

Conure Reader's Stories: Chapter Two

BirdChannel.com readers share their conure story.

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Sunshine (Sunny), In Memory of Vert
Courtesy Andrea Fellion, New York

Vert liked to watch the snowflakes fall and he never left my shoulder after dark. I went out to get the mail and off he went. I spent the night trying to get him out of the tree but it was sleeting. I was heart broken. I came across a website with a 10 month old brown throat just like Vert. I thought it was kismet. We drove six hours to get him. It was love at first bite! That is when Sunny came into my life. He is himself and Vert all in one amazing little package. If I cry, Sunny comes and wipes the tears away. He is the "protector" of all the other fids, yet he scolds them if they're being bad. He cheers crying children, and best of all, he refuses to go outside without being in his travel cage.

Sunny was helping me on the computer one day. He walked across the keyboard and somehow typed 'Vert,' so I wrote this.

Sunny's Letter To Vert

Our Story begins in that pet shop you sat
Your mom could no longer keep you
But guess who walks in?
A new mommy (maybe)
You climbed on her shoulder
Like no other before her
And smitten you sure both were
So happy you made her
She loved You so much
And yet you flew away
Far out of her reach
You were her light in the darkness
Her rainbow in the storm
Yet its kismet you see
Cause you came to me
You taught me your quarks
And said you'd stay with me
Your old body was done
But we could be one
Mommy found me soon after
And shocked she sure was
Cause looking in my eyes
She saw both of us

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Jake
Courtesy Maxine Booth, Tennessee

This is Jake, my sweet blue-crowned conure. I went to a bird fair in Nashville two years ago and found him in a small green show cage. He was quiet and seemed friendly. I took him home and very soon learned his dos and don'ts. He didn't want to be petted anywhere but on top of his head and, eventually, his beak. He wouldn't Step up; hadn't learned that. He had been raised on a rainbow pellet diet, which I was glad about. He came to me speaking a few words like "Mommy," in a loud gravelly voice, "Pretty boy" and a wolf whistle. He must have learned "Shut up!" from his last home. That made me feel bad. Now he says it whenever someone is talking loudly or Jessie, my Hahn's macaw, is yelling. He is very sweet and gentle, if I approach him slowly and gently from above. He is so gentle when he takes treats from my hand, and I've taught him to say thank you. I thank him for every nice thing he does, like giving me kisses. Baths are very

important to him, and if I'm not quick enough with the pan of water, he will use his little water bowl. He has learned a lot from Jessie, like "Hello," "Hi," "Hi baby, baby, baby" laughing. He's also taught her to hold food in her foot to eat. He's a little more laid back than Jessie, but he plays a game with me. I bob my head and whistle a tune, and he imitates me with an enthusiastic whistling, bobbing like he's made up his own song. He's only 4, so we have lots of learning and fun together ahead.

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Conner
Courtesy Terri Mitchell, Florida

Hi, my name is Conner and I am a nanday conure. I am a big bird in a little package. My new family loves me and tells me I must have been a macaw in another life. I am in my third and final home. My first owner said I was too loud. My second owner loved me dearly, but she passed away. I was given to my third home with a cockatiel in the cage with me. I was only fed cockatiel seed. Now that I have my own cage, I eat all kinds of good pellet food and fresh veggies and fruits. Boy, I didn't know what I was missing. If you want an energetic, out going, love-to-greet-the-day kind of bird then a conure is the bird for you.

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Jeepers and Peepers
Courtesy Mary R. Summers, Georgia

We are two people who are owned by two cute, sweet baby conures. We first got Peepers because my husband wanted a bird of his own that would be a loving, kinder bird than our African grey that bonded with me rather than him. We went to our favorite pet place and began to look for a cool bird. Well it was not five minutes before this cute little bird jumped right on my husband's arm, like he picked my husband. Charles fell for the little tike and right away named the baby Peepers because of his big eyes. Now we have Peepers and I decided Peepers needed a playmate, so, about six weeks later, we were looking for another conure like Peepers (peepers is a Jenday/ Sun Conure) but while looking, this little cutie pie sun conure seemed to pick me out, and now we have two. Charles named this one Jeepers to go with Peepers. They are the joy of our lives, although they are still babies they have taken to each other very well. We don't know for sure if they are male and female, but they have the bird-n-al-ity (bird word for personality) for Peepers to be a male and Jeepers to be female.

Peepers is more aggressive and a little bigger than Jeepers, although they are the same age and Jeepers is very tiny, sweet and gentle like a little girl. Peepers is a bit loud, and Jeepers is a bit more quiet.

In the morning, my job is to get up when the birdie alarms go off, because they are ready to eat! So off I go and put them on their stand to eat, and they can eat! They love fresh fruit and special treats then they're off to the toys. They will play for hours and eat and play, We really enjoy watching them. There are more pictures of the babies on BirdChannel.com on their web pages. I was so delighted to discover the site while reading my BIRD TALK magazine. My husband and I have found a new lease on life when we became owned by our birds. The conures are a real joy, as are our other birds; REO an African grey and Pe-air and Sweet Pea, cockatiels.

Our birds keep life interesting because you never know what to expect from them. The conures are very entertaining. They roll and lie on their back and wave their feet at us. They seem to know their pick – Jeepers is mine and Peepers is Charles' – but they still interact with either of us.

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Sunkist
Courtesy Wendy Joan Wansor, New York

Sunkist is our great sun conure. He greets us with a loud squawk anytime we walk into the kitchen. He gets lonely when you leave the kitchen and he seems to squawk, "Where are you going?" Sunkist also hears us when we park our cars in the driveway and close our car doors. He is already squawking by the time you reach the door! Our sun conure is also a

wonderful watch bird. When there is a cat in the back yard, he starts squawking to alert us to the furry intruder as he gazes through his window.

Sunkist loves taking baths. He even tells you when he is ready by tapping his beak on his water dish! The "human" comes to his aid and places him in his special parrot dip dish. He looks like one cute bird when he is splashing in the water and gets all wet, as you can tell in the picture.

Our conure is pretty smart. He can count from 1 to 6 by tapping on his cage bars. He also enjoys doing crossword puzzles with us. Cuddling is also one of Sunkist's favorite activities. He enjoys a fleece sweatshirt and he loves sleeping against his fuzzy cuddle buddy in his cage.

Sunkist also likes to ride on his shopping cart, picking up his dietary needs. He is looking to find his favorites, Ritz crackers and Stella Doro cookies. When we say cracker, he stands up straight and jumps to his high perch.

Our Sunkist has truly been a lovable part of family for the last 15 months. H adds a gentle peace to our lives and brightens our day with his cuteness and antics! Click image to enlarge

Pattie
Courtesy Linda Campbell, Missouri

Pattie is a Patagonian conure rescued in 2005. My only previous exposure to Patagonian conures was through pictures where they had beautiful iridescent green and yellow feathering with a bright red patch of feathers on the stomach. Pattie (his name then was Popeye) had very dirty, bedraggled feathering, was extremely thin, fearful of hands, would bite and screamed a lot. Despite all of these problems, it was love at first sight.

I arrived at work early each morning to spend time talking, reading and singing silly songs to him. As Pattie gained strength and learned to trust people, his true personality began to emerge. Instead of shy and fearful, he became outgoing, and entertaining. Although territorial inside his cage, once outside, he readily stepped up on my arm. A new, more descriptive name was needed. We chose Pattie because of his green coloring, his mischievous leprechaun-like personality and, of course, because he was a Patagonian.

Pattie now lives in my office, eats a healthy diet, is beautifully feathered, active, alert and seems happy. He entertains everyone by ringing his bell, attacking his toys and hanging from the top of his cage by his beak. Pattie's favorite behavior is "break dancing." Pattie stands atop his cage, bobbing up and down, flapping his wings and making clicking noises. A true conure, Pattie can be very loud, especially when seeking attention. It can sound like a jungle.

Life with a parrot can be demanding. They need more than just food, water and a clean cage. These are living creatures retaining all of their wild characteristics; they bite, scream and can be very messy. At the same time they can be entertaining, funny and very loving. They are not for everyone. But we made it work for us.
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Zacchaeus (Zack)
Courtesy Rick and Sherri Moorer, South Carolina

We are proud parents of a sun conure named Zacchaeus (we call him Zack.) We bought him at 6 weeks old. The story of how we came to "adopt" him is quite interesting.

My senior year in college, my budgies died. I had three of them, and they all died in a period of about six weeks. Devastated, I swore I wouldn't have pets again. I graduated college, got married, moved in our first home and started my first job. Then a few months before our second anniversary, my husband decided it would be good for us to have a pet.

I disagreed, but he was adamant. One night, I reluctantly agreed to go to the pet store to look at dogs. That's when Zack found us. He was in a cage near the register and I'm not kidding - that bird followed us around the store. The owner noticed he was "stalking" us and decided to bring him over for an introduction.

I caved in. Rick fell in love with him right away, and I must admit I was smitten with the little fellow, too. When a little girl came in begging her father to buy him, I knew I had to jump on this or I'd regret it forever. I whipped out my trusty credit card and told the father the bird was already sold - to us. Surprisingly, the owner agreed that it would probably be better

for us to have him anyway, as he was reluctant to sell such a high-energy bird to a child with no experience handling pets. Fate smiled on us that night. We named him Zacchaeus after the tax collector in the Bible that climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus. It seemed an appropriate name, considering he was practically climbing the walls in that store to keep us in his sights!

Zack is now a happy, healthy 7-year-old, and the sunshine of our lives. He is the most loyal and faithful pet I've ever seen – I believe he has dogs beat in the category of "Man's best friend!" His cheerful disposition is an inspiration to us to live everyday to the fullest and to find joy in all life has to offer.

I would encourage anybody who loves birds to have a conure. I know the cockatoos and macaws get the most attention, but conures are truly a blessing and a hidden treasure in the bird world. More people need to get to know this species of bird that personifies the sunshine!

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