

## **ORTH CENTRAL REGION**

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-794-2373

### **IOWA**

te coordinator:  
ck Suds 712-642-4578  
l America Caged Bird Society  
west Parrot Club

### **KANSAS**

te coordinator:  
ke Langerot 316-479-3235  
-Kan Cage Bird

### **MINNESOTA**

te coordinator:  
ve Estebo 612-985-5728  
nnesota Companion Bird Assn.

### **NEBRASKA**

te coordinator:  
i Hansen 402-496-3676  
west Parrot Club

### **NORTH DAKOTA**

te coordinator: \*

### **SOUTH DAKOTA**

te coordinator:  
yce King 605-393-1720  
ck Hills Cage Bird Club

### **WISCONSIN**

te coordinator:  
urion Starr 608-788-0736  
rosha Exotic Bird Club  
dison Area Cage Bird Assoc.  
sconsin Bird Lovers & Exotics  
sconsin Cage Bird Club, Inc.

## **ORTHWESTERN REGION**

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3-927-6983 fax 253-952-6983

### **ALASKA**

te coordinator:  
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aska Bird Club

### **IDAHO**

te coordinator:  
argie Loewen 208-939-1041

### **MONTANA**

te coordinator:  
nee Evenson 406-453-9612

### **OREGON**

te coordinator: \*  
erald Exotic Bird Society  
ch Connection  
d Oregon Bird Breeders Club  
rthwest Bird Club  
se City Exotic Bird Club  
uthern Oregon Exotic Bird Club

### **WASHINGTON**

ate coordinator:  
idi Thompson 253-756-9369  
vicultural Society of Puget Sound  
iscade Canary Breeders Assn.  
rthwest Exotic Bird Society

## **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION**

Barry Wold, Director  
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### **CALIFORNIA (NORTH)**

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Leslie Gillis 559-674-1990  
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Mary Ellen Le Page 408-997-3113

Butte County Bird Club  
California Avicultural Legis. Assn  
Capitol City Bird Society  
Central California Avian Society  
Contra Costa Avian Society  
Foothill Bird Fanciers  
Gold Country Aviculture Society  
Gold Country Bird Society  
Golden Gate Avian Society  
Monterey Bay Caged Bird Club  
Redwood Empire Cage Bird Club  
Santa Clara Valley Bird Club

### **HAWAII**

State coordinator:  
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Aloha Parrot Association  
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## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION**

Aletta M. Long, Director  
Phone/fax 562-596-7429

### **SAN DIEGO AREA**

State coordinator:  
Marty Muschinske 619-468-3201  
Finch Society of San Diego County  
Hookbill Hobbyists of So. California  
North County Aviculturists  
San Diego Bird Breeders  
San Diego Canary Club

### **LOS ANGELES AREA**

State coordinators:  
Jami Kennedy 661-252-0437  
Cathy Kelly 949-859-0861  
California Gamebird Breeders Assoc.  
East San Gabriel Valley Bird Society  
Hemet Valley Bird Society  
Long Beach Bird Breeders  
Orange County Aviculturists  
South Coast Finch Society  
Valley of Paradise Bird Club  
West Valley Bird Society

\* Position open: contact regional vice president if interested.

\*\* indicates 2 year term has been fulfilled. If no new interested party comes forward and indicates a desire to serve, incumbent remains in position.

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's state coordinator.



# *This Issue*

by Sheldon Dingle, Alhambra, California


This issue is focused on Africa below the Sahara Desert. The region above the Sahara will be treated at a later date.

We collected so many excellent articles for this issue that not all of them fit in. Those held out will be published in issues to come.

We were able to include an "AFA Visits" to South Africa (Roger Bringas made the recent trip); articles on Cape Parrots; an overview of the African lovebirds; an engaging article on the Lilac-breasted Roller (did you notice the lizard for dinner the cover bird is carrying?); an unusual article on the Bearded Barbet (a bird with a scary beak); "Alex" the brainy and famous Grey Parrot; the Brown-headed Parrot,

a little-known species; Lady Ross's Turaco (including one with no tongue); the graceful Cape Dove; the Timneh Grey Parrot; and a lot of other articles not necessarily connected to Africa, including Part II of "Waxbills and their Allies" which, by happenstance, is connected to Africa.

We have the very popular and longest running series in *Watchbird* history, "Veterinary Viewpoints," in which several avian vets answer all your questions; an important AFA effort in behalf of the Spix's Macaw; the AFA's Red Siskin Project; an encouraging study on the Dominican Amazon Parrot, and some fun material on the convention.

Enjoy. 

# *Veterinary Viewpoints*

Edited by

Amy B. Worell, DVM, ABVP-Avian  
All Pets Medical Center, West Hills, CA

**Question #1:** What methods do you prefer for the cleaning of produce for parrots? I have read that some fruits and vegetables are contaminated with such pathogens as *E.coli* and *Salmonella* because they are grown in the fields of Central and South America where workers are not provided adequate sanitary facilities.

*T. Crosiar*, Illinois

**Answer #1:** This is a difficult problem because not only can there be bacteria on the fresh produce but also pesticides. I personally use lots of fresh running water to wash off the fruits and vegetables I feed my birds, as this will at least mechanically remove any debris or residue. Ideally, organic fruits and vegetables should be used to eliminate the pesticide residue problem but

this is not always practical. And they still need to be washed because there could still be bacteria on them from insects contacting them between the fields and the grocery store. I hesitate to use disinfectants or soaps since those can be harmful if the bird ingests or contacts that which is not thoroughly rinsed off. So, we are back to running water - lots of it.

*Rhoda K. Stevenson*, DVM, ABVP-Avian  
Jacksonville, FL

**Answer #2:** Fruits and vegetables are on occasion contaminated with disease producing agents. Human source organisms do occur but do not forget wild birds, reptiles, and other mammals as the carriers. Nature has provided fruits and vegetables with a tough skin. Just as you do for yourself, wash and

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<http://www.afa.birds.org>

peel as indicated. Prevent spoilage using refrigeration and remove uneaten food in a timely fashion.

*James M. Harris, DVM*  
Oakland, CA

**Answer #3:** Many food stores now offer pamphlets on how to clean produce and foodstuffs so they are safe for consumption. I would recommend a rinsing with copious amounts of cool water. Use a vegetable brush to remove obvious soil. Leafy vegetables can be soaked and swished through a large bowl of water, and then rinsed well under a faucet.

*Rose Ann Fiskett, DVM, ABVP-Avian*  
Fairfax, VA

**Answer #4:** I recommend the same methods for cleaning the produce that is fed to birds that I use for myself. I thoroughly rinse fruits and vegetables in running water for several minutes. If dirt is present, that it is also removed by hand or with use of a sponge or

brush. I guess one could always purchase fruits and vegetables that are certified to be organically grown without the use of pesticides but this does not appear to be necessary. I personally am not familiar with problems in parrots resulting from the consumption of fruits and vegetables that have bacterial contamination.

*Amy B. Wordell, DVM, ABVP-Avian*  
West Hills, Ca

**Question #2:** Are parasites, both internal and external, a big problem in caged birds? Should one routinely screen for them?

*M. Maczkley, Iowa*

**Answer #1:** We live in Florida where many pet and aviary birds are exposed to the wild bird population and parasites are a definite problem. However, mites are *not* the problem that most people think about when the bird is scratching or picking. Less than 1% of the feather picking birds that I see are picking due to mites. Birds most often pick up parasites from other birds either from direct contact or from contact with infected feces in the cage, water, or food. When a bird is first purchased or brought home, it should always have a physical exam and a fecal parasite check by an avian veterinarian since it has been in contact with other birds in the pet shop or in the aviary. We then recommend a yearly check up during which we routinely check for parasites as well as other things. It is not the most common problem that we see, but it certainly is a problem that can be treated.

*Rhoda K. Stevenson, DVM, ABVP-Avian*  
Jacksonville, FL

**Answer #2:** Compared with mammals, caged birds appear to have fewer parasites. Budgies presented with scaly face mites and Cockatiels with feather lice. Some birds have ascarids (roundworms) and giardia is a problem. Although more often negative than positive, a fecal should be part of a routine screening and a thorough examination should be per-

formed on all patients.

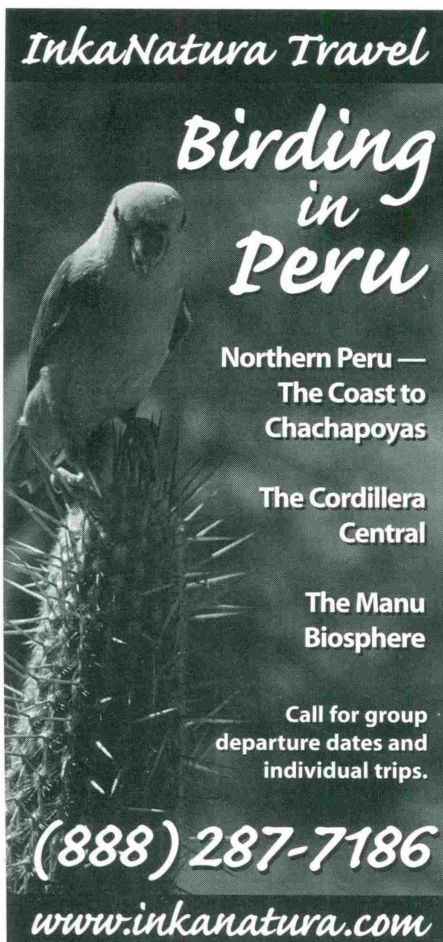
*James M. Harris, DVM*  
Oakland, CA

**Answer #3:** External parasites, with the exception of *Knemidocoptes* mites in Budgies, are usually not a problem in captive caged birds housed indoors. Examination of the feathers and skin under lighted magnification can reveal the presence of lice or mites. Skin scrapings of abnormally crusty skin lesions may yield mites or mite eggs on microscopic examination. Internal parasites or worms can be a problem, especially in Australian grass parakeets. Internal parasites are identified by examining a sample of stool under a microscope and looking for eggs from the parasite. Each parasite produces a unique shaped egg that helps to identify what parasite it is. Parasites do not shed eggs continuously: fecal samples are negative for parasite eggs, but the bird may still have parasites that are not shedding eggs at the time they are checked. Yearly fecal samples for parasites are always a good idea.

*Rose Ann Fiskett, DVM, ABVP-Avian*  
Fairfax, VA

**Answer #4:** External and internal parasites are not a common problem in caged birds in general in my practice. For those individuals affected though, it is a *big* problem. The most common external parasite I see in practice is commonly called scaly face mite, affecting Budgerigars. This mite can cause significant changes in the bird's beak and facial appearance. The most common internal parasite that I encounter would be the air sac mite that affects mostly common finches and canaries. This serious mite is not curable and often presents as respiratory disease in these birds. Other internal and external parasites are seen in practice but with a lesser frequency. By all means, I think it is a prudent move to annually check caged birds for internal parasites by use of a fresh stool sample. External parasites are screened for by visual examination, usually of the feathers. Their presence in my experience is not common in pet and aviary birds in my area.

*Amy B. Wordell, DVM, ABVP-Avian*



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