

From The Editor's Desk

Dear Mr. Thompson:

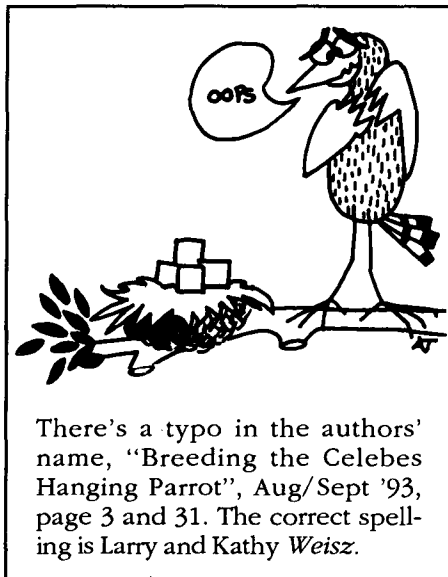
The article titled "Iron Storage," which appeared in your Aug/Sept issue, was of considerable interest to me. The authors state that, "It is not known whether this iron storage disease is a result of a heritable condition of abnormal iron deposition which occurs regardless of iron level in the diet or is a response to chronic ingestion of excessive iron in the diet." In the well-studied iron overload disease in humans (hemochromatosis), it is the currently accepted belief that the inability to excrete iron is a genetic defect. Changing the diet has *little impact* on the course of the disease. However, in many cases, the disease has been made considerably worse by the attending physician failing to diagnose the disease and further compounding it by prescribing iron tablets. Humans who do *not* suffer from genetic hemochromatosis apparently have a great tolerance for the excessive zeal of the iron wielding physician. If they did not, there would be many more people with iron overload disease.

This disease is easy to diagnose by simply running a serum ferritin level. In humans, it is not uncommon to have extremely high levels of ferritin by the time the patient is showing symptoms; i.e., lameness, liver disease, heart disease, neuropathy, etc. Establishing normal levels in the concerned avian species should not be at all difficult and may even be available.

It would seem to me that your authors should eliminate the birds suffering from the genetic iron overload disease from their study. This would be easy to do. They will probably find, as was discovered in humans, that most of the birds suffering from iron overload do, indeed, have the genetic condition. Of course, iron poisoning could occur by ingestion of large amounts of iron or by excessive iron therapy, but that is not too likely. The only really effective treatment is, of course, phlebotomy on a regular

basis. This works quite well and the frequency can be reduced over time depending on the serum ferritin levels.

Sincerely,
M.L. Simmons, D.V.M., President
Veterinary Resources America, Inc.
Parrot Conservation Group
P.O. Box 2200, Vero Beach, FL 32961
Phone (407) 562-9745



I would like to thank Jack Clinton-Eitniar and the Board of Directors for being presented a Service Award for my efforts in Hurricane Andrew relief. However, I do not feel right being singled out for this award. I feel I was just the muscle (and not always the brains) of a group of aviculturists who were able to react immediately to the devastation in South Dade County.

Although donations from central Florida businesses, veterinarians and bird clubs were received, a large financial donation from Town and Country Feathered Friends of Michigan bank-rolled the first relief trip. A total of 13 trips were made by Dwight Greenberg and/or myself, including four trips before the "official" AFA and

SOFAR relief efforts were felt in the disaster area.

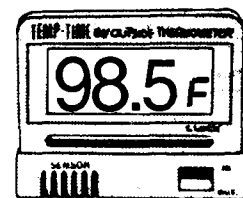
We could not have done this without the help of many individuals who acted as our "procurement and support committee." Debbie Clifton, Beth Greenberg, Starr Kirchhoff, Diana Skalsky, Bob Smith and Pamela Willis helped our effort immensely, keeping the donations coming and taking care of any special orders that we received. Sally Zonner, at Avian Specialties, and Renn Danzer, at Sunshine Bird Supply, made sure no vehicle went into the disaster area unless it was loaded completely with supplies.

Our effort was helped by a local "hospitality committee." Kathleen Haring and Rick Jordan at Luv Them Birds, though disaster victims themselves, supplied lodging, excellent food, security and strong drink to anybody coming into the area to help.

Again, I appreciate receiving this award, but I must accept it on behalf of the many people (named and unnamed) who made this effort so effective.

Sincerely,
Morgan Knox ●

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