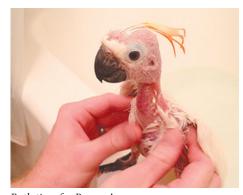
The Official NEEWSLetter of Foster Parrots & The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary

Peepers' Holiday Story

Peepers - bringing joy to the people he loves.

can't say for sure why I found myself on the porch, separated from my family. I tried to be a good bird. I didn't mean to eat the armoire! But the beautiful wood felt so good in my beak. I didn't mean to scream... but I needed to be heard. I didn't mean to bite...but how else can I control events? I do not always understand the forces that stir inside of me, but before I know it I have chewed something or I have yelled too loud or... I have bitten.

There were no people on the porch. There were no sounds of a family. My screams, instead of being met by human screams in return, were met by silence. I never meant to be a bad bird. I just don't always understand the rules.



Bath time for Peepers!

I felt lonely and my heart ached, but I discovered that if I reached up with my foot and pulled out a few feathers the pain would be followed by a rush of warmth, which I liked. It was cold out there on the porch, so it felt good to pull out those feathers. The more I pulled, the better I felt. Reaching up with my foot and pulling on those feathers, I would close my eyes and imagine the fingers of my humans, stroking my feathers like they used to.

Then one day a truck pulled up and strange humans from a place called "Foster Parrots" came to see me. They looked concerned.
They kept saying, "It's ok Peepers... We are going to take care of you, Peepers." The Foster Parrots people brought me to a place called "sanctuary" where hundreds of birds live. I didn't understand any of it at the time, but now I know why Foster Parrots took me away from my place on the porch. They did it because Jeanne and Stephen needed me.



Happy at home for the holidays.

Jeanne and Stephen brought me home with them it was clear that I had a big job to do: I had to fulfill all of the social needs of two very

When

strange humans. They needed me to fill their home with my beautiful singing. They needed me make them laugh (they think everything is funny). They needed me to share their meals with them, to supervise them while they do their chores, and to snuggle with them during naptime. But most of all they needed me to accompany them to the park to help them meet other humans! Attracted by my beauty, all kinds of people come to talk to them and ask questions, and this gives them the chance to tell many people about birds like me who need homes, and about rescue organizations like Foster Parrots that help bring parrots away

By Karen Windsor

from lonely porches and into the lives of good people like Jeanne and Stephen. This year I will not be spending the holidays alone on the cold porch. This year I will be bringing joy to the people I love. \odot

This true story, now about 5 years old, was originally submitted by Foster Parrots to a "Rescue Story Contest" staged by the Petco Foundation. We didn't win the contest, unfortunately, but we still loved Peepers' story. We've altered it slightly for publication.

It Takes a Village!

Notice something different about your year-end NEEWSletter?

We want to take this opportunity to thank the people who make Foster Parrots' tri-annual newsletter possible, starting with our friends at **Colonial Printing** in Warwick, Rhode Island whose generosity, professionalism and expertise have made it possible for us to produce our first full color newsletter. Not only did they make it more beautiful, but they cut our work and our expenses in half!

ColonialPrinting

You are here at www.colonialprinting.net

We also want to thank our graphic artist, **Dorian DeSimone** of **Dorian DeSimone** Designs (*DorianDesigns*. *com*) for contributing her amazing time and talent as our newsletter designer, and also big thanks go out to graphic artist and photographer, **Brian Jones** of **Brian Jones Design** (*BrianJonesDesign*. *com*) for the contributions of his stunning photography that can be seen in all of Foster Parrots' publications.

Without the donated and discounted



services provided by these talented people, our beautiful newsletter would not be possible. Thank you!

'Tis the season for year-end giving! The Year-End Mini-Match is a beautiful way to show your love for the birds & support the important work we do year round!

To Re-Home or Not to Re-Home: Understanding Parrot Challenges By Karen Windsor



athy never would have let go of Olive, her 32-year old macaw, had it not been for the cancer that left her tired and weak and unable to properly care for the bird. Olive is so aggressive no one would ever want her," Cathy explained, her emotion catching in her throat. "I'm afraid of what would happen to her out there, where she would end up. I would rather have her put down than be abused." She had been so fearful of Olive ending up in a bad situation, she failed to recognize the bad situation Olive had been enduring for 15 years in her home. Cathy was unable to handle Olive. Olive had rarely been let out of her cage since Cathy's husband left several years earlier.

When Foster Parrots founder, Marc Johnson, opened Olive's cage door, Cathy's eyes widened and she took a step back. Despite her love for the bird, her fear was apparent. Olive at first refused Marc's arm, but she did step up on a stick. Once out of the cage, Olive was transferred from the stick to Marc's arm, and he proceeded to whisper to her gently and caress her face, neck and head. Olive melted like butter. "I can't believe it," Cathy gasped. "No one has been able to do that to her in years." Olive, as it turns out, was not a bad bird or even necessarily aggressive. She simply had a strong preference for men. She was simply misunderstood.

The concept of "the forever home" may be unrealistic when it comes to wild animals as long-lived and variable as parrots can be. More notably, it's an expectation that can create chains of love - or guilt -that sometimes tether a bird to a poor living situation. Sometimes our home is not the best home for a parrot. When we talk about honoring the commitment we made to our parrot, the basis of that commitment should be quality of life. Our obligation is not necessarily to keep our parrot in our home forever, but to take responsibility for ensuring that bird is in the best possible home for him. Re-homing is sometimes the answer. Sometimes it is not.

Love or guilt can, at times, be the forces that keep a parrot in a situation of poor care. Other times these feelings are the very basis for the loss of a home that is - or could be - the kind of safe and stable environment that our birds need. Empathy, as it turns out, can be one of the biggest destroyers of relationships between parrots and people, and this occurs when we feel helpless to adequately meet the needs of a bird kept as a pet. Recognizing their inability to provide anything even remotely similar to the freedom and social support their parrots would have enjoyed in the wild, many people seek to place their birds in sanctuary, but the fact is that birds who are well-socialized and desire human companionship do very poorly in the sanctuary setting. Other people, understanding their bird's desire for human interaction, hope to find loving adoptive homes with people who have more time than they do. But where are those homes? No one has the time a parrot needs. And the fact is, in many cases, if the parrot had a voice and a choice, they would not choose to lose their guardian. Instead of using our love as the reason to cast a parrot out into the world, perhaps it's time to use love as the impetus for creativity and effort that can improve our bird's life with us.

Widely accepted, traditional standards of care for parrots kept as pets have done little to support quality-of-life for parrots in home

The concept of "the forever home" may be unrealistic when it comes to wild animals as long-lived and variable as parrots can be.

environments or to actually meet the social, psychological and physical needs of the birds. Consequently, the "reality of the pet parrot" comes as a surprise to many people, and an entire industry of guardian education and professional behavior training for problem parrots has bloomed over the past two decades to help us remedy the problems. We're finding, however, that the same lack of guardian time, motivation or resources that result in the development of undesirable avian behaviors are the same things that prevent people from seeking the assistance that can help their parrots keep their homes. For some, it is easier to remove the bird than to try to fix the problem.

"In everything else we encounter in life, we reach out for professional assistance,



"savs Sheila Blanchette, a professional avian behaviorist certified by the IAABC, and owner of "Heart Of Feathers" behavior training and consulting company. "If the cat is missing the litter pan, a vet is called

for assistance. If our child is having trouble learning in school, parents reach out to tutors or educators. When we, as humans, experience a personal crisis, we seek professional help. When problems or misbehaviors relate to a bird, if a quick fix cannot be found, people just give up.

"Re-homing should not be the first solution when negative behaviors develop in companion birds," Sheila continues. "Assistance and education should be sought. I work to keep a companion bird in its home. The bird understands the dynamics of that home. Of course, a bird can adapt to a new home, but with change, there are consequences."

According to Sheila, many of those consequences can arise from the fact that behavioral issues in the previous home were not addressed. They were simply passed along. A sudden change and a new environment for an already troubled bird can exacerbate problem behaviors and, once again, result in adoption failure.

Behavior training is never just about training a parrot. It's also about training human guardians to read body language, understand behavioral motivations and triggers, and how to respond in ways that discourage undesirable behavior while rewarding positive interactions. Bob Lewis, president of Northeast Avian Rescue (NEAR) in New York, agrees, and with his typical sense of humor laughs, "It's just a matter of trying to change what you can in the bird to make the bird a better fit, and as an adopter, to change what you need to change as a human to make the bird a better fit."

The development of many problem behaviors in parrots could be avoided if a parrot's most fundamental, natural needs are met in the home environment. Many people start out envisioning an ideal life with an avian companion who talks and snuggles and is content to sit in its cage until interaction

(cont'd on p. 3)

To Re-Home or Not to Re-Home: Understanding Parrot Challenges (cont'd from page 2)

is convenient for the guardian. No living, breathing bird, of course, fits this description. Parrots are social and are driven to be active participants in a dynamic social group. Parrots need to have the ability to make choices in their own best interest. Parrots are smart, and like all intelligent beings, they thrive when their cognitive skills can be challenged and exercised.

Wilson is a red-lored Amazon whose behaviors were not necessarily abnormal, but his insistence on acting like a parrot and exercising his right to autonomy proved to be unconscionable to his guardians. "Wilson has been miserable and unhappy with his current situation," his woman explained in the surrender request. "He does not want to stay in his cage at any given time. Once he is out of the cage he wanders around the house, climbs chairs and curtains and when we



put him back in his cage he starts screaming non-stop. No matter how we try to entertain him with toys, games and puzzles he still unhappy." Wilson's guardian assumes that the cage is the proper place for Wilson, and the fact that Wilson disagrees has created an intolerable situation in this home, but parrots protesting being incarcerated is one of the most common reasons why guardians determine that their birds are unhappy and would be better off elsewhere. With a little bit of creativity, however, a safe and stimulating environment could easily be created for Wilson, limiting his reign of the home, but also eliminating the need for cage.

Inevitably, events transpire in the lives of people that create untenable situations for parrots. Sometimes re-homing can vastly improve the life of a parrot. Other times investing in training, or implementing small changes in home environments, daily routines or social opportunities can transform a parrot from a lonely bird or a problem bird into a well-adjusted, dynamic member of the human flock.

Macaw Conservation Costa Rica - Project Update (Formerly "Hatched To Fly Free")

Then Foster Parrots partnered with Chris Castles in 2014 to support him in the establishment of a new macaw conservation project in Costa Rica, we embraced the challenges as well as the hardships and wove it all into an adventure that has been



Chris Castles medicating a Scarlet Macaw in Costa Rica

inspirational in spite of - or perhaps even because of the inevitable bumps in the road. A mere 4 years later our baby has fledged, with 2017 being a pivotal year for Macaw Conservation Costa Rica (MCCR).

Early in 2017, UK biologist, Rob James, joined the MCCR team, and Rob's extensive background in conservation together with his

administrative skills added balance and momentum to the project, helping to catapult the groundwork and professional collaborations laid down by Chris over the previous years. One



Biologist Rob James, newest member of the MCCR team



MCCR's new aviaries in the lush tropics of the Osa Peninsula

such collaboration has now culminated in a contractual agreement for the establishment of MCCR's first release site in the Guanacaste region of northern Costa Rica. Details for the management of this new release site and the necessary infrastructure are now being worked out, but the partnership represents a major step forward in MCCR's goal of creating the Pacific Coast Macaw Corridor, and introduces a stream of funding for MCCR that will be instrumental in the future growth of the organization.

In a serendipitous twist of events, Chris Castles was contacted in September by a former associate who required immediate placement for a large number of parrots, including 3 breeding pairs of scarlet macaws. This offer represented an undeniable opportunity that would jumpstart MCCR's breeding program. In preparation for the arrival of the birds and in anticipation of future expansion of the project, MCCR initiated a partnership with Dr Otto Monge, Head of the Conservation Genetics Laboratory at the University of Costa Rica, and veterinarian Dr Ricardo Alfaro, in order to establish strategies for managing the genetic integrity and geographic distribution that distinguish Costa Rica's two scarlet macaw sub-species (Ara macao macao and Ara macao cyanoptera). Genetic and health testing commenced prior to MCCR taking

custody of breeding macaws, as this information will be vital in determining protocols for the release of their future offspring.

In order to receive the large groups of birds, it would be necessary to raise a considerable amount of money quickly for the construction of several new aviaries. A plea for emergency funding went out to some of MCCR's key supporters, and \$21,000 was raised within



Scarlet Macaw in her brand new MCCR aviary

a matter of weeks. Aviary construction commenced in October and the new aviaries were completed in just over a month. The new birds arrived on November 24th.

Since its inception, MCCR has played

a critical role as a resource for the rescue and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned and confiscated parrots, and these birds have arrived (cont'd on p. 4)

Macaw Conservation Costa Rica - Project Update

(Formerly "Hatched To Fly Free") (cont'd from page 3)

from all parts of the country. Between 2016 and 2017, MCCR has returned dozens of birds to the wild, and some of these continue to visit the compound from time to time. A local flock of orange chinned brotogeris seems to wait and watch in anticipation for the rehabilitation and release of new flock mates. Parakeets in rehab are visited by the wild birds and, upon their release, are whisked away by escorts to join the local brotogeris community. Most of the red lored Amazons rehabbed by MCCR have disappeared into the large Osa population, although "troublemakers" Jimmy and Pirate, continue to visit the main house, taking great enjoyment in harassing their former caregivers. MCCR's first rescue of a wild scarlet macaw took place at the beginning of the year when an old girl was found emaciated, parasite-ridden and near death in a rice field by a local farmer. Her mate and offspring visited her daily while she was under the care of MCCR. She was released several months later in April to her waiting family.

Sadly, the injuries incurred by some parrots cannot be healed to the extent that release back to the wild is possible. Weasel, a male scarlet macaw raised by Chris in 2010 and released in 2011 at the Tiskita site across the gulf, was recently found with a broken wing. Although the cause of the injury is unknown, a fight with another macaw is suspected. After x-rays, bandaging, weeks of treatment and TLC, therapy on the wing is being applied, but it is unlikely that Weasel will regain flight.



An injured young Scarlet Macaw recovering at MCCR



Inside MCCR's new aviary



New Scarlet Macaw pair at MCCR in Costa Rica

In September of this year a fledgling macaw was brought to MCCR with horrific injuries suggesting she was attacked in the nest. The top of her beak and the cere were missing, her damaged and infected eye was beyond saving and there was a severe injury to the back of her skull. The fact that she had survived her injuries was astonishing, but a keen indication of the spirit of the bird! Chris took her to the National Vet University to have her damaged eye removed. Now two months later she's doing very well and can even fly! Once her eye is completely healed, Chris hopes to introduce her to Weasel.

Now with breeding macaws on site, Chris Castles can resume the work that is most dear to his heart. But the need for MCCR's services as a rescue and rehabilitation center are critical, and the inevitable cases where injuries render a parrot unreleasable make permanent sanctuary an important part of MCCR's mission.

You can follow the work of Chris, Rob and the MCCR team on facebook at https://www.facebook.com/macawconservation/. Please consider supporting this beautiful project! Tax deductible donations can be made electronically through Foster Parrots by visiting www.fosterparrots.com . Please be sure to designate your donation to MCCR. Donations can also be made by check, payable to Foster Parrots, Ltd. with a designation noted to MCCR. Please be assured that 100% of your donation goes to Macaw Conservation!

Return to Guyana



Surveying parrot populations in Guyana

Partnering with our good friend and associate, One Earth Conservation, Foster Parrots returned to the South American country of Guyana in October in order to conduct parrot population surveys, assess conservation attitudes in villages of the Rupununi,

and determine the focus for continued parrot protection efforts in the country. With One Earth as the lead organization, it is the plight of the vanishing wild sun parakeet (Aratinga Solstitialis) that has riveted our attention.

Once prolific throughout northeastern South America, sun parakeet numbers in the wild have plummeted over the last two decades and populations continue to decline due to ongoing trapping activity. While these gregarious



The endangered Sun Parakeet

little birds are bred liberally in captivity for lives in cages, one of the last strongholds for the wild sun parakeets can be found in the Pakaraima mountain region of Guyana and just over the border into Brazil. Here, One Earth and Foster Parrots will be working closely

The trapping and exportation of wildlife is still legal in Guyana, and many indigenous Amerindians note a perceptible decline in flocks of wild parrots since the 1980s

with the Amerindian village of Karasabai to implement a conservation strategy that will include population counts, nest monitoring and protection initiatives, and humane education programs that can help connect children and adults alike to the lives and experiences of their precious sun parakeets.

The trapping and exportation of wildlife is still legal in Guyana, and many indigenous Amerindians note a perceptible decline in

flocks of wild parrots since the 1980s. Guyana's wealth of natural resources has been her primary economic focus, and the extraction of parrots



Wild Conures in Guyana

and other wild animals has been as economically alluring as the extraction of oil, gold, minerals and lumber. Many Amerindians,

however, are eager to pursue alternative opportunities in conservation, which can offer economic stability while also supporting deep-rooted indigenous cultural values. One Earth and Foster Parrots' efforts in Guyana will also include training people in the villages of Rewa and Yupukari to conduct parrot counts,

and collaborating with the Ministries in Georgetown as well as professors from the University of Guyana so that we can begin to assemble a profile of the present and future needs of Guyana's beautiful parrots.



Wild Macaws in Guyana

In Loving Memory: Mr. Magoo



hen Last Chance Bird Farm in Florida decided it was time to clean house in 2010, hundreds of breeder birds were put up for public auction. In a recue collaboration with Virginia veterinarian, Kim Danoff, Foster Parrots stepped up to take a number of the birds Dr. Danoff perceived to be in the worst shape and at risk on the auction block. We received 10 parrots from that event. One of those birds was Mr. Magoo, an elderly Moluccan cockatoo with mature cataracts in both eyes that had rendered him completely blind. Blindness in a prey animal is a high stress situation. His days were spent cowering in a

cardboard box, with Magoo inside lunging repeatedly at invisible threats. Only at the end of each day when the sanctuary had fallen quiet and human activity had subsided would Magoo emerge to find his food bowls, to forage and to stretch his wings.

In 2012, a veterinary exam revealed that one of Magoo's damaged eyes was still viable and eligible for cataract surgery. A Canada based advocacy

group, "The Crazy Bird Ladies" spearheaded the fundraiser to raise the money needed for the surgery. On May 10, 2012 four boarded veterinarians gathered at Ocean State Veterinary Specialists, Inc. in East Greenwich, Rhode Island to return the gift of sight to an old Moluccan cockatoo. Present were ophthalmologist Dr. Marcia Aubin as the lead surgeon, Drs. Hank Wietsma and Lucy Spelman on anesthesia, and Dr. Julie Decubellis assisting. The surgery was a success. It was estimated that more than 60% acuity was returned to Magoo's eye.

The change in Magoo's life was remarkable. Where once this bird's life had been shrouded in darkness and defined by terror, Magoo began to venture out of his box more and more often to forage on the floor of his enclosure - or sometimes to chase away an unwelcome human caregiver. Our hearts all filled with love and pride when Magoo began to climb up to join the other M2s on the branches and hanging play frames above. For more than five years to follow, Magoo continued to improve and thrive.

Sight can sometimes be to restored to the eyes of an old bird, but a heart can grow tired through the years. On November 12, 2017, Magoo's old heart finally came to rest. He passed away peacefully in the arms of Sanctuary Manager, Monica Armstrong.



Adoption Spotlights



Sydney: Yellow-Streaked Lorikeet

ydney is a stunning, 6 ½ year old yellowstreaked lorikeet who is a cherished member of her current human family, but must be re-homed do to her guardian's health issues. Sydney loves everybody! She is extremely affectionate and loves men, women and children with equal zest. She does not, however, like cats or dogs, and this is something a potential adopter must be mindful of. She is playful, really smart and craves attention and interaction. Sydney will require a home in which people are present and available for all or most of each day. She is located in North Andover, MA.

Important: Sydney is a lory, and lories are messy! They must be accommodated with a diet of commercially available nectar mix and fresh fruit (no seed or nuts!). A potential adopter must be aware of maintenance issues that come along with lories, and be able to meet this challenge creatively!

Izzy: Male Senegal

zzy is a 12-year old male Senegal and he is one of the most charming little birds you will ever meet! He has a strong preference for women and is extremely affectionate and loving. He craves interaction and will solicit attention by calling, "Sweetheart!" He would love to have a home with a female primary caregiver who will enjoy having Izzy attached and can include him in the daily routine. Izzy can feel a bit insecure and fearful

in unfamiliar situations, so one must be supportive in regards to his phobias. Periodically, he can emit a high-pitched screech which is hard on the ears! But Izzy is super smart and highly motivated to please his chosen woman. He will respond well to a little positive reinforcement based training. Izzy is available for adoption in our adoption center at the NEEWS.





Berta: Hybrid Macaw

year old Berta was described by her previous guardian as being excessively aggressive.

We have found that she's simply been misunderstood, which is typical for macaws in captivity. Berta has a strong preference for men, and when Foster Parrots founder, Marc Johnson, retrieved her from her previous home, she welcomed his petting and head scratches! Berta is on the petite side for a macaw. That, along with her coloring, suggests she may be a military-

scarlet cross. Berta has been through 4 homes in her 32 years and hopes that home #5 will be her last! Her unstable history has resulted in a plucking problem that can accelerate when she feels lonely or distressed, so it is very important that Berta's adopter has the confidence and experience to handle a macaw, and can offer a loving and supportive home where Berta can thrive. Berta is available for adoption at the adoption center at the NEEWS.

Captain Jack: Blue & Gold Macaw

reetings! My name is Joanne, and I'll be helping Foster Parrots here and there when a macaw needs a little pre-adoption support! My first FP foster bird is Captain Jack, a 7 year old blue & gold macaw who, like so many macaws, was misunderstood and labeled "aggressive" in his previous home, and this led to him being relegated to a cage for over a year. We were told that he screams constantly, but that is simply not true! Now that he's out of his cage and getting attention, he screams very little. Captain Jack is a delight, and is actually super affectionate. He loves to be the center of attention and to entertain with crazy antics like dancing, singing, laughing,

sneezing, coughing and even burping. His intelligence makes him highly trainable, but it also makes him challenging. He's a macaw! He needs a stable home where people are present for all or most of each day and have the time to include him in the activities of the family. His new guardian(s) must be confident and capable of managing Captain Jack's love for "testing boundaries" and his occasional toddler temper tantrums. Jack seems to have a preference for women, and he loves my 14 year old daughter. He does not, however, like other birds, so he should be the only macaw in the home. He is available for adoption in Hudson, MA.





Interested in Adopting a Parrot?

Interested in adopting one of these parrots or any of the dozens of other birds on our waiting list? We need you! There are so many birds in need of homes! Applicants should be aware that social support is one of our highest adoption priorities. If you have time and love to give, please consider

reviewing our requirements for adoption and submitting an adoption application by visiting our website at: https://www.fosterparrots.com/adoption-rescue/ If you are interested in one of the birds featured here, please indicate that on your application!



Foster Parrots launches 3 fundraiser events every year! We hope you will consider supporting at least one of these fund drives.

No Cage Is Big Enough

requests every day for unwanted and abandoned parrots. The tragedy of captive parrots has reached its boiling point. Together we can work to help the thousands of parrots desperately searching for a path to safety, and to impact public perception regarding the staggering inappropriateness of parrot captivity. By supporting Foster Parrots, you become a part of a dynamic community taking a stand on avian welfare issues and speaking for the freedom and sovereignty of parrots everywhere.



Support our future. Strengthen our voice. In 2018, Foster Parrots, Ltd., in partnership with **One Earth Conservation,** will be launching a global initiative to bring awareness to the plight of parrots in captivity and the devastating impact of the pet trade on parrots worldwide. Our goal is to shift public perception in such a way that the concept of a flighted wild animal in a cage will no longer be acceptable to anyone. Our ability to tackle the issues depends on YOU as we work to expand our reach and grow our programs. Every dollar donated to Foster Parrots for the Year End Mini Match supports the birds and animals at the NEEWS and strengthens the effectiveness of our work in rescue, adoption conservation and humane education. Please be a part of the solution to end to the suffering of parrots worldwide. None Are Free Until All Are Free.



YES! I want to contribute to the 2017 Year-End Mini-Match! All donations made in December will be matched up to \$3,000!

Your contribution to Foster Parrots helps provide care for over 400 parrots and animals at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary. It supports our humane education and adoption programs, and it helps to protect the freedom of wild parrots and natural habitat.

Yes! I want to support the work of Foster Parrots with a tax-deductible donation of:

	_ \$25	\$50	\$100	\$200	\$500	Other
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Please mail checks to: Foster Parrots, Ltd.

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