

Birdy Bytes

Newsletter for the High Desert Bird Club of New Mexico



Volume 12, Issue 10

October 2019

Upcoming Events

Oct 24th – General Meeting,
Program: Bird Spa Night
RGSCC, Albuquerque, NM

Nov and Dec – Combined General Meeting,
Program: Dinner
Santa Ana Star Casino Buffet
Date and Time to be Determined
Pueblo of Santa Ana, NM

Happy New Year – 2020!

Jan 23rd – General Meeting
Program: TBD
RGSCC Albuquerque, NM

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Bird Words

Greetings Everyone,

This month we have a special treat for our birds, Bird Spa Night, at our general meeting, and a special treat for our readers, an article written by Margaret Johnson on Health Conditions in Pet Birds.

October is also the time when we nominate HDBC officers for the next year. Like many birds clubs across the country, we've had members, once very active, move on to other endeavors. We need your help to continue as a bird club. Now is the time to get involved.

If you're not a member, it's never too late. Prorated membership for October-December is a mere \$5.00 for individuals. Such a deal. If you're already a member, thank you and please consider becoming more active in the club. Several officer and committee chair positions are open and ready for your ideas and enthusiasm.

Our partnership with Birds of a Feather Parrot Rescue of NM offers new and additional pet bird owners a place to socialize and interact with other birds and bird people. We look forward to more Bird Spa Nights and Bird Toy Workshops in 2020 and beyond. Be a part of it because we really are for the birds.

Jennifer Catron



Operators are Standing By

Bird Club Biz

High Desert Bird Club of NM
P.O. Box 67855
Albuquerque, NM 87193
www.HighDesertBirdClub.org

Bird Rescue Hotline: (505) 554-0804

General Meetings

Fourth Thursday of the month

Meeting time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Location:

Raymond G. Sanchez Community Center
9800 - 4th Street NW
Albuquerque, NM
Map link: <http://goo.gl/maps/tk52Y>

Club Officers

President: Margaret Johnson
Vice President: Available
Secretary: Available
Treasurer: Jennifer Catron

Committee Chairpersons

Advertising/Publicity: Available
AFA Delegate: Jennifer Catron
Bird Rescue: Margaret Johnson
Education: Dorothy Newbill
Fundraising: Available
Hospitality: Available
Library: Available
Membership: Available
Newsletter: Jennifer Catron
Raffle: Available
Website: Jennifer Catron

Treasurer's Report

Beginning balance (stmt 8/31/19)	\$1,825.85
Revenue	\$0
Expenses	\$0
Ending balance (stmt 9/30/19)	\$1,825.85

**The High Desert Bird Club of NM is a
501(c)(3) educational, public charity
recognized by the IRS.**

Membership Requirements

Any person interested in cage birds who agrees to support the objectives in the HDDB By-Laws is eligible for membership.

Membership Dues

\$20.00 Individual
\$30.00 Household
\$15.00 Junior (17 or younger)
\$15.00 Senior (60 or older)
\$25.00 Senior Household

Dues are payable in January of each year or at a quarterly pro-rated amount upon joining the Club.

Newsletter Policy

Birdy Bytes is generally issued on a monthly basis. Content from members is encouraged. Content deemed obscene, inflammatory, overtly personal, copyrighted without permission to republish, or insufficiently bird-related may not be published at the discretion of the newsletter Editor.

Newsletter Advertising Policy

Any individual or business that supports HDDB through the donation of money, goods, or services may have a near business-card sized ad published in the newsletter for three months for no cost.

Members may have a text ad of up to 50 words and a reasonable number of supporting photos for no cost. Ads run for two months and may be renewed for two-month increments. Members are responsible for contacting the newsletter Editor to renew their ad.

Advertising space may be purchased. A half-page ad costs \$25 for six months. Additional ad sizes and corresponding rates are available.

Newsletter Editor reserves the right to accept or reject any advertisement based on the appropriateness for *Birdy Bytes*.

To submit content for *Birdy Bytes*, contact Jennifer Catron, Editor, at jcatron@Q.com, or (505) 235-2803.

Thank you.



General Meetings

October: Bird Spa Night



Back by popular demand, we will be hosting another Bird Spa Night!

Does your parrot need a nail trim, beak grooming, or flight feathers trimmed? The

meeting activity for October partners HDBC and Birds of a Feather Parrot Rescue (BFPR) to host a bird grooming clinic.

Our club President, Margaret Johnson, has volunteered to provide bird grooming services for a donation to the parrot rescue.

No appointments this time: it's first come, first serve. Donations for services go to the Birds of a Feather Parrot Rescue of NM.

Suggested donation for these services:

Nail Trim

Big birds (Amazon to Macaw)	\$15.00
Small to medium birds	\$10.00

Beak Grooming

Large birds only, and only if your bird needs beak points ground to a manageable curve.

\$8.00-\$10.00

Flight Feathers Trimmed

Big birds	\$8.00-\$10.00
Small to medium birds	\$8.00

Join us to support your local parrot rescue and bird club, and enjoy the opportunity to meet others with the same love for the birds!

Members, guests, and birds are always welcome. Tell a friend.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Meeting at a restaurant for a combined November and December general meeting was agreed upon. Location will be the Santa Ana Star Casino buffet where we met last year. Date and time is pending.

Meeting activity involved assembly of bird foot toys, good conversation, and good fun.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Hospitality Table

Do you like snacks? Do you like to share? HDBC invites you to share some snacks at our hospitality table at each monthly meeting.



Everyone is encouraged to bring snacks when they can. We're very informal about who brings what and when. Donations are always welcome.

Thank you for your support.

HDBC Elections

It's that time of year again to nominate HDBC officers for the next year. In October, nominations are collected and accepted. In November, members vote for the candidate of his or her choice.

Please consider running for an officer position or working as a committee chairperson. We're a good club with a noble cause. We should continue our mission to educate and promote good and proper care of caged birds.

Serving as a club officer is both challenging and rewarding. It does require some time, but it is not all consuming. The more members we have participate in leading the club, the easier it is.

Responsibilities of club officers are listed in our bylaws. A copy of our bylaws is posted on our website and can be found using this link: <http://www.highdesertbirdclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/HDBC-Constitution-and-By-Laws-062608-Amend-110712.pdf>, under Article VI - Duties and Powers of Officers.

Health Conditions in Pet Birds

By Margaret Johnson

Pet birds often become ill when they are not cared for or fed appropriately. While most avian diseases can affect every species, some species are more prone to develop certain conditions. By being familiar with various conditions that commonly affect a certain species, you and your veterinarian are able to formulate a diagnostic and treatment plan resulting in a correct diagnosis and cure for your bird's illness. While it is impossible to list every possible disease and breed that may afflict your bird, the following will help with some common health conditions your bird may encounter. If the signs of these health conditions are noticed, contact your veterinarian right away.

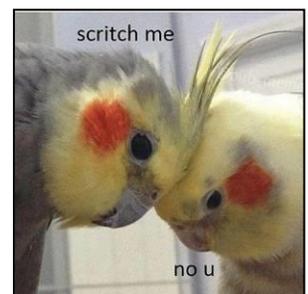
Budgerigars (also known as Budgies or Parakeets)

- Budgies can develop cancerous tumors in their kidneys and reproductive organs. Kidney, ovarian, and testicular tumors often cause a unilateral (one-sided) lameness that owners often mistake for an injured leg.
- Goiter (underactive thyroid gland or hypothyroidism) also can occur in budgies, especially when they are on all-seed diets. Seed contains very low levels of iodine that is required by the thyroid gland to function properly, therefore, the gland swells to try to extract all the iron it can from the seeds. Budgies afflicted with this condition are often overweight and have a squeaky voice or regurgitate when they eat as a result of the enlarged thyroid gland pressing on the esophagus.
- Another condition commonly seen in budgies, especially when they are in close contact with other budgies in pet stores, is psittacosis (also called chlamydiosis or parrot fever). It may be carried by budgies without them showing any clinical signs, or infected birds may show respiratory signs (sneezing, difficulty breathing, decreased ability to fly, and tail bobbing) or a swollen abdomen from liver enlargement.
- Since many owners incorrectly feed all-seed, high-fat diets to their budgies, obesity is common in these birds. Hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver disease) is a problem that often results and causes death. This species also is predisposed to poor diet-related (high-fat, all-seed) tumors called lipomas and xanthomas that may be found on the wings and ventral abdomen. Lipomas appear as pockets of soft, white, moveable fat, while xanthomas are typically firm, fixed, and yellow-orange.
- Reproductive problems are very common in pet birds, as well. Egg binding is seen often in pet budgies, even those housed individually without a mate, that are still capable of laying eggs. Birds often become egg bound when they are eating diets high in seed that lack calcium and vitamin D, which are critical in the formation and laying of eggs.



Cockatiels

- Like budgies, cockatiels are commonly afflicted with respiratory disease caused by the bacteria, *Chlamydophila psittaci*. Like budgies, cockatiels can carry this organism without any signs, shedding it in their stool and respiratory tract secretions to other birds, or they may develop respiratory signs, weakness, and enlarged livers.
- Another organism that commonly affects cockatiels is the internal parasite, *Giardia*. Birds infected with *Giardia* may have diarrhea and be very itchy, violently attacking themselves, especially under the wings.
- Another disease more commonly seen in cockatiels is gastrointestinal yeast infection with *Candida* organisms. Birds with yeast often regurgitate, lose weight, and have diarrhea and decreased appetite.



- Birds on all-seed diets often become obese and develop fatty liver disease (hepatic lipidosis) which can lead to death.
- Reproductive problems are even more common in cockatiels than in budgies, even in individually housed pets, and include egg binding, soft-shelled to shell-less eggs, oviduct prolapse, and reproductive tumors.

Canaries

- Canaries have several genetic-based conditions. Feather cysts, which require surgical removal, frequently occur in canaries.
- Cataracts also are not uncommon.
- In addition, baldness of the head of certain male canaries also occurs.
- An unusual form of knemidokoptic mange called tassel-foot occurs frequently in these popular birds in which mites cause excessive build-up of crust on the skin over the feet, making the feet look like there are tassels hanging off of them.
- Air sac mites that infect the trachea (windpipe) and air sacs commonly contribute to respiratory disease in canaries. Affected canaries breathe quickly, often with open mouths.
- In addition, owners who provide their canaries with nesting material made of fine thread often unknowingly cause a problem for their birds. The fine thread can wrap around a toe or foot, impairing the blood circulation and ultimately causing necrosis (death) of the affected toe or foot. With extreme tissue damage, the toe or foot may need to be amputated.
- Poxvirus causes crusty lesions on the unfeathered skin in canaries and may affect the respiratory system, ultimately causing death.
- As with other small birds, reproductive problems, such as egg binding, are seen in canaries.



Finches

- Similar to canaries, finches often have air sac mites, leading to severe respiratory disease.
- In addition, as in canaries, fine thread used as nesting material can wrap around the toes and legs of finches, impairing circulation to the limbs and ultimately requiring amputation of affected tissue.
- When stressed from overcrowding, finches will often pick feathers off each other, especially around their heads and faces.
- Finally, these small birds, especially if they are fed all-seed diets deficient in calcium and vitamin D essential for egg production and laying, will often develop egg binding, which can rapidly result in death if not treated early.



Conures

- A strange bleeding syndrome of unknown cause has been reported to occur in conures. When they are injured or when they have blood drawn, they bleed excessively. Luckily this syndrome can be treated effectively if caught early.
- Feather-picking is seen with some frequency in pet conures when they are stressed or overcrowded.
- Nanday and Patagonian conures may carry a herpes virus without showing any clinical signs. This herpes virus causes an illness called Pacheco's disease in other bird species, particularly Amazon parrots and cockatoos. In these species, Pacheco's disease typically causes sudden death; therefore, conures should not be housed with other bird species.



Lovebirds

- Like other smaller bird species, lovebirds may be affected with chlamydiosis that typically causes respiratory signs, weakness, liver problems, and death.
- Lovebirds also commonly develop gastrointestinal tract yeast infections (candidiasis) caused from the yeast *Candida*.
- Various infectious causes of feather loss occur in lovebirds, including skin infection with yeast and bacteria, particularly inside the wings.
- Epilepsy is occasionally seen in lovebirds.
- Reproductive problems, such as egg binding, seen frequently in other small birds, also occur with some frequency in lovebirds.



African Gray Parrots

- These extremely intelligent, often high-strung birds frequently develop psychologically-based causes of feather-picking as a result of boredom or loneliness. They will also feather-pick as a result of sexual frustration from not breeding.
- A potentially fatal syndrome occurs in African grays on all-seed diets in which they develop low blood calcium levels resulting in seizures.
- Aspergillosis, a potentially fatal fungal infection, is often seen in African grays. The signs include difficulty breathing, sneezing, lethargy, weakness, and weight loss.
- Bacterial infections of the respiratory tract may cause similar signs as aspergillosis.
- Cancer is seen with some frequency in this species, as they are a long-lived.
- Although uncommon these days, beak and feather disease virus may occur in young African grays and is quickly fatal as a result of suppression of the bone marrow.



Amazon Parrots

- Amazon Parrots are commonly afflicted with upper respiratory diseases, many of which result from vitamin A deficiency associated with an all-seed diet.
- Cloacal papillomas (warts) commonly affect older Amazon parrots and may also appear in their mouths.
- Amazons may feather-pick, especially their wings and legs, as a result of psychological stress and sexual frustration.
- Amazons commonly exhibit mating season aggression towards their owners; some of these birds become too aggressive to handle and are given away to shelters.
- A syndrome of unknown cause, called Amazon foot necrosis syndrome, occurs in Amazon parrots. With this syndrome, parrots violently mutilate the skin on their legs and feet, causing excess bleeding and tissue damage.
- Some Amazon parrots develop epilepsy.
- Like African gray parrots, Amazon parrots are long-lived and as a result develop cancer in various organs.
- Moreover, like most birds on high-fat, all-seed diets, Amazons commonly develop obesity, hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver disease), atherosclerosis (cholesterol deposits in arteries), stroke, and heart disease.



Macaws

- Macaws were the first species to develop an ultimately fatal disease, proventricular dilatation syndrome, which causes chronic and progressive weight loss, regurgitation, and in some birds, ultimately death. This syndrome is believed to be an autoimmune disease associated with a viral infection called bornavirus. No one yet understands the complete cause of disease, as many bird species are infected with bornavirus and are not clinically affected.
- Chlamydiosis (infection with the bacteria, *Chlamydia psittaci*) also occurs in macaws, causing respiratory signs and liver disease.
- Oral and cloacal papillomatosis (warts) also occurs more frequently in older macaws.
- Psychologically-based feather-picking often occurs in the larger species of birds that are tightly bonded to their owners; macaws are no exception. They become frustrated because they are bonded to, but not mating with, their human flock-mates.
- Regression to juvenile behavior may be a sign of illness in sick macaws, especially those with gastrointestinal diseases.



Cockatoos

- Cockatoos, like other large birds, often develop psychologically-based feather-picking that is difficult to treat, particularly because they are so socially needy and require a great deal of attention from their owners. However, other problems, such as infection of skin with bacteria and yeast, may also cause feather loss. For this reason, any feather loss should be thoroughly investigated by your veterinarian.
- Like macaws, regression to juvenile behavior is often seen in cockatoos and may be a very early sign of severe illness in this species.
- Cloacal prolapse, seen most often in sexually mature females, occurs frequently in cockatoos.
- Lipomas (benign fatty tumors) are commonly seen in rose-breasted cockatoos who have a tendency to become obese.



The above is information I researched and was written by The AFA, The Association of Avian Veterinarians, The Lafeber Company, along with two DVMs, Dr. Laurie Hess and Dr. Rick Axelson.

Nobody knows our birds as well as we do. When something seems off, “not quite right,” your bird is acting different, droppings appear different, birdie isn’t eating or drinking as usual, don’t dismiss the change in behavior. Make an appointment right away as time is always of the essence when it comes to a parrot. They are the masters of masking illness and every minute counts when your feathered child doesn’t seem quite right.

Bird Rescue, Foster, and Adoption

A wide variety of birds are available for adoption at Birds of a Feather Parrot Rescue of New Mexico (BFPR). HDBC is partnering with BFPR to help with receiving, fostering and rehoming pet birds.

If you're interested in adding a feathered friend to your family, please contact Dorothy Newbill (BFPR) at (505) 980-6166, or you can call our HDBC Pet Bird Rescue Hotline at (505) 554-0804 for assistance.



Scarlet Macaw



Green Cheek Conure

If you are interested in fostering or adopting a parrot, BFPR is a **very** active parrot rescue. They are always working with a variety of different pet birds from Amazons to Macaws, and the smaller birds like budgies and cockatiels. They've even had some hand-tame doves available for adoption.

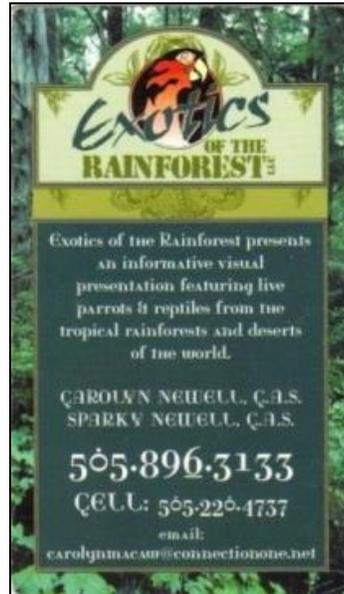
For more information, call Dorothy Newbill at (505) 980-6166 or check out their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/birdsof FeatherNM/>.

Rehoming fees and adoption policy process apply.

Double Yellow-headed Amazon



Friends of HDBC




Linda M. Contos, DVM
Ventana Animal Clinic

505-792-3700
5747 Calle Perro NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114
www.ventanaanimalclinic.com



DANIEL LEVENSON, DVM

10141 COORS BLVD NW
SUITE A
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87114
505-890-8810
505-890-8797 FAX
INFO@MYSOUTHWESTVET.COM

Birds of a Feather Parrot
Rescue of New Mexico

Dorothy Newbill
Director
505-980-5193

Birdsof FeatherNM@gmail.com
WWW.facebook.com/birdsof FeatherNM

