



ALASKA BIRD NEWS

December 2011

Lin Westgard, Editor

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Available on-line at www.alaskabirdclub.org
Dedicated to all the current and future parrot owners of Alaska

Parroting 101: Tricks and Helpful Hints to make living with your bird easier.



1. Trays for food dishes - minimize your trips to and from the bird cages.

2. Treat Jars - get organized with your treats so that it's easy to access and easy to regulate how many they get.

3. Carpet protectors - they make a wonderful product designed for moving companies that temporarily “stick” to your carpeting. It allows you to wipe up bird mess or sweep around the cages. It will save your carpet and make the clean up a LOT easier.

4. Corner wall protectors - moving companies also have these great cardboard corner pieces that they use to protect the corners of your furniture. I have used these to protect the corners of my shelving and corners to the bird room. Basically it's a thick 4" 90 degree piece of cardboard that can be cut to size OR you can buy plastic corner protectors from a hardware store.

5. Layering newspaper on bottom of cages instead of under the grate. This allows you to do a quick pick up day to day rather than wait until the bars get really gross and then have to really work hard to clean them. If your bird plays with the paper, then you can put multiple layers and put “stuff” on top of the paper out of the poop zones. Then you can remove layers and they will have a clean cage!

6. Toy rotation stands—have a designated area (like the back of a closet door or something where you can hang your bird toys to make it easier to rotate them). I've seen people use other things like wicker baskets or laundry baskets to hold toys in as well.

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CLUB INFORMATION

The Alaska Bird Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in the State of Alaska. It meets the first Tuesday of every month at Serendipity Adult Day Services in Anchorage at 7:00pm. Location: 3550 East 20th Ave (off of Northern Lights Blvd & Nichols St).

The mailing address is:

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Membership Chair Person: Candi Denton

You can e-mail the Alaska Bird Club at:
akbirdclub@yahoo.com

Or visit our website:
Www.alaskabirdclub.org

We welcome any comments, articles or any ideas for the club or the newsletter. Current issues and extra copies of previous editions of The Alaska Bird News are available at the monthly meetings.

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The following locations have copies of our newsletter if you need extra. We have also noted the clinics that have avian vets by the 🌟

ANCHORAGE:

Alaska Mill & Feed
1501 E. 1st Ave.
276-6016

Alaska Pet-ography
9130 Elim St.
868-1680

Chester Valley Veterinary
1571 Muldoon Rd.
333-6591

🌟 College Village
Animal Clinic
Dr's Basler & Nicholson
2036 E. Northern Lights
274-5623

🌟 Dimond Animal Hosp
Dr. Doty
562-8384 (24 hour)

🌟 Hillside Pet Clinic
Dr. Bluestone
2101 Abbott Rd. #1
344-7913

Petco
8621 Old Seward Hwy

Pet Emergency
2320 E. Dowling Rd.
274-5636

🌟 The Pet Stop
Dr. Riley Wilson
1921 W. Dimond Blvd.
522-1006

The Pet Zoo
901 E. Dimond Blvd.

🌟 VCA Alaska Pet Care
Dr. Frederickson
3900 Lake Otis Pkwy
562-PETS (7387)

VCA Alpine Animal Hospital
12531 Old Seward Hwy
345-1515

VCA E. Anch Animal Clinic
2639 Boniface Pkwy
337-1561

EAGLE RIVER:

🌟 Ravenwood Veterinary
Clinic
Dr. Cuthbert
11525 Old Glenn Hwy
694-9665

The Pet Zoo
12046 Business Blvd.
622-2966

WASILLA:

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic
Mi 7.4 Palmer- Wasilla Hwy
(907) 376-6016

The Pet Zoo
1481 E. Parks Hwy
357-7335

PALMER

Far Country Animal Hospital
2701 N. Liahona Dr.
Palmer
(907) 746-7297

North Star Animal Hospital
840 S. Cobb St.
(907) 746-7387

Palmer Veterinary Clinic
Mi 39 Glenn Why
(907) 745-3219

The Pet Zoo
10201 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy
746-0056

FAIRBANKS:

Mt. McKinley Animal Hospital
800 College Rd.
Fairbanks, AK 99701



Having a serving tray helps “transport” clean food, water, and vegetable dishes. Also on the tray is a kabob with yummy apple and grapes. You can put toy replacements and other things you take in and out of your birds cage.



Little stands that can be placed on table tops, counters, bathtub bottoms (for showers), etc. This is simple. Find a ‘neat’ looking branch base from a birch tree (birch is safe for birds) and screw in some cross branches. Make a perch end (one of those screws that have a screw on one side into the branch and the other side a bolt looking thing that that you put your wing nut on over the washers and punch it through a wicker basket. Fill the basket with river rocks for weight and you have a portable parrot stand that you can hang toys from or as just a stand.



This is a parrot stand that can be very portable room to room. At my house, it’s used as a “drying stand”. After their showers, they like to sit up in my bedroom with me while I get ready for work. You can get these stands from amazon.com for about \$27.00 and they offer free shipping to Alaska on this item. Then I got a swing or I use an orb to hang from it. Or you can get those popular “boings” to hang from it. It’s great for a way for parrots to still be with you, but up and out of the way. Or if you like the more natural look, another way to make a portable parrot stand is to get a Christmas tree stand and put a sawed off branch from a birch into it and make a perch for them to stand on. That’s a great way to encourage them to chew wood and it gets them up off the floor.



This is a rug protector that movers used when moving me into my new home. It turned out to be fantastic in my bird room and makes the clean up much easier for cages located on carpeting. Simply wipe up poops and/or sweep up food debris. It’s awesome! It’s like a very thin plastic that has a slight adhesive backing (just enough to stick and stay put). Replace it every 3-4 months and it’s good go go!



For the bigger birds, you can use these baby quick links to hang toys instead of having to buy large metal hooks that can get caught on their bands, etc. These can be purchased at any store that carries baby toys and can be easily washed in your dishwasher. Have your spare toys ready to hang using these.

Check out the Alaska Bird Club's Website!

Find out about our latest Lost and Found Birds, our birds that are available in our Adopt-A-Bird program and other various articles and videos. Advertise your un-wanted cages via newsletter and website! See what's up and coming and stay in touch!

www.alaskabirdclub.org

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FACEBOOK

"LIKE" us on Facebook! The Alaska Bird Club has a Facebook page. It's a great way to share timely info, helpful tips, cute stories, pictures, and videos, and happenings that are of interest to the companion bird community. You must have a Facebook account to participate. If you are, simply search for "The Alaska Bird Club," click over from the button on our website at www.alaskabirdclub.org.

Parrot Behavior Consultations

Need help with any of the following?

Aggression
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to schedule your consultation today:
929-BIRD (2473) or akpeac@gmail.com.

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See www.comfyclawth.com for Alaskan made bird blankets that can be used to train your parrot to be toweled in a safe and comfy environment.

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P E A C

(Parrot Education & Adoption Center)
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929-BIRD

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Membership Renewal !!!

It's that time again - The Alaska Bird Club memberships run Jan 1st to Dec 31st. Please fill out the renewal form on Page 6 and mail it in. We need you, it's as simple as that!

Treasurer Report: Income \$95.00 (\$60.00 Fundraiser Table, \$10.00 Donation for Nut Sales, \$25.00 membership). Expenses: \$187.51 (\$95.00 Storage, \$6.84 phone, \$35.72 Newsletter Mail-Outs, \$49.95 McAfee Virus protection for our laptop).

As you can see, our expenses can be pretty high. If you are interested in helping, here are some ways that you can help: 1. Donate some stamps; the newsletter gets mailed out to 20 clinics across the state 2. Donate envelopes (9x11) or stamps for mail outs. 3. Donate towards our storage fee that houses our cages and supplies. Contact the bird club if you want to help with any of these things or call Amber 351-2762 or Lin at 229-9295. As a non-profit organization, we rely on your support. Thank You!!

THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



alaskabirdclub.org e-mail: akbirdclub@yahoo.com phone: 868-9070
Non Profit Club EIN# 92-0134866

The Alaska Bird Club's mission is to promote responsible avian ownership through education and when possible, to provide rescue and adoption services for abandoned and unwanted birds in communities across Alaska.

We are a statewide 501(c)(3) [non-profit] educational club. All money collected as dues is used to provide educational training and activities to assist people in caring for companion birds. Our main activities include convening educational monthly membership meetings, producing a monthly newsletter, offering an annual seminar featuring experts in avian care and managing a website. Additionally, The Alaska Bird Club manages a statewide Adopt-A-Bird Program offering placement referrals, emergency/foster care and rescue services. The Alaska Bird Club also has a Lost/Found-Rescue Committee that aids in the rescue and capture of lost birds. There are numerous other activities and services that The ABC offers. You do not have to attend the meetings to be a member.

MEMBERSHIPS:

Membership is due annually, and runs from January 1st—December 31st. (rate discount of 50% applies to members joining in August and later). New members receive membership packets and free newsletter mailings.

_____ Single: \$20.00 _____ Family: \$25.00

Mail Payment and Form to:
The Alaska Bird Club, PO Box 101825, Anchorage, AK 99510

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address _____

Type of Companion Birds you live with and their names:

How would you like to receive your newsletter?

US Mail ____ E-mail ____ Web ____ At membership meeting ____

Would you like to be listed on a registry that is available to other members? Yes ___ No ___

Would you be interested in carpooling from the Valley with other members? Yes ___ No ___

Would you like to be on a committee? Yes ____ No ____ and if so, do you have a preference?

Adopt-A-Bird: ____ Lost/Found-Rescue Committee ____ Hospitality Committee: ____

Membership Committee: ____ Educational Committee: ____ Seminar Committee: ____

Emergency Services Committee: ____ Other: _____

The Bird Club uses e-mail as the preferred method of communication. Do you wish to be included on this mailing list or not? Yes ____ No ____

Comments: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

Revised 2/11/2011

The Association of Avian Veterinarians

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PDD in a Nutshell

PART II of II

Susan L Clubb, DVM, dip ABVP (Avian)

Diagnostics

The gold standard for diagnosing PDD has been, and will likely remain to be histological examination. A crop biopsy is relatively non-invasive compared to a high risk biopsy of the proventriculus or ventriculus. The sensitivity of crop biopsies for detecting PDD has been a matter of controversy, with the reported prevalence of ganglioneuritis in crops of PDD patients ranging from 22 % to 76 %. Under general anesthesia the skin over the crop is incised exposing the crop and a section is removed containing a prominent blood vessel. Nerves tend to follow blood vessels so this increases the chances of including adequate ganglia in the biopsy. Possible complications include the bird chewing out the sutures, infection or hemorrhage, but in general it is a low risk procedure. Diagnostic imaging techniques, such as survey radiographs with or without contrast fluoroscopy, and ultrasonography, are useful aids in the diagnosis of PDD, but cannot be used to confirm or rule it out. The most consistent finding in birds with PDD is a moderately to markedly distended proventriculus that contains mainly ingesta and variable amounts of gas. Crop, ventriculus and small intestine may also be distended.

Molecular diagnosis and serology

With the discovery of ABV the potential for laboratory diagnostics is now available. However the detection ABV by PCR (polymerase chain reaction test to detect the virus) or detection of antibodies to ABV is not a diagnosis of PDD, but simply means that the virus had been detected or that the bird has been exposed to the virus and developed antibodies. Tests which detect ABV RNA in blood are unlikely to be useful as a persistent viremia (virus in the blood) is unlikely with ABV which is a neurotropic virus. We also know that ABV can be shed intermittently so failure to find it on PCR on choanal or cloacal swabs, or in feces, is not a definitive negative. Some naturally-infected birds have been reported to shed the virus without obvious clinical signs. Unfortunately, in the experience of this author, we have inadequate information at this time to fully evaluate the results of these tests.

Antibody tests may ultimately hold the greatest potential for screening. In a test developed at Texas A&M, Western blot analysis detected antibodies against an unidentified ABV protein in the brain of a bird with PDD. This protein was later identified to be the nucleoprotein (N), one of the two major immunogenic proteins of bornaviruses. The nucleoprotein was extracted and used to test other sera from PDD patients and from control birds. It was concluded that serology could not differentiate between PDD patients and asymptomatic ABV carriers. This conclusion is also supported by the findings of another study that used Western blot as well as ELISA to detect anti-ABV antibodies in asymptomatic ABV-positive macaws.

With the limited data available to date on molecular and serological assays for ABV detection, false positive as well as false negative results are apparent. The tests may detect the ABV status of a bird correctly, but can not be directly correlated to the patient's clinical status. The definitive diagnosis will, therefore, continue to be based on histology, with PCR, serology and IHC results as supporting evidence. The great advantage of these tests is that they will hopefully improve our ability to clear flocks from ABV, and ultimately reduce the incidence of PDD.

Clinical Management of PDD

PDD is a devastating disease for affected birds, but it is equally devastating for their owner/caretaker. It is also a flock management problem because many owners have multiple birds. Transmission between birds in the home or aviary may lead to sequential illnesses and potentially deaths, over a period of years. The social implications of a PDD diagnosis can also be

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devastating. Owners may be shunned from bird club functions, by pet sitters, or social interaction with other bird owners. Initially, the owner may be faced with difficult decisions, choosing between euthanasia and long-term management of affected birds, which may remain infectious. Euthanasia may be the best decision if the bird is critically ill; however, many owners may be reluctant to choose this option. A potential compromise that may allow the client to make a more calculated decision is to treat for 3-4 weeks and re-evaluate for treatment response. Living with a bird that has a chronic infectious disease that is a risk to other birds, requires a commitment of time as well as limiting birds coming and going from the home or aviary. Long term care can entail a significant investment of time and money. The bird could be placed in a rescue center that handles birds with PDD, but they may, rightfully, request monetary support for long term treatment. Placement of the bird in a home without other birds for long term management is another option if such a home can be found.

In clinical management it is vital to assess the disease status of other birds that are in contact with affected birds ideally by a combination of Ag and AB tests, as well as crop biopsy. To be in denial and avoid checking other birds, to bring more birds into the home, or transferring birds to other owners without disclosure places other birds at risk. If diagnosed before the bird is critical, most birds can be helped. Conversely, many birds which are diagnosed by either crop biopsy, ABV-PCR or antibody to ABV may not develop naturally occurring disease. Long term monitoring will be needed to answer this question.

Treatment considerations

Many birds with clinical PDD can be returned to being clinically normal but effective treatment will typically require months or years and treated birds may remain latently infected. The long term consequences of treatment, and risks associated with affected bird post treatment are still unknown. Treatment of PDD is aimed at reducing inflammation, aiding digestion and controlling secondary infections, often for a very long time. With prolonged therapy and control of secondary infections, birds that are diagnosed early can return to good physical condition. However, their life expectancy cannot be predicted.

Initial reports of treatment using the anti-inflammatory drug celecoxib presented the first real hope for birds affected with PDD. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory

drugs (NSAIDs) are used clinically for the treatment of pain and/or inflammation through inhibition of the cyclooxygenase (COX) enzymes. In addition to their anti-inflammatory properties, NSAID therapy may have other unexpected effects and have been shown to inhibit some viruses in humans and animals. Celecoxib has been used very successfully in treating PDD at the rate of 20 mg/kg bodyweight (BW) once daily if given directly orally, but this can be stressful, especially with long term treatments. Adding celecoxib to the bird's food at 40 mg/kg BW once daily has been very successful. A 200 mg capsule of celecoxib may be dissolved in 10 ml of water and used at 0.2 ml/100 grams body weight, provided on a small amount of food, which improves the chance of consuming adequate amounts. Empirically, it is recommended that a new stock be prepared fresh at least once a week, and stored under refrigeration. Clinical response is slow and gradual and many birds do not show much benefit for at least 2 weeks. Tepoxalin (Zubrin, Schering Plough, Union, NJ, USA), was also used successfully, and was possibly superior, in treatment of a group of crop biopsy positive birds. Meloxicam is widely used, however, in the authors' empirical opinion, the clinical response seen with meloxicam is inferior to that observed with Celecoxib or Tepoxalin therapy possibly related to the mode of action of the drug. Gastro-intestinal bleeding is the most common side effect. The risk may be higher in the first few weeks of therapy. Feces should be monitored daily and treatment discontinued immediately if black stools or fresh blood is detected. Some birds seem to develop hypersensitivity to celecoxib. NSAIDs should be used with caution in birds with renal disease. Due to their impaired GI motility, birds with PDD often develop secondary bacterial and fungal GI infections. These should be diagnosed and treated appropriately. Clostridium infections are more common and can result in bulky, black, foul smelling feces. Vaccination for clostridium should be considered.

The prognosis especially guarded in patients showing severe central nervous system disorders which are often poorly responsive to NSAID therapy alone. The addition of amantadine hydrochloride (10 mg/kg po SID, or 20 mg/kg SID on food) to the therapeutic protocol resulted in a vast improvement in outcome. Amantadine was initially used as an antiviral against influenza viruses but was also found to reduce the severity of symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Amantadine has many effects on the brain including release of dopamine and norepinephrine. Amantadine has been used in combination with celecoxib to treat a large number of PDD patients with only rare adverse reactions, which resolved after cessation of therapy.

Gas formation and retention in the gastrointestinal tract is a common finding in and can cause discomfort. Gas may be evident radiographically and/or gas bubbles may present in the feces or vomitus. Surfactants (e.g. Infant's Mylicon, Johnson & Johnson, Merck Consumer Pharmaceuticals, Ft. Washington, PA, USA) provide some symptomatic relief. Metoclopramide (0.5 mg/kg q12h PO or IM) is beneficial in cases of reduced intestinal motility or intestinal stasis. Supplement of vitamins, especially B complex vitamins, is helpful.

If possible, birds should be kept outdoors and spread out to avoid large viral exposure and to allow sunlight to inactivate the

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virus. It will also enhance the birds well-being. Stress should be kept to a minimum. Liquid diets as well as easily digested pelleted diets have been developed specifically for birds with PDD, or hand feeding formulas can also be used. Formulated diets are easier to digest than seeds and absorb medications well, however extreme caution should be used in converting an ill bird from a seed based diet to a formulated diet. Supplementing the diet with high fiber vegetables may be beneficial by stimulating intestinal motility in early cases but may create problems in critical cases. Affected birds often ingest foreign bodies, especially pieces of wood, possibly in an attempt to provide relief from intestinal discomfort, and they may benefit from high fiber vegetables to fill this need.

Probiotics supplementation may be beneficial. Supplements that enhance nutrition as well as provide anti-inflammatory effects may augment conventional therapy. Antioxidants including oils rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, specific amino acids, minerals and some natural herbal anti-inflammatory agents may be beneficial. Nutritional adjuncts for cases with CNS signs include ginkgo biloba, Vitamin E, alpha lipoic acid, acetyl-L-carnatine and B complex vitamins. There are no studies in the literature on the effect of various diets and/or nutraceuticals on birds with PDD; therefore these recommendations are empirical.

Response to therapy can be monitored by periodic physical exam, monitoring body condition and weight, repeated radiographs and hematology and plasma biochemistry analysis. Increases in body weight can be misleading as weight gain may be associated with dilation of the proventriculus and intestinal stasis. Monitoring by serial crop biopsies is very useful.

Goals of prevention are to avoid introducing the pathogen into new flocks to clear it from flocks where it is already present. At this time these goals were difficult to achieve due to the disease's long incubation period and difficulty in interpretation of tests. Precise recommendations as to the preferred screening protocol can not be made. Overcrowding of aviaries facilitates the spread of PDD, and should be avoided. Even facilities using long term quarantine for new arrivals are not completely safe from PDD. While ABV-positive birds should not be added to existing flocks, a positive test is not a death sentence and positive lab test should not be considered reason for euthanasia.

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PRESIDENT'S PERCH - December 2011

By Michael Stanton, President 2011

END OF TERM MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF TABC

A year has gone by and it seemed like yesterday that I was "tricked" into becoming TABC President for the year 2011. But now that I've done it, I must say I don't regret the experience. You have taught me a lot-and surprisingly, I have actually remembered some of the things I've learned-and-I am trying to forget a fair portion so I don't have deep winter nightmares. All in all I can appreciate the predicament of Alaska's companion parrots and without a doubt there are challenges ahead for all of us. Getting through the holidays can make bird and owner a little coo coo. All the precautions we take to avoid any sort of undesirable actions or consequences can be cumulatively stressful. I want to remind you that you and your bird need to program an occasional calming break once to keep the holidays enjoyably memorable.

The Alaska Bird Club exists and thrives upon the involvement of the membership. This is your bird club. In direct proportion to that involvement, the level of membership activity is a clear indicator how well you regard your Alaska Bird Club. Our level of economic security can also be correlated to membership involvement with various activities, committees and fund raising events.

TABC has an eclectic, informed membership capable of doing for TABC what TABC has done for you. A passion for parrots, and birds in general, is the driving force that creates bird clubs. We are all in a unique position, as Alaskans, to amaze a worldwide population of parrot lovers how we incorporate parrots into our daily lives. We need help from you. Can you take a few hours month help TABC continue its 501(c) mission to educate the public and contribute to the overall welfare of parrots? The more volunteers we have, the more we can spread the work load: thus, we can enjoy the fruits of our labor by continuing to make The Alaska Bird Club an even better place for people and their companion parrots.

Fund raising is the eternal challenge that all non-profits must bear. Like a private, for profit business, TABC is no different. I have proposed a few strategic projects to your Board of Directors. One of them is to create a fund raising events that target both the parrot lovers of Alaska and the general public. If you have any great ideas, please present them to the new president for 2012—Amber O'Neill.

The next proposal is a work in progress by this retiring President—a book about the Alaska Bird Club and the stories and photos of its members and companion parrots. Let me interview you, your birds, view your pictures and take photos of both. A successful book will generate a substantial portion of the profits for TABC. If you want to be a part of this book, expect to hear from me in the near future to schedule an interview. Also, many of the pet stores want TABC presentations for customers. Presentations are a unique opportunity to share your knowledge of parrots with the public. The benefits of such are enormous. No idea is too small or unimportant. This is your bird club. Speak up and speak out. Let's get excited and inspired to make the 2012 New Year imaginative and exciting.

REMINDERS

1. We always need a bird of the month for our next meeting and newsletter. Contact the bird club if you're interested.
2. Bring some finger food snacks for next meeting.
3. You have many opportunities to recruit membership. Share your enthusiasm with a parrot lover
4. Our goal is to rehabilitate people, and train birds. See ya next month.



The Good Angel and the Questionable Angel

(Taya; Mike Stanton & Bettie Smith's female Quaker, pondering a Christmas Angel.)

**What happens to my parrot
if something happens to me?**

Estate Planning.

Just Do it!



Estate Planning - It's a hard subject to think about, but really, it's time to consider taking care of your parrots after you are gone. Here is a hard fact: 501c sanctioned parrot sanctuaries are experiencing wait times like they have never before. The Oasis Sanctuary has a wait list of over 150 birds at this very moment. You don't want your parrots to end up in a non 501c sanctioned sanctuary that might not be around for the long haul. It's one thing to take in parrots; it's another to sustain them. Be careful and do your research! Also, bird clubs across the country are reporting their adoption programs filling up with parrots that need to be re-homed and yet breeders continue to breed. It's a very scary situation. If you don't have relatives that will take your parrots, please don't saddle them with your friends and/or neighbors. Plan for them and make sure they are taken care of. One of the newer trends is to "estate" your birds.... You can now set up a trust that will help ensure a spot in a sanctuary. Contact the sanctuary you like (i.e.: the Gabriel Foundation, the Oasis Sanctuary, Best Friends Sanctuary, etc) and see what you need to do to make sure your parrots have a safe place to go. And do your research. Make sure it's a SAFE and legitimate sanctuary and not just a "home" where someone "rescues" parrots. They should have a board of directors and a vet on staff. Visit them to ensure you will be happy to have your parrot live there!

Once you've contacted a sanctuary or identified someone to take your bird(s), then contact an estate attorney. The Alaska Bird Club had a wonderful attorney come to our meeting a few years ago to give us the scoop. It's not an impossible thing to do (but a bit tricky in the state of Alaska). It's fairly inexpensive too. It's time you seriously think about it. Contact information:

Paul D. Kelly
Law Offices of Kelly and Patterson
(907) 258-6777

Alaska Law allows you to set up a trust for your parrot. Do it!

More *Alaska Style* from David Jensen Photography

Visit David's website at: www.alaskaportraits.com

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David Jensen has been our volunteer judge for our
Photography contest every year at the Alaska Bird Club
for six years now.



Photo by David Jensen



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