

Lorikeet Feeding Exhibit —



Both school children and adults are fascinated by the colorful lories and lorikeets at the public feeding exhibit daily at the Marine World Africa USA, Vallejo, CA. Shown is a group of students with Mary O'Herros, Marine World staff



This youngster is really enjoying his head full of lories.

The lory feeding exhibit is large enough for numerous visitors but small enough so that it seems full of birds.



Photos by Darryl Bush, Marine World Africa USA.

Marine World Africa USA

by Lori Collard Hill
Vallejo, California

"The best thing in the whole park!" "We came here just for this!" "What a wonderful exhibit!" Are they talking about the Whale Show? Elephant Encounter? Shark Experience? No, lorikeets! Yes, these are just a few of the comments we've received since the opening of our lorikeet aviary in 1988. Our philosophy at Marine World is simple: education is most effective when it's fun. Throughout all areas of the park we strive to give our guests the most in-depth, up-close look possible at the animals with which we share our world. A handfeeding lorikeet aviary fits right in with this philosophy and has proven to be a very effective learning tool.

We currently house 42 lorikeets of 12 different species. They range in size from the petite Perfect Lorikeets up to the large and boisterous Chattering Lories.

The aviary itself was constructed on a slope using telephone poles and cables to support 7/8 in. x 7/8 in. nylon netting. It is divided lengthwise into a public feeding area and a "safe" area for the birds to retreat to. This "safe" area goes up to a slope that is covered with large boulders and grass and leads to their shelter.

The shelter consists of a completely enclosed 10 ft. x 14 ft. x 6 ft. wooden building with windows that have fold-down shutters into the aviary. The inside walls are fibreglassed to facilitate cleaning and the floor is concrete. It is equipped with heat lamps and Vitalights.

The keepers start the day by giving the birds one liter of liquid nectar (Nekton lory) in their shelter. This is left for approximately 1-1/2 hours until they return to clean. At this time, all the bowls are pulled, the shed is closed up with the birds outside and is scrubbed, hosed and disinfected with Wavicide or bleach. The outside area is cleaned and raked and ready just in time for the 11:00 public feed.

The aviary is open to the public for two or three half-hour feedings per day depending on the time of year. We have a double door system that allows us to let a small group of people into the air lock where we give them a brief introduction and lorikeet feeding tips.

When entering the main aviary they are given a slice of peeled apple or a grape to feed the birds. They may stay the entire half hour and feed as much fruit as they like, however, on busy days we do try to rotate people. We find that one half hour period is the optimum length for each feed as the birds tend to fill up in that length of time and start to lose interest in the public. Also, their rapid digestive system goes into action and the more time people spend in the exhibit, the more wet wipes we need to pass out!

We bring down four to five liters of fruit for each feed and any leftovers are given to the birds. During the winter, we often find it necessary to give them additional liquid nectar or powder (Avico Lory Life) to hold them over until the next feed at 3:00 p.m.

The substrate in the feeding area is decomposed granite which we have found to work very well as it is easily raked after each feed, drains well and provides good footing for the public.

After the last feed we clean up any leftover fruit in the shelter and provide an additional six liters of mixed fruit (apples, grapes, bananas, melons, papaya), one to two liters liquid nectar (in the winter it's cold enough here to

be left out all night) and one to two cups dry powder. Just to cover all our nutritional bases the birds get a weekly blend of veggies including cooked yams, carrots, corn and sometimes broccoli mixed with their fruit or blended with sugar into a tasty cocktail.

All of the lorikeets in our aviary were handraised and have come from various breeders across the country. The majority of them are under one year of age when we acquire them and most are just weaned. All birds from the same breeder are quarantined together in a walk-in cage measuring 4 x 12 x 6 ft. They may range in age from three months to one year and may include Chatterings, Reds, Perfects and Edwards. Some of these birds may have been previously housed together but usually not all of them. By placing them all in the same cage at the same time in new surroundings they all start off on equal footing and a natural pecking order is established. The birds are observed for any signs of aggression and any necessary changes are made such as placement of perches, bowls, toys, etc. Because of their young age we rarely have to pull any birds housed in this situation. We do take in donated pet birds occasionally and that can be a dif-



Solely Solomon Island Eclectus

Call Chauncey (409) 547-2506

- Loving Pets
- Great Talkers
- Singles and Unrelated Pairs

1995 COMMITTEES

AVIAN RESEARCH

William Sager, D.V.M. (508) 486-3101

AFA IN BRIEF (monthly newsletter)

Cheryl Jones (509) 226-0611
fax (509) 326-6725

AVY AWARDS

Dale Thompson (805) 252-4871

CAPTIVE BREEDING SURVEY

Starr Kirkchoff (616) 327-3399

CITES

Al McNabney (510) 945-1785

CONSERVATION (Red Siskin)

Kevin Gorman (716) 865-6414

CONSERVATION SMALL GRANTS

Benny Galloway (409) 775-2000
FAX (409) 775-2002

CONVENTION COORDINATOR

Mary Perry (801) 582-6445
fax (801) 486-0757

COOPERATIVE BREEDING PGM

Sharon Garsee (916) 784-1314

DRAWING COORDINATOR

Cathy Ford (805) 684-0752

EDUCATION AND MEDIA SERVICES

Bob Smith (517) 764-4170

ETHICS

Larry Ring (916) 885-7868

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robert J. Berry (713) 434-8076
fax (713) 433-3731

FINANCE

Jim Hawley bus (602) 838-4770
res (602) 987-9206
fax (602) 987-3389

FUND RAISING

Tom Marshall (703) 777-3252

ILLEGAL BIRD TRADE

Marty Muschinske (619) 468-3201

LEGAL COUNSEL

Gary Lilienthal (617) 345-0770

LEGISLATION

Dwight Greenberg (407) 631-9800
fax (407) 632-4338

Janet Lilienthal (617) 345-0770

MEMBERSHIP

Paddy Lambert (314) 926-8186

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Gary Clifton (602) 830-4920

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Cheryle Jones (509) 226-0611
fax (509) 326-6725

PUBLICATIONS

Sheldon Dingle ph/fax (213) 223-7449
Dale R. Thompson (805) 252-4871

fax (805) 252-5861

M. Jean Hessler (714) 548-3133

fax (714) 548-0420

PHOENIX BUSINESS OFFICE

Carol Inderrieden (602) 484-0931
fax (602) 484-0109

WATCHBIRD STAFF

Dale Thompson/Editor- (805) 252-4871
in Chief fax (805) 252-5861

Sheldon Dingle/Managing
Editor ph/fax (213) 223-7449

M. Jean Hessler/Art (714) 548-3133

Director, Production fax (714) 548-0420

Sharon Rosenblatt (703) 255-3399

Advertising fax (703) 281-3140
or Phoenix Office

ferent story! These birds are generally a little bit older, have not usually been housed with other birds and often times have clipped wings. We try to time their arrival with that of another group of birds so that once the quarantine period is over they can be introduced into this smaller flock before they all go into the main aviary. This allows them to bond with at least a few birds before they join the rest of the flock.

During quarantine, all birds are checked for PBF, psittacosis and parasites and a CBC is done. We also check their flight capabilities and pull some clipped primaries if necessary. The keepers will spend time at the end of the day with those birds that are in the walk-in quarantine cage and encourage them to eat out of their hand. This gives us a good 30-45 days to work with them before they are released into the main aviary.

New birds are released into the aviary in the morning just prior to the first scheduled feed. We've found it very helpful, if the weather is nice, to first go down and give all the birds in the main aviary a spray with the hose (which they love). Some of them get quite soaked and this really slows them down so they aren't able to chase the new birds around as much.

It's hard to make generalizations regarding the temperaments of the different species and how well they interact with the public and amongst the flock because much of it depends on the bird's age, background and individual personality. But in general, we have found the following to be true. The Perfects rank #1 in customer satisfaction and are aptly named. They are sweet little birds that never bite, they have outgoing personalities and come down readily to the public. They are also a favorite with children as their size is less intimidating. We have tried other smaller species such as Webers, Meyers, and Goldies but they just weren't able to compete with the larger birds and didn't do as well.

The Green-nape Rainbows cause the least amount of trouble. Although these are the most numerous birds in the aviary they are very homogenous with the other species and are seldom involved in any "gang fights." They generally do well with the public.

The Dusky's, on the other hand, will sometimes band together and gang up on a particular individual. Usually a larger bird such as a Black Lory will be

the instigator and the Dusky's will join in. For that reason we limit the number of Dusky's we have although the public loves seeing these "trick-or-treat" birds.

You'd think that the largest birds would be the most aggressive in a mixed aviary but this is a case where individual personalities really come into play. We have several Chatterings that have been in the aviary since we opened and have never caused a problem. We've also had some Chatterings and Black Lories with more dominant personalities that did create problems. The best solution we've come up with is to remove that particular bird from the aviary for a period of time to cool things down. Sometimes this will correspond to a time when we are releasing new birds into the aviary and activity will change the hierarchy of the aviary so that when the "problem bird" is reintroduced he is not at the same status as when he left.

We've only had two Black-caps in the aviary and both have proven to be very shy, non-aggressive birds.

The birds from the genus Eos (Reds, Black-wings, Blue-streaks) have had a tendency to be a little more nippy than others but it's never been a big problem. We caution the public not to pet any of the birds, but these are the birds that are most likely to bite if touched.

We make every attempt to discourage any breeding activity in the aviary because the pair will become quite aggressive towards other birds and the public. Throughout the summer we find ourselves plugging holes in between rocks that the birds have excavated and cutting back tufts of grass they try to nest under. We occasionally get a pair that is so intent on breeding that we'll pull them and either set them up at our facility or trade them for younger birds from a local breeder. We are currently breeding Perfects and have released five chicks into the aviary so far.

Part of the difficulty in keeping lorries is their susceptibility to disease. We have had a periodic recurrence of two types of bacteria over the years. The first to hit was *Clostridium sp.*, an anaerobic bacteria that infected the flock just before the opening of the exhibit. This particular bug was very difficult to culture and extremely virulent. We lost a number of birds in a very short period of time before an effective antibiotic (chloromycetin palmitate) was found. The source of this infection was never

discovered although it happened a few days after a very hot spell of weather. It recurred once again after another heat wave the following year but with appropriate antibiotic therapy begun immediately no birds were lost. We have since that time treated the birds twice prophylactically following heat waves but have had no need for further treatments in the past two years.

Yersinia sp. is another potentially fatal bacteria that has cropped up occasionally in our aviary. It usually is seen in the colder season and is probably rodent-borne. We have seen droppings in the shed and birds' bowls (particularly the dry powder). Baytril has proven to be effective against this bug and is easily given in their nectar. We have since placed all food trays on the solid walls to keep the rodents out of them.

We have had a few cases of candidiasis though we administer an anti-fungal medication with antibiotic therapy. Since we began to regularly include additional sources of vitamin A through a variety of produce, this problem seems to have been eliminated.

Lorikeets, by nature, have inquisitive, engaging personalities and many of our guests become quite taken with them. We get a lot of questions regarding their suitability as pets. We don't hesitate to tell them of the difficulties in keeping a lorikeet in the house. Even with the advent of the dry diets on the market today, they are still messy birds and require a lot of care, sometimes more than the average pet owner is willing to give. I know, because we get an increasing number of calls each year from people who want to give us their lories. They just didn't realize when they bought them that such a cute little bird could be so demanding.

Overall, I'd say our lorikeet aviary has been a resounding success. It's rewarding to see children, and adults that have never held a bird in their life, covered with lorikeets happily eating an apple, or playing with their buttons, zippers, sunglasses and cameras. It gives visitors an opportunity to form an attachment to these wonderful animals and perhaps a desire to learn more. Without such experiences where would our future aviculturists, biologists and environmentalists come from; and what would be the future of the world's birds? We hope that with more exhibits such as these across the U.S., we can help to make a positive impact on the future of aviculture. ➔

Corporate Members

Hagen Inc., Rolf C., Canada
L/M Animal Farms, Pleasant Plain, OH
Luv Them Birds, Miami, FL
Lyon Electric Company, Chula Vista, CA

Nekton USA, Clearwater, FL
Sun Seed Company, Bowling Green, OH
Sunshine Bird Supplies, Miami, FL
Zoogen, Inc., Davis, CA

Commercial Members

Aardvark Imports, Santa Monica, CA
About Birds, Hebron, IL
Adsit Mobile Veterinary Clinic, Schenectady, NY
Alan P. Friedman, Gahanna, OH
American Bird Center, Goulds, FL
And Feathers Bird Studio, Chicago, IL
Animal Crackers, Greendale, WI
Animal Environments, Carlsbad, CA
Avian Kingdom Supply, Inc., Dallas, TX
Avian Resources, San Dimas, CA
Avi-Sci, Inc., Okemos, WI
Avitech, Inc., Frazier Park, CA
Banish, Theresa, Pinole, CA
Bay-Mor Pet Feeds, Cressona, PA
Biomune Company, Lenexa, KS
Bird Brains, South Africa
Bird Country, Lewistown, MT
Bird House, Grand Haven, MI
Birdlady's Babes, Atascadero, CA
Birdland Breeding Farm, Elkhart, IN
Bird-on-a-Stick, Merrillville, IN
Bird's Haven, Inc., Elmhurst, IL
Birdzerk Aviary, Marshallville, GA
Blue Skies Aviary, Whitwell, TN
Boston Exotics, Action, MA
C & F Parrot Farm, Corpus Christi, TX
C & J Parrot Pals, Phoenix, AZ
Cedar Hill Aviary, Northbranch, NY
Citrus Park Animal Hospital, Tampa, FL
Cock-a-Doodle Too, Richmond, VA
Corners Ltd., Inc., Kalamazoo, MI
Country Critters, Ltd., Medford, NY
Crofton Animal Hospital, Crofton, MD
Cuttlebone Plus, Fallbrook, CA
Dean Parrot Farm, Dripping Springs, TX
Di Vinci Ltd., Las Vegas, NV
Double "M" Feed Co., Terry Town, LA
DRB Bird Ranch, Deming, NM
Eden's Nestbox, Eden, MD
Exotic Animal Rescue Service, Carmel Valley, CA
Fabulous Feathers Aviary, Texarkana, TX
Fancy Feathers, Sparta, NJ
Fancy Publications, Mission Viejo, CA
Fantastic Feathers, Port St. Lucie, FL
"Farm, The", Medford, OR
Feather Fantasy, Inc., Miami, FL
Featherhaven Phase III, Four Oaks, NC
Feathering Heights, Scotts Valley, CA
Featherwood Farms, Phoenix, AZ
Firethorn Supply, Salt Lake City, UT
First Flight, Belleville, IL
F.M. Brown's Sons, Inc., Sinking Spring, PA
Greenfield Bird Farm, Solvang, CA
Goldenfeast Pet Foods, Pottstown, PA
Gulf Coast Exotic Birds, Panama City, FL
Heartland Pets, Eagan, MN
Henry's Aviary, Sequin, TX
Highland House of Birds, St. Paul, MN
JDP Enterprises Inc., Cooper Canyon, TX
James Knapp Aviary, Taylor, MI
Jewels on Wings, Elko, NV
JamaNI, Inc., Lee's Summit, MO

Julie Weiss Murad, Aspen, CO
Jungle Ginny's, Andover, NJ
Just Parrots, Lexington, SC
Kaytee Products, Inc., Chilton, WI
Kellogg, Inc. Seeds & Supplies, Milwaukee, WI
Kookaburra Pets, Carrollton, TX
L'Avian Plus Pet Products, Stephen, MN
LGL Animal Care Products, Inc., Bryan, TX
Lima's Exotic Birds, Woodland Hills, CA
Little Pecker's Bird Farm, Martinez, CA
Living Design, Inc., Colorado Springs, CO
Loriidae Production Network, Woodlake, CA
Maggie & Me, Franklin, KY
Magnolia Bird Farm, Anaheim, CA
Mandy Wagner Davidson,
Roatan Island, Honduras
Max Sharpe, Plant City, FL
Mountain Lake Aviary, Brooksville, FL
Nest Box Aviary, Miami, FL
Neotropic Aviaries, Myakka City, FL
Ohio Association of Animal Owners,
Pleasant, OH
P & J, Marshalltown, IA
Paradise for Birds, Cary, NC
Paradise for Birds Rehab, Cary NC
Parrot Jungle & Gardens, Miami, FL
Parrotville Aviaries, St. Clair, MN
Patty's Parrots, Booneville, MS
Penn-Plax Inc., Garden City, NY
Pet-iatric Supply, Wichita, KS
Pet Metro, Irvine, CA
Pets N Such, Inc., Erlanger, KY
Picture Perfect Parrot, Cleveland, OH
Pleasant Valley Animal Hospital,
Quakertown, PA
Premium Nutritional Products-ZuPreem,
Topeka, KS
Gwyn PO
Precious Hearts Aviary
Rain Forest Exotics, Soquel, CA
Rain Forest Exotics, Inc., Conroe, TX
Raintree Publications, Fort Bragg, CA
R.B. Exotic Birds, Thousand Oaks, CA
Santa Barbara Bird Farm, Santa Barbara, CA
Scarlet Orchard Aviaries, Otis Orchards, WA
Schults Bird Farm, Langhorne, PA
Seven Seas Aquarium & Pets, Auburn, WA
Swan Creek Supply--Grumbach Incubators,
Saginaw, MI
Swelland's Cage & Supply Co., Ramona, CA
The Bird Shop, Sacramento, CA
Topp Flock Aviary, Inc., Loxahatchee, FL
Torrey's Parrot Place, Spokane, WA
Touch of Grey Aviary, Marlboro, MA
Tropical Paradise, Fountain Inn, SC
Turner, Drs. Stanley & Kathleen, Hilton Head, SC
Ulrich, Richard A., Clearwater, FL
Urban Bird, New York, NY
Waylyn Enterprises, Onyx, CA
Wyl'd's WingdonMoyock, NC
Yvonne's Swings and Things, Rochester, NY
Zeigler Bros. Inc., Gardners, PA