

The *Flock Talk* Collection, book II

Living With A Parrot



by **Wilhelm Kiesselbach**

Edited by *Robirda*

From the Flock Talk Archives

www.flocktalk.com

This ebook is dedicated to all those who try to leave the world a better place than they found it. Thanks for everything!!

ISBN # 0-9730434-3-1

Copyright © 1995-2002

This material is copyright 2000-2002 by the author, photographers, Robirda Online, and its licensors. All rights reserved. No part may be edited, reproduced, translated or arranged without written permission of the author and editor, or (when applicable), the photographer and/or licensor.

This is an electronic book, and is not licenced for sale through any vendor other than Robirda.com, nor may more than one copy (for backup purposes only) be produced by the purchaser of this ebook. Such a copy may not be sold or otherwise marketed in any way.

Contents

Bird Brains	page 04
So, You Want A Pet Parrot?	page 09
Good Breeder, Bad Breeder	page 12
Handfeeding	page 20
Weaning With Abundance	page 35
Stepping Up	page 40
Toweling	page 45
Bathing	page 48
Talking	page 54
Clicker Training	page 56
Behaviour Modification? Whose?	page 59
Inappropriate Behaviour	page 66
Are You Slowly Killing Your Bird?	page 78
Domination Revisited	page 83
Second Hand Parrots	page 88
Recommended Reading	page 98

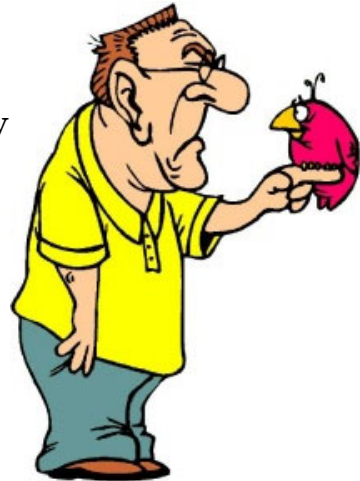
Bird Brains

This ebook is intended to most emphatically convey some very important general characteristics of parrots, and to instill respect and understanding for one of nature's great miracles: the Psittacine. Don't even dream of thinking that a parrot is 'just a bird.'

Firstly, this would do an injustice to 'just any bird', and secondly it is patently incorrect. There are very credible scholars who maintain that Psittacines are direct descendants of the Dinosaurs. That would give them a huge jump on the evolutionary ladder over most other creatures currently sharing the planet earth.

Moreover, their brain-to-body ratio is that of a human, and their brain is as highly complex as is ours.

Now the term 'bird brain' assumes an all-new meaning. If you wish to understand parrots, it is worth noting that they do not process information in the manner mammals do. While mammals use the cerebral cortex, Dr. Irene Pepperburg's research shows that psittacines use the neostriatum to process information.



They are literally dancing to a different drummer in a way that we can only try to fathom.

I have spent a large part of my life in the company of many different bird species, and have raised many different kinds of birds. Some are reputed to be among the more intelligent species, such as jays and jackdaws. But no other species I know even closely approaches the intelligence and intuitiveness of a parrot.

All parrots, (some more than others), possess an astounding level of intelligence. It has been shown to be equal to that of a dolphin or a five year old child. Additionally, over thousands of years of evolution, they have been 'programmed' to act and react in a certain species-specific manner.

This evolutionary development includes a near unbelievable ability to sense moods and changing emotional nuances in their environment. While they probably cannot read our minds, they seem to be able to perceive changes in emotional atmospheres and each will react in its very own species-specific way.



As a general observation, and somewhat complicating this challenge, are important differences in the manner in which this behavior is expressed. Each species and sub species has its own intrinsic and distinctive behavior patterns.

Among the various sub-species of Amazon parrots, for instance, behavioral tendencies are markedly different, ranging from docile to aggressive. Congo African Greys require a different approach than Timney African Greys, and the same holds true for the various kinds of Cockatoos, Macaws or any other new or old world parrot.

There is one imperative that must be held uppermost in your mind, if you wish to keep a parrot: before getting your bird, research, research, research. Decide which characteristics you are

Living With A Parrot

looking for, and if possible, visit a responsible breeder and then and only then make your final decision.

All too many people acquire a parrot with the same mind set in which they would buy a dog or a cat. Dogs, man's great companion, and cats, charming and independent as they are, have been specifically bred for traits that make them suitable to be mankind's companions.

Parrots, though, are basically wild animals who, with all their instincts very much intact, make a *choice* to give their trust. Living successfully with a parrot demands deliberate preparation and willingness for a commitment that can last a lifetime—or more.

When the new parrot owner attempts to keep a parrot without first educating him or herself on the subject, it is certain that surprises will lurk in the wings. These could and usually do include disenchantment and capitulation in the face of a bird turned 'mean', whose personality and behavior patterns remain very much a mystery. In fact, in most cases such an outcome is inevitable, given such a start.

Someone once characterized parrots as 'children from another world', and with very good reason. We humans relate to each other through overt actions and our language. We rationalize our way into, through and out of our relationships, and we are largely unable to perceive differences in other species' intellectual processes.

If it is not included within our idea of how the world works, we tend to not see it.

Beyond the ability to make serious commitments is another, far greater factor exacerbating the problem of communication



between human and parrot—too many of us are unable to perceive that this is a creature who is in many ways our equal, and who deserves to be treated that way.

This is the great parrot tragedy.

This ebook is not meant to provide universal information about parrots. I am merely trying to draw a very wide outline in the hope to stimulate you, the reader, to do your homework *before* you get a parrot.

Please believe me, this is vital for your and your new friend's happiness, and directly affects the 'Happy Ending' for both of you.



Above all, please remember, *never* buy an unweaned bird and never, *never* buy a bird from a pet shop unless you are 100% certain that they do *not* support 'baby mill' breeders. This will mean that they do not buy birds in 'bulk lots', and that they will take good care for the birds in their stewardship. You may wish to note that a young bird is not fully weaned until he is eating on his own—not just nibbling little bits here and there, but eating enough to support himself fully. In some species this may take a year or more.

This may make prices higher than elsewhere, but it will save you more than money in the long run. Such places may be rare, but they *are* out there, and these are the *only* kinds of pet shops with which any caring person should ever consider dealing.

Living With A Parrot



The once numerous Carolina parakeet—now extinct.

Recommended Reading;

'My Parrot, My Friend', and, 'The Pleasure of Their Company' by Bonnie Munro-Doane.

'Companion Parrot Handbook' and 'Pet Bird Report' monthly publication, by Sally Blanchard. www.petbirdreport.com/

'My Human, My Slave' by Echo Bird and Dust Bunny 'Too as told to Elizabeth Aaron www.toolady.com/

'The Complete Bird Owners Handbook' by Gary A. Gallerstein, DVM