



Surprise Bird In Spring Clutch Of Green-cheeked Conures

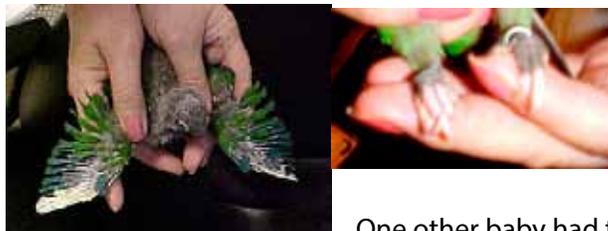
This is not a story about how to raise different mutations, but rather a story about a possible pied mutations in Green-cheeked conures that just showed up out of the blue in our aviary as we recently had a little surprise when it came time to bring a clutch of birds inside and a chance to look closer at the little birds.

We had the parents of this clutch of four for about one year. We noticed that one clutch from them had white toes and toe nails, or at least some white on their feet, but had not really paid a lot of attention to it.

The dad of this clutch is a cinnamon, the female a normal looking Green-cheek, We had purchased the pair from friends of ours locally, they were selling almost all their breeders because of health reasons. The reason they had the mutations mixed on this pair, was that during a temporary move, they had a normal Green-cheeked Conure female and a normal looking male in a cage and during the move added the cinnamon male in the same cage, yet within 30 minutes after sharing the temporary cage, both of these birds had simply fallen in love and our friends figured, well if she is that much in love with this male and abandoned her original male, they must not have been very compatible to begin with and left them together.

They started laying right away and our friends also had some babies from their clutches with white toes but, like us, they did not really question the white toes too much.

Well, then came spring of 2007 and Deryl brought their first clutch in at two weeks and I noticed one baby looked different, the outer pin feathers on the wings looked almost white and also had white toes and toe nails. We kept watching closely and sure enough, as feathers began to unfold, we found three beautiful white feathers on the right wing and two on the left wing.



One other baby had three white toes and the third had kind of a mottled color on his legs, not the normal dark coloration you will see on a normal looking Green-cheeked. The fourth baby was a cinnamon female with no unusual coloration.

Let me back track and explain that we are both very mutation challenged. We have been able to keep up with the sex-linked Green-cheeked mutations up to the pineapple, but we had never raised anything other than Green-cheeked conures with sex linked mutations, and had very little knowledge of the mutation process.



So, needless to say we were very taken aback and did not know what to make of this unusual baby. I took pictures to see what would develop and once fully feathered, the bird had these beautiful white with a little yellow feathers and we knew it was something special, but we were not sure what to make of it.



We wrote to several people that really know mutations and were told that it looked very much like a pied bird, which meant that both parents were at least split to pied. We have started to try to learn all we can about pied mutations and, with the help of another Pyrrhura member, are going to hopefully breed some offspring that has the same markings. We are told one way to make sure it is a true pied, is to have this beautiful coloration passed on to their offspring.

So, we set him up for future breeding and also found somebody that has a Green-cheeked conure that has white wingtips and might also be a split to pied. We would like to use this bird set-up next year with a baby from our surprise bird. We are anxiously looking forward to the next breeding season and hope to have several birds with these unusual markings.

We will write a follow up next year when we hopefully have some clutches from our newly set up birds and will send pictures of them.

Elke and Deryl Davis
www.rockportroost.com



Playing Catch Up Successfully!

By Laurella Desborough
July 21, 2007

Okay. Let's look at reality.

This past week, a friend of mine told several of us that his sister and her family, who own a good business in the LA area, were going to donate THREE MILLION DOLLARS to PETA because of their good work for animals. Well, we just about came unglued. We dug up a host of facts and sent him on his way to educate his sister. Now, HOW MANY OTHERS are donating money thru wills, trusts, and just outright donations?

Now, where does that lead? It leads to AR organizations being able to hire FULL TIME PR persons, full time lawyers to draft legislation, writers to create articles, and all of these spend at least 8 hours a day, five days a week, year in and year out PUTTING OUT PR and LEGISLATION for these animal rights outfits like HSUS and PETA. So how do we counteract that onslaught?

1. We need to support the national organizations that ARE working to provide real information, who have websites and who have media contacts, federal and state government contacts and who are respectable and factual in their presentations. National Animal Interest Alliance is one of those...www.naiaonline.org



Here is the AR
playbook WRT
breeding birds:

Handfeeding
= Bad

"Co-Parenting"
= Good

Parent Raising
Only = Better

No Breeding
= The Best!

Euthanasia =
Orgasmic

No Birds in
Captivity =
Nirvana!!!

John Del Rio

Personally, I am not acquainted with all organizations that cover all animal interests and species. There are national orgs that relate to specific breeds, such as in dogs or cats; specific activities, such as farming or ranching or circuses; or to specific pet species, such as birds and herps and fish. They also deserve our support in terms of membership dues, and in terms of volunteer activities for these orgs. We all need to step up to the plate and get active in working to support our animal interest organizations.

2. We need to support the internet websites or bloggers that support OUR animal interests and causes, such as www.consumerfreedom.com or www.activistcash.com or www.dogpolitics.com.

3. We need to PURPOSEFULLY educate our family members and friends and acquaintances about the problem of the animal rights orgs, and make a point of NAMING them... HSUS, PETA, etc. and tell why they are a problem for all animal owners. People need to know and appreciate the facts.

4. We need to 'make friends' with local animal control when that is possible. In other words, when they haven't already been taken over by the AR belief system. Even then, if local breed clubs can make a point of working with local animal control agencies, providing free training days for the public, assisting with adoptions, providing fund raising projects that help the shelter animals, THAT can change their minds.

5. We need to make sure that every member of the animal organizations to which we belong have their email address in the main files of that organization so that we are able to INFORM people when threatening bills are proposed at the state or federal level. And, it would help to have some meetings devoted to educating the membership about animal rights...who they are and what they do and how to fight them.

6. We need to respond to ALL media articles about animal issues and be sure that the information provided is accurate and gives a balanced opinion to the public. When a staff writer presents a one-sided AR view of animal issues, we need to call them on that and present the facts and push for them to share those facts with the public. We cannot stand idly by when B.S. is being reported in the news.

7. We need to introduce ourselves to our LOCAL county commissioners and our STATE representatives and senators, and let them know about our interests in animals and our CONCERNS about the AR agenda. In my case, I give them a copy of the book: Animal Rights: The Inhumane Crusade, along with a one- page flyer which describes the difference between animal welfare and animal rights. I develop a friendly relationship with the staff person if there is one for the state rep or the federal senator or congressman. All these actions are what the animal rights folks are doing...If we FAIL to do this, we leave the area of legislative power in their hands...and then when proposed laws come forward, we are way behind the power curve.

8. We need to take the opportunities that present themselves

and use them to educate the public. For example, when there are local dog, cat and bird shows, marts, or other animal events, setting up an educational booth with general information about the animal AND with special information about animal rights is great. Often the event organizer, if the AR issues are explained, will provide a FREE booth for such information. If that is not possible, find a person or organization with a booth who will allow you to provide flyers about the AR problem, or get permission to pass them out at the door of the event...so that every attendee gets a flyer. Be sure the flyer includes website information about the animal rights agenda and about pro-animal organizations...so they can become a part of our solution to the AR problem.

Probably others on this list can come up with further recommendations on what we can do, but the above eight actions are what I have learned over the past twenty plus years DO WORK!

Now, the picture is bleak...but not hopeless. Why? Because more animal owners are waking up to the AR realities and deciding to do something about it. Because more and more members of the public are becoming educated about the AR agenda...and, if given the opportunity, even legislators do wake up. But, the wake up calls need to be put out there more and more often and the only way that is going to happen is IF and WHEN each person on this list selects the actions that they will perform to help change the tide of public opinion towards pro-animal interests.

One individual cannot do everything, but one individual can do SOMETHING... Many individuals each doing SOMETHING will change the situation to benefit animal owners.



Miscellaneous Expenses for PBA

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 6-4-07 | Received ck# 5507 | \$34.00 |
| 5-4-07 | Envelopes | \$ 3.91 |
| 5-11-07 | Stamps | B\$ |
| 6-11-07 | Address Labels | \$ 4.28 |
| 6-27-07 | Stamps | B\$ |
| 7-6-07 | Welcome Pkt | \$ 1.14 |
| 8-2-07 | Stamps | B\$ |
| Total | | \$33.93 |



The Baby Parrot Hand Dance

By EB Cravens, from Birdkeeping Naturally, August 2007,
reprinted with permission

We are raising one baby amazon chick this summer. She was a bit of an afterthought by one pair, arriving very late in the season and quite unannounced! Plans were to give most everyone (including April) a rest this year. But little "Button" as we call her, is here in the house after being with her parents in the box for about six weeks. We were ever so hesitant to pull her because raising chicks alone is something we avoid at all costs. But the parents Tia and Yoga were tiring of the late July hot days and a good home with other amazons has been reserved on Maui, so there we have it...

The dilemma was going to be how to relate to a single Yellow Fronted Parrot that now found herself lifted from her birthplace and plunked into our living space under a dark towel in a cushy basket with an inanimate, albeit pleasingly fuzzy teddy bear. We kept her as far from human and other pet commotion as was possible in a small house, let her sleep the night unbothered, and started proper first feeding the next a.m.

Button was suspicious of the strangeness to be sure, so next day's introductions were all done beneath the security of her dark bath towel shelter. I even cup fed her first formula with crushed papaya within the safe darkness of her now somewhat familiar basket home. In order to get her to relax and accept our ministrations, I used the gentlest of forefinger and thumb touches on her most natural and compliant body part—the beak. Years ago I noticed that baby amazons—and indeed most species of psittacine—when they are shy and hesitant coming out of the nestbox, will best respond to beak contact with a human fingernail. After all, this is the best mimic we have for the gentle, affectionate touch of their parrot mother. Beak to beak; fingernail to beak; very similar! Little pinches, subtle scratches, obscure clicks with my nail and the occasional "vibrational regurgitation motion" with my hand are all recognizable by hookbill chicks when done in the dark. They are neither scary nor patronizing to the baby-- instead approaching him or her solely where it is best received: frontally at the feeding station of the mouth.

'Tis the beginning of what I call the baby parrot "hand dance."

First, a bit of history would be appropriate here. The relationship between captive psittacines and human hands is fundamental to all aspects of parrotkeeping. In many ways it can be considered the most important intimacy contact there is. How and when this relationship develops and the degree to which it is carried, have much to do with how the parrot will behave towards people its entire life. There are some birds which avoid or resist hands, some which consider hands overtly threatening, many that take hands for an acceptable chew item, even as an object of sexual attention. Given that our hands can be so many things to the parrots in our care, then the way we introduce them to young birds is critical.

The parrot hand dance is based on the principle that the hand feeder or keeper uses his fingers lightly and fleetingly to touch a baby psittacine in the most natural of spots—while trying to never cross that line of the pet's privacy, nor make the hand a dominating physical force. Early on when a chick is fresh out of the nest, but eyes well open for three weeks, we use motions and touches that are akin to what a mother would do with her baby. The aforementioned beak contacts, also minute thumb and forefinger twist-preening on the cheeks and under the chin, making sure to not preen too hard on the still growing feather sheaths. We initiate tiny, brief, subtle "regurgitation vibrations."

When the chick begins to enjoy and respond after a few days, more leeway can be taken on top the head. But there is no body petting as this is unnatural for a parrot. If the baby wants to burrow under the full palm of the hand, we hold very still and allow it to be covered with one or two hands on the front half of its body. This is a very secure and nurturing position for an orphaned youngster that has been removed from its parents.

EB Cravens is the most consistently prolific writer of which I am aware with regards to raising baby psittacines. He has been published in various newsletters, but this article is one of the most interesting I've read. I personally appreciate his willingness to share what he has tried—various techniques to aid in adjustment and socialization in baby birds—and consider it very contributory to education for particularly small breeders, who don't have the benefit of old-timer aviculturist mentors or many years of experience with birdkeeping. EB publishes a monthly e-article (by subscription), and he may be contacted at aprilsflock@hialoha.net —Marcy Covault

Some chicks will go into total relaxation mode and fall asleep beneath your hand, so get comfortable and be prepared to give at least fifteen patient minutes to your parrot. Hands are held still, except when the baby moves at which time I give a furtive little twitch with a finger or two to reassure, and go back to just gentle holding. Do not pick the baby up to hold cuddle at this stage, as that is also an unnatural position and most chicks are uncomfortable being moved around with legs helpless. Sounds made by the infant can be imitated and duplicated by the keeper—beginning the vocal interaction essential to good nursery procedures.

Preparations for fledging—signaled by the parrot climbing up onto the basket edge, flapping in earnest, and showing a desire to get away from where it is placed—bring a whole different type of hand dance. At this stage the bird is interacting well with keepers, is over most suspicion, and is provided with munch-able foods, a green tree bough, picked flowers, and a simple baby toy sometimes with rattle or bell. Now our hands begin a more active relationship with the psittacine. We graduate from copying the mother/baby natural interaction to the fledgling/sibling behaviors. We are more direct in our preening, and firmer in the ways our fingers and nails touch the chick. Face and cheek and head touching evolves into holding upper and lower beak, twisting it back and forth playfully, grabbing at the feet and pulling as would brother or sister parrots in play. Regurgitation vibrations also occur between siblings. We experiment with tickling a finger or two under the belly, pinching the tail feathers, gently holding the wing and stretching it a bit. Most of these interactions are infused with vocal squeaks and squeals and mock growls from the fledgling—sounds duplicated by us to establish that this is all in play and any discomfort to bird or the human can be expressed as an extra-loud growl! Such roughhousing between keeper and parrot serves to establish the parameters of beak strength and hand strength which are proper and suitable between you and your pet! Essentially we are teaching and learning mutual trust and respect. Boundaries are being set by the bird and the owner: boundaries that if instituted correctly will endure for life.

In the case of our lone little Button, this

is the only training she is getting at this point, so the how's and how-hard's being learned are doubly vital. It may be weeks before Button is introduced to her cousins and grandparents, etc. out in the aviaries for a new phase of parrot social training.

The baby parrot hand dance...

Early finger/feather contact is not some arbitrary treatment which has meaning only in manipulating the baby bird by the keeper. It is an intimate schooling that reaps long-term benefits for human and hookbill alike. Give it a try. The outcome may surprise you!

Aloha nui loa, EB



Painted Conures *Pyrrhura Picta Picta*



Six babies, youngest to oldest!



Photos courtesy of Mary Arunski

Smiling Bird?

The rare recurve-billed bushbird, *Clytoctantes alixii*, was rediscovered after an absence of nearly 40 years, and was photographed for the first time in the wild. To read the article in its entirety and listen to this rare species' song, go to:

http://scienceblogs.com/grrlscientist/2007/07/elusive_smiling_bird_rediscover.php



Recurve-billed bushbird
photo by Fundación ProAves



Perija Parakeet photo by
Fundación ProAves

Rare Pyrrhura Captured on Film

First photos were taken of the Perija Parakeet (*Pyrrhura caeruleiceps*) in the wild, is critically endangered. This rare Pyrrhura is threatened by illegal bird traders and habitat destruction, according to the American Bird Conservancy.

<http://news.mongabay.com/2007/0706-birds.html>

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