the Olympia Food Co-op. Chia seed, meal, and oil can also be obtained online. One source is <http://www.greengrownproducts.com:80 chia-seed-meal-oil.htm>.

Resources: <http://www.living-foods.com/articles chia.html>;

<http://www.living-foods.com/articles chia.html>;

James F. Scheer, Magic of Chia : Revival of an Ancient Wonder Food

SILICON – IS IT TOXIC?

When silicon baking products first came on the market several years ago, I was hopeful that it would be a safe non-stick alternative to Polytetrafluoroethylenes (PTFEs) for parrot owners. There was nothing online at that time to say whether it was safe or not, and I still haven't seen anything definitive. Below is a sad story that indicates it may not be safe (I believe it came from one of the Feeding Feathers groups). It raises questions as to its safety:

I know about Teflon products and do not purchase them. I do not clean my oven with anything but a plastic scraper and hot water. Saturday Jan 10, 2009 two days ago, I put an oven liner that claimed it was made from silicone and was completely safe for animals. I followed the directions, started the oven, popped in a pizza, within five minutes of taking the pizza out, my Parrotlet fell to the bottom of the cage and died in my hand. I had no clue what happened to him, I tried to clear his little air way, I thought maybe he choked on something. No luck bringing him back. I have only had him for 5.5 months, but you sure can get attached quickly.

I also have two female caiques, Tango and Daisy. These birds are my children just as for many of you. I wanted to show the girls that little Tucker had passed, so they wouldn't call for him. I took out Tango (blk.head) showed her that Tucker was gone, she seemed to understand.

When I went to take Daisy (wht.belly) (my princess) I have had her for 3 years, when I looked at her she was sitting low on her heated perch, almost squatting. I had her step up, but she had a hard time doing so. Once I had her I could tell something was very wrong, she was wobbly and out of it.

It hit me like a ton of bricks!!!! I had read about this..... That darn oven must have contained some type of teflon or chemical. My roommate and I now in a total panic, rushed the girls outside. Daisy was fading fast.....I was crying and begging her to stay awake.

My neighbors came out to help, they called the local avian vet and had to leave a message. The internet said oxygen.....Where am I going to get oxygen at 6pm on a Saturday night??? I was a mess!!!

I called the local Fire Dept. I asked them to please, please bring oxygen to save my baby. I must have sounded like a lunatic or something. They came with in fifteen minutes, we put the mask over Daisy's mouth and her eyes became more alert. I was hopeful. He suggested putting her in a small box and letting the oxygen tube go directly into the box.

We got a small box, she seemed to be standing now..... Very hopeful now!

The EMT called the University of Tennessee avian vet. The avian vet said it sounds like teflon exposure. He told the EMT the outcome was not good, but the EMT did not tell us that right away; he could see what a mess we already were. The vet said to take the oxygen off for ten minutes and if she stayed alert that we could bring her to the hospital, but if she faded that meant she had already suffered a lethal dose and there would be nothing he could do for her.

Daisy Mae died at 10:15pm, I told her it was bed time and she went to sleep. Tango, the survivor, was trying to feed Daisy the last hour of her life. It broke my heart.

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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 SSEBS-subscribe@yahoo.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 sized 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.



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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
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
(Renton area)
For information, contact: President Julie Corwin, 206-772-1730
Email: blconnection@hotmail.com
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 14th Street. Follow 14th 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

