

BIRD TALK Editor's Note: Welcome Home

Laura Doering, BIRD TALK Editor

BIRD TALK Editor Laura Doering and her nanday conure Ollie.

We have all experienced the joy and excitement of welcoming a pet bird into our lives. For some, this meant daily trips to the breeder or pet store to spend snuggle time with a baby bird during its weaning stage; counting down the days until your little one was given the green light to go home with you. For others, it meant working with a bird rescue or adoption agency to match you up with a bird in need of a new home. And perhaps some of you were like me; finding yourself the sudden guardian of a bird from a friend, relative or acquaintance who didn't know what they were in for when they got a bird.

In my case, my nanday conure, Ollie, was the one pet left behind when a close relative moved a few states over. I was happy to take Ollie in until I could find a deserving home for him. Well, six wonderful years later, Ollie is still with me. Fortunately, he is totally unaware that I was supposed to be a temporary stop in his life's journey. It took about a week before he'd let me scratch under his wing (an honor bestowed on a select few), and he's been my morning shower buddy, laundry sorter and my watch-over-the-rest-of-flock bird ever since. I couldn't imagine my life without him, and I suppose I already knew that the night he arrived at my door.

This issue is our special new bird issue and, as the above scenarios indicate, "new" birds come in many forms. Regardless of how young or old your new bird is, the basic principles still apply: offer a safe, nurturing environment, have patience and always respect your bird's boundaries. If you know someone who just brought home a bird or is in the process, share in the excitement. On Page 16, BIRD TALK columnist Susan Chamberlain offers some fun examples of a new-bird welcome basket, full of fun and informative items any new bird and bird owners will greatly appreciate!

Open To INTERPRETATION

You may have heard that the state of Pennsylvania is considering a ban on nanday conures in that state. According to its game commission, the reason for the proposed ban is "in response to human health/safety and wildlife habitat health purposes."

Being owned by a nanday, I can honestly say that I've never feared for my well being. As for the affect on wildlife health, I've heard that one concern is the nandays' reproductive and nesting capabilities. Nandays aren't exactly the power-line crazy nest builders like quaker parrots, and even then, there are ways to work around that, as quaker parrot advocates are well aware of.

I haven't heard of problems associated with the feral flock of nandays that reside in the Los Angeles area. When I lived there, I used to see the feral flock a few times each week. They looked like bandits on the run with their black-feathered heads, as if trying to sneak by incognito. But, of course, their screeches might as well have been a bank alarm going off after a heist.

Interesting that the nanday's black mask aligns it with another masked outlaw, banned in some states, the ferret. (You can't keep a pet ferret in California, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Washington DC and New York City.) Curiously, ferrets are OK in Pennsylvania.

What has your real-life experience with nandays been? Do you think they belong on the banned list? Has anyone in Tennessee (a state where they are currently banned) noticed a difference there? For the latest information on the proposed nanday pet ban and to voice your opinion, check out our coverage on BirdChannel.com.