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The Incomparable Philippine Red Vent

(*Kakatoe haematuropygia*)

by Lynne E. Mello
Lauderhill, Florida

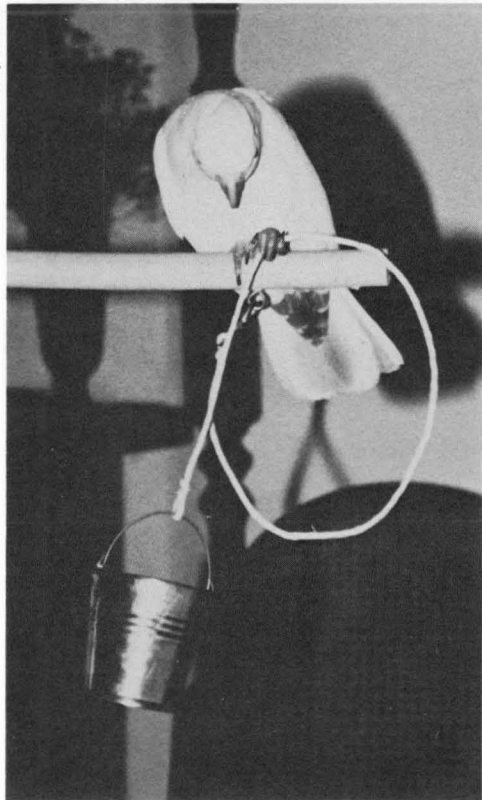
Regardless as to the amount of superlatives used to describe this delightful cockatoo, the persona is such that one would have to live and interact with one in order to fully appreciate this remarkable creature. I have had the pleasure of sharing nine years of my life with red vents kept strictly as pets. I would like to adopt a proven pair one day although they are not prolific and generally not considered a member of the glamour group (larger crested cockatoos). They are indeed, without question, the *most intelligent*, charming, lovable, affectionate little cockatoos you will ever encounter. It is in need of all the good publicity that one can muster up. Unfortunately, breeders of these rare medium-size birds are equally as rare. With conditions less than encouraging, the birds' natural habitat is also in question. Therefore, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to keep the red vent from that dreaded extinct list. They are worth the love, if not the effort.

Sometimes compared to the Goffin or the corella, there is a difference in their feathering, general stature and personality. I find a beauty in their expression which is solely that of the Philippine red vent. The head is finer, body two inches longer than that of the Goffin's. The body is gracefully shorter and slimmer than that of the corella. By no means should we overlook the undertail red-orange coverts against the lovely sulphur color undertail. Since mine is free-flying, I can also enjoy the sulphur coloring under the wings. Their flight is fast and very well controlled.

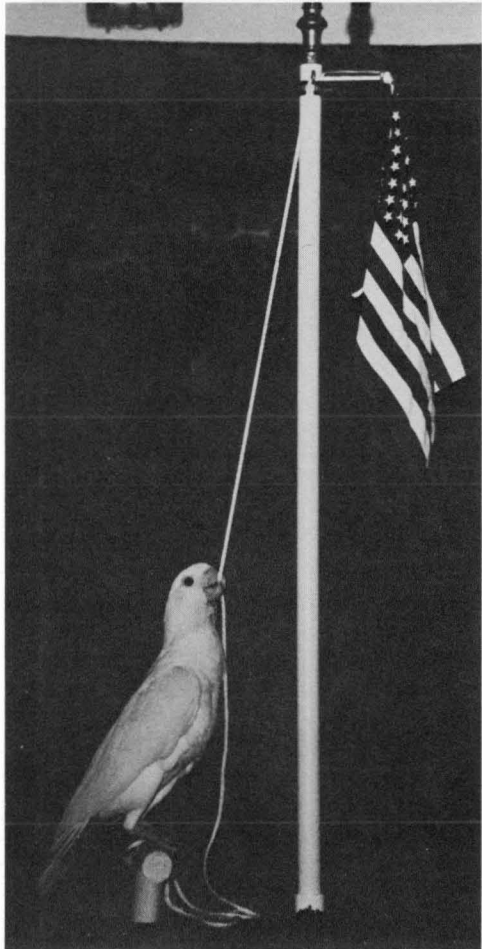
Aware of their above-average intelligence, I found it advisable to take a course in training to properly handle and better understand my bird's behavior. In this manner I was able to achieve a comprehensive means of communication. I have learned to never underestimate. If one were to refer to mine as a "bird brain" I would definitely say, thank you.

Continued on page 8

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's closest state coordinator. There is a state coordinator listing with phone numbers elsewhere in this publication.



"Houston" is a hand-raised Philippine red vented cockatoo a little over a year old. He is the sweetest pet, does a number of tricks and has a growing vocabulary.



"Houston" does the flag raise.



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"Houston," a talented red vented Philippine cockatoo.

Photo by author



Antics on the flag pole.

"Houston" was born May of 1985, at this writing is one year old and it arrived seven months ago via air freight. I was rather apprehensive about having a hand-fed baby shipped but it was the only way I could get this precious cargo to Florida. At five months the red vent's rump feathers (grows from the rump and covers the area a tad above the vent) are a pale salmon in color, white in the adult. The eyes had a brown iris. No sign of tiny feathers on the cere or nostrils. At one year the cere has the protective feathers about the nostrils and top of cere. The iris is now a charcoal grey. The blueish skin which surrounds the eyes is now white in color.

This remarkable baby was doing the cup trick and flag raise at seven months of age. Shortly after, he mastered the eagle, waves, nods it's head for a yes, sticks tongue out for daily checkups, flies to me on command, goes for a walk, gives kisses and *talks*. The speaking voice of the Philippine red vent is likened to none. You have to hear it to appreciate it. It would melt the heart of any grouch. It is a sweet and endearing sound. Should it send you up that proverbial creek you would go gladly. There is no question as to what they have to say. The enunciation is

clear. The vocabulary at this writing consists of: "I'll be right back; awright; wanna play? good bird;" and a lot of practicing. There will be more soon.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thoughts with regard to a home study course in bird behavior which includes training. It is as necessary to the health of your charge that you handle it properly as is their diet. There is no such thing as a bad bird. There is definitely a world full of well-meaning people who have adopted parrot-like individuals who, through ignorance, have created birds with unfavorable behavior. I was one and I do carry the burden of guilt. It should be mandatory that with every ball of feathers adopted as a pet a course be included. These little or large creatures demand time and a sincere effort on our part to understand our obligations. They are social, they form bonds, are extremely sensitive and require the same things we do for a healthy, happy life.

My thanks and appreciation go to the breeders of "Houston." Their love for the Philippine red vent is proven by the three large aviaries they maintain for them. We do need the red vent and more breeders like these dedicated men. ●

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