

Millions of exotic birds are caught, bred, and sold annually for the pet trade. Some of those birds are caught in the wild. Others are captive bred in unnatural, overcrowded warehouses. Both circumstances ultimately lead birds to uncertain futures and more often than not, tragic and painful lives.

After leaving the warehouses, birds are transported under stressful conditions to pet stores where they are often cared for by young, inadequately trained employees. Some birds are left unattended without food and water for several days when pet shop employees take their days off or if they call in sick. Many pet stores treat birds like mere inventory and don't provide the birds comfortable environments, adequate diet, or medical care when they are ill or injured.



THE MYTH

Pet stores and breeders give the consumer the false impression that a hand-fed baby parrot is guaranteed to remain loveable and cuddly forever. Captive-bred and hand-fed baby parrots share the same wild traits as their cousins who live in the jungles and rainforests. Most birds will resort back to their wild, "untamed" state if not handled regularly. Even with regular handling and good socialization, a parrot may become aggressive, territorial, and start biting when he/she reaches sexual maturity and hormonal levels change.

Most retailers and breeders neglect to tell consumers that parrots exhibit natural wild traits. Screaming, chewing (from furniture to electrical cords) and biting are traits that all parrots share.

What you can do:

- Rather than purchasing birds from pet stores or breeders, adopt companion birds from reputable sanctuaries or through bird referral adoption programs.
- Keep a watchful eye on your local pet stores and report abuse and/or substandard conditions to your local animal cruelty officers. Write letters to the store management and let them know that you don't approve of selling birds and other small animals. Let them know you will boycott their stores until they stop selling live animals.
- Seek to learn more about proper care and guardianship of companion birds so you can spot and report abuse. Educate others about the plight of captive birds.
- Although some domesticated birds have been known to survive after their release into the wild, never release an exotic captive bird into the wild. In nearly all instances these birds suffer from the elements, are attacked by predators, or starve to death before dying an agonizing death.
- Write letters to your legislators and ask them to create and strengthen laws that will protect captive birds from abuse and negligence.

To learn more visit:
www.idausa.org

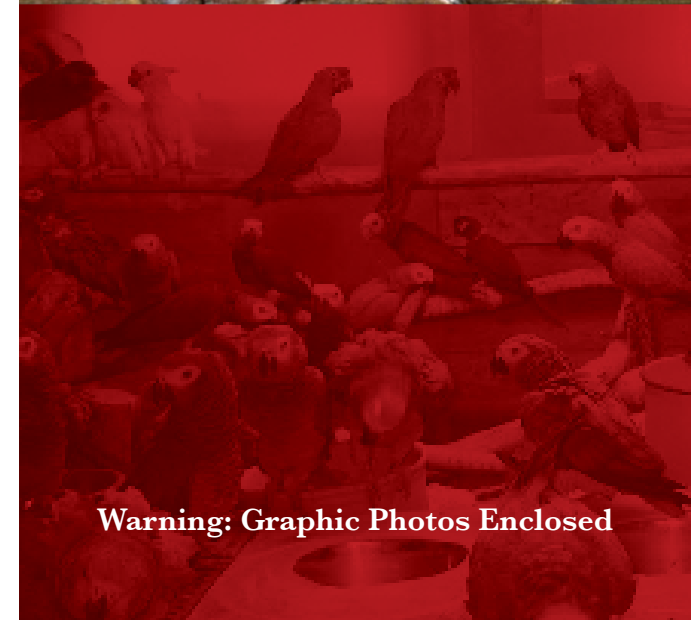
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In Defense of Animals
3010 Kerner Blvd.
San Rafael, CA 94901
415-388-9641

The "Pet" Bird

CRISIS



Warning: Graphic Photos Enclosed



A Hidden Crisis

Once the consumer experiences the inherent traits of their wild pet, these birds are often placed behind closed doors for months, years, or even decades - in garages, basements, or closets. These hidden birds may languish in tiny cages, dark rooms, garages, basements, or closets; suffering, lonely, starving and dying. Unlike the neglected or abused dog or cat in the back yard whose caring neighbors may witness the abuse and call authorities, these birds will rarely if ever be afforded that kind of rescue.

Lack of Proper Diet and Care

Countless birds are denied the most basic needs such as companionship, adequate housing, flight, and a nutritionally balanced diet. The incidence of death and illness from malnutrition, abuse, and poor housing is high. Sadly, stories of birds starving to death or dying from dehydration because someone forgot to feed and/or water them, are common.

Multiple Homes - Long Lifespans

Large species of parrots can live up to 85 years. Some smaller parrots can live 25 to 50 years. Most people don't consider their bird's lifespan as it relates to their own. The long lifespan of parrots adds to the complexities and tragedies of keeping parrots as pets. Many parrots will outlive their guardians, leaving the birds more often than not, homeless. Family members are left with the burden of surrendering or finding a home for the deceased relative's bird.

The intellectual level of many parrots is equal to a 3 to 5 year old child. Keeping a parrot is similar to caring for a human toddler for the rest of your life. This is one of many reasons why parrots eventually end up unwanted and are left homeless. It is estimated that nearly all parrots will be in at least five homes before they die prematurely or find a permanent home.

Physical and Emotional Suffering

Tragically, by the time unwanted birds reach a shelter or sanctuary they are often already showing signs of stress and suffer from minor to life threatening health problems. Severe emotional disturbances and/or insanity such as self-mutilation, obsessive compulsive behaviors, uncontrollable screaming, or severe inhibition, are only a few of the traits that traumatized birds exhibit. These behaviors are often irreversible, making it extremely difficult to place these birds in new homes.

Much like primates, birds require strong social interaction for emotional well being. However, many people don't offer their bird a companion bird, fearing their bird will lose his "pet quality" if given a mate. However, with busy schedules and long work hours, most people lack the necessary time to offer their bird regular, essential emotional stimuli and companionship. Consequently, many pet birds have never been afforded the simple but necessary pleasure of socializing with their own species and suffer from loneliness their entire lives.



Overpopulation

Breeders, retailers, and hobbyists continue to breed parrots at an alarming rate despite escalating numbers of unwanted and homeless companion parrots. Many unwanted birds end up in classified ads, on the internet, or at events called bird marts where birds are sold and traded like used cars. Many zoos receive hundreds of calls annually from people wanting to relinquish their birds. Unfortunately, most zoos cannot accommodate them. The euthanasia rate of homeless birds is on the rise.

Many shelters will not accept birds. Some so-called parrot "sanctuaries" are actually breeders or hoarders who accept surrendered birds for the sole purpose of enhancing their breeding stock. Of the few reputable bird sanctuaries that exist across the country, many are overcrowded and cannot accept more birds.



THE

REALITY

So that a small percentage of responsible people can have the few birds that they will undoubtedly love and "properly" care for, millions of other birds will suffer and die prematurely.

Although many parrot breeders and pet stores acknowledge the high mortality rate of "pet" birds, and acknowledge the skyrocketing number of homeless birds, they continue to breed at an alarming rate.