

Caique Readers' Stories

Bird owners share thier experience living with a caique

Woody

Courtesy Chrissy & Ron Pritchard, California

Hi, my name is Woody. I love my new home. It is so big, I feel like king of my castle. My mom and dad give me lots of toys to play with, but my favorites have bells on them. I love to play on my back and finger wrestle. I love bonding by just sitting on the shoulder of Mom or Dad and resting there. I go like the Energizer Bunny for 10 hours a day and then crash for the night. I can whistle like my dad. At Christmas time my mom was wrapping a present and gave me my own paper to play with, but when she wasn't looking I got to unwrap the present. I just thought that it was for me. I live in a small town, and one of my roomies is a Senegal parrot named Cooper. We love to play and share our snacks together. My mom and dad love and take very good care of me. I also love to play with their 2-year-old granddaughter. I can't wait to be her show-and-tell pet. I love to go on outings and play with the kids.

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White-bellied caique

YoYo

Courtesy Ingrid Harrington, California

Not only do I have a white-bellied caique, but I have many caique friends from our Internet list from all over the world — we've had members from Norway, France, Peru etc. New members find us when researching their birds or from some of the caique breeders. We help people figure out if they really want to get a caique, proper caging, nutrition, health, polyoma vaccination, getting two caiques vs. one, microchipping, behavior, bird safe living and any other question they might have. We share pictures too — lots and lots of pictures. Some of our members have developed quite nice caique websites. We had to make a second list just to talk off-topic. Talking with your caique buddies is so much fun! The picture is YoYo as the make-believe BIRD TALK Cover Girl.

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Black-headed caique

Rubie

Courtesy Tina & Chris Spena, Ohio

I own a black-headed caique named Rubie. She came to us through the PEAC (Parrot Education and Adoption Center) rescue group. Her previous owner lived in New York during 9/11, and Rubie was traumatized with all the smoke and noise. She couldn't cope with the stress, so her owner decided to give her up. We are so glad she did.

Rubie loves to sit on the window sill in our sun porch. She will tap on the glass at the birds and people in the yard. Rubie loves to be around people. If my husband and I are in another room, Rubie will fly to find us.

Christmas time is Rubie's favorite time of the year. We have a Mickey Mouse musical house that moves and plays songs. Rubie will sit on the house for hours and never move. She loves to hear the music. If you try to get her to move she will hide behind the house as if we can't see her.

Rubie's favorite thing to do in the evening is to go into her cage and lay on her back in her toy basket. She will lay there for hours making all kinds of noises and throw toys everywhere.

Rubie will also lay under the blanket with me in the evening while I'm watching TV. She loves to cuddle and have her head scratched. What makes her unique is how loving and funny she is. She will cuddle with you, and the next minute, she is clowning around. She will pick up a stick and shake her head up and down so she can get a laugh out of you. She loves to make people laugh and clap.

Our first parrot we owned was an Amazon. We loved him very much. When he became ill and passed away we thought

we would never own another bird. We thought we would work with a rescue group to foster birds, but Rubie changed our mind. Rubie is on the move and investigating everything all the time. To sum it up, having a caique just makes you laugh.
[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Pasquale
Courtesy Clark Sheen

For the first five years of Pasquale's life, he was a very misunderstood bird. As a matter of fact, I had the pleasure of Mr. Pasquale's companionship for about four years before I took him to my vet for a check up and to my surprise found out he was really a she! Mr. Pasquale was really Ms. Pasquale.

That was not the worst part of being misunderstood. Her first owner thought Pasquale was an insane, hostile, unsociable bird that should remain locked in his cage. When it was necessary to remove Pasquale from his cage, the owner would put on thick leather gloves, reach inside and grab the screaming, panicked bird and remove her by force.

Pasquale's second owner, though more understanding, was unable to deal with a bird that would scream and panic when you approached its cage, which is why I was offered Pasquale if I wanted him. I was told if it didn't work out I could bring him back.

At first Pasquale would scream and panic when I approached her cage. I knew of her history, that the first owner would reach into her cage and remove her by force. I thought because of this aggressive violation of Pasquale's space, she had become hyper territorial of her cage. I decided I would move Pasquale to a new cage, which would be neutral territory.

Pasquale quickly adjusted to the new cage and quit screaming when you approached her. I then decided I would never forcibly remove her from her cage. Instead I would entice her out by leaving the cage door open. Sure enough, Pasquale started sitting on the cage door threshold. Shortly she would walk out to the end of the drawbridge-type door and lean her body toward me as I sat at my computer. By the use of a 3-foot perch, I extended Pasquale's reach to my shoulder. Pasquale was quick to take advantage of the perch extension, walking to the end, just above my shoulder. The next day, you can imagine my joy when this sweet misunderstood bird jumped on my shoulder and cuddled next to my ear.
[Click image to enlarge](#)

White-bellied caique

Gator
Courtesy Dennis Meeks, Florida

One of the four birds that I belong to is a 2-year-7-month-old white-bellied caique named Gator. Ally, an African grey, shares the same birth date and joined our household within a week, when they were both 7 months old. Since we live in Florida, I thought having an "Ally-Gator," without worry about being eaten, would be fun. Is it ever, including an occasional bite! Growing up with a very talkative grey, Gator never found out about the caique's limited talking ability. I step from the bedroom to "Hi Dennie," every morning. He even nicknamed me, on his own, "Dennie-ennie." My father called me that as a young boy. "Give me a kiss," "Thank You" and "I'll be back," are frequently heard from the little guy. He can even whistle the beginning of "Col. Bogey's March."

There is no teaching any of my birds to talk. Ally picks up new words and then shares them with the rest of the flock. Right now, Ally is teaching Twinkie, a blue-and-gold macaw, to talk and has done a good job teaching Lemon, a Goffin's cockatoo.

Gator's cage is filled with toys and he plays with them all, but his favorite toy is one I made for him using two small, craft-wooden flower pots and a spool tied together with tie wraps. He uses them like barbells and slides across the cage floor on his back waving them with one foot. He drags them up the ladder in his cage just to drop them through the top rung and runs down, picks them up and does it all over again.

I am a professional clown, but I never fool Gator. He knows me both in and out of costume and make-up. Just goes to show, you can't fool the clown of the bird world, even when dressed in a clown costume.
[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Harlequin (Harley)
Courtesy Bonnie Dugan

I had always dreamed of being owned by a caique. I frequently hang out at the local parrot store, and along came this baby caique. I used to play with him all the time. He was so animated way before he even had feathers. I visited all the time, but my fiancé had told me, "No more birds." Anita, at the parrot store, kept telling me to just buy him, but I kept saying I just couldn't do it – until they put him out in the main store where anyone could just come in and buy him. That's when it hit me – he was my bird. I paid for him, and waited for him to be weaned, which didn't happen for a long time. I named him Harlequin. He is colorful and acts like a clown, so I thought it was a perfect name. I call him Harley for short.

Let me tell you, he has been a barrel of laughs from day one. He loves to talk on the phone to all my friends, and he never hesitates to laugh at himself. What a cheeky fid he is! No matter what he gets into I can never be angry. He makes me laugh every day. He is a very good talker for a caique, and he calls me and my fiancé when he wants us. He has never been aggressive toward anyone in the family. My daughter has friends that come over just to see my funny little caique. I have never regretted bringing him home for a second. My life would be completely empty without my Harley. My fiancé's parents are not bird people at all, but they enjoy it when Harley comes to visit. He really loves his grandpa. He surfs all over his rough hands, and everyone thinks it is hilarious. If you want an always-on-the-go bird, without an off switch, then a caique is the bird for you. Never a dull moment, but that is what most of their charm is all about.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

White-bellied caique

Sunny
Courtesy Roseanna Launstein

This is my Sunny, a white-bellied caique. I had fallen in love with the caiques first. I saw the black-headed caique and I was hand-feeding him for another breeder. I told my husband I would love to some day own one. We saw a young pair of caiques and we bought them and set them up for breeding. For five years they did not have any babies, then in 2004 they laid their first clutch. He (Sunny) was the only one that made it and I waited five years for him. Now he is my pride and joy! I love this little guy.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caiques

Higgins & Rosie
Courtesy Emily Gough, North Carolina

I am owned by two rehomed caiques, Higgins and Rosie (a.k.a. Goober). They are the loves of my life. After living with caiques for three years I can't imagine having a house without these wonderful birds.

I'm often asked by nonbird folk what caiques are like, and why I am so attracted to them. In an effort to help people understand what a caique is really like, I give this description: "Imagine a dog, like a border collie, the type of dog that needs to be worked. Now, mix in the intelligence of an African grey parrot and the attention span of a moth. You have a caique."

There is never a dull moment with a caique around. They may be hanging from the curtains, flying from playgym to playgym with a great big whirring sound to wrestle with one another, or beating up toys in their cages. They are fantastic eaters and eat with gusto. I often refer to them as little garbage disposals – I've yet to find a food they dislike!

Another thing that endears me to these wonderful little birds is how outgoing they are. I've had neighborhood children come and play with my birds, much to the birds' delight. Just about anyone can handle them, so long as they are unafraid. Most people are taken quickly by their quirky little personalities.

Higgins and Rosie bring laughter into my life daily. I enjoy looking into the future with them and growing old together.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Patches
Courtesy Isabella Fuschino, Toronto, Canada

I absolutely love my black-headed caique! Patches became part of my life in December of 2005. I bought her at a breeder's farm located north of Toronto. She was not living in such great conditions. Her cage was filthy and unkempt. She had one toy and looked like she needed better care. So, I took her home right away, and she loves her "castle" cage!

Patches is so fun to be around. She bobs her head speedily very often when I say the word "dance." She gives me kisses very often and she whistles every minute. She hops on the kitchen table when you try to catch her. She goes crazy and tries to attack the vacuum cleaner when I vacuum around her.

She flies to me when I'm sitting on the couch watching TV so she, too, can be part of the HD experience. Patches loves her treats. Pumpkins seeds, walnuts, almonds and sunflower seeds. She will do anything to receive her treats. Her favorite thing to do is play with newspaper by hiding in and under it, shredding it to pieces and rubbing her body on it.

If you want to own a caique, be ready to have lots of fun! Caiques are funny, hyper, bossy and cute. They are also very cuddly and love to be around their owners. But be careful; if they don't get their way, they will fight for it! Let them know who is boss.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Wolf: white-bellied caique, Meow: black-headed caique

Woof & Meow
Courtesy Catherine Balkin, New York

Woof and Meow are caiques who love to play, climb, get into trouble and make people love them.

What makes Woof unique is he whispers sweet nothings in my ear. His whispers sound like breathy, heart-melting sighs. He preens my neck so gently, I get sleepy. He'll crawl inside my shirt to snuggle against my heart. At night, he often sleeps on his back on the bottom of the cage, and when I sing their nighttime lullaby, Woof will join in, singing a soft bubbling back-up. Woof is like an close friend. Meow, on the other hand, is our little social butterfly. He'll climb up on anyone who comes to visit, shake hands with them, play hide-and-seek with them, hop on command, hang upside down, give away his toys and do anything else he thinks will get a laugh or a word of praise.

Woof and Meow are, by turns, jealous of each other if one gets more attention than the other, and they adore each other. Meow sometimes sleeps with his head tucked in Woof's neck, and Woof will wrap his head protectively around Meow's head. He'll get all puffy and pinprick his eyes menacingly at anyone or anything that might harm Meow, from the vet trying to draw blood to the broom that sweeps up little things. A little smaller and a little younger, Meow knows he's got a protector in Woof and runs to him with any problems that come along. And Woof seems to feel responsible for Meow and will protect him fiercely – when he's not arguing with him, that is. They love to wrestle and argue over everything from food to who gets to surf in my hair.

More than anything else, Woof and Meow are family – my rough-and-tumble little avian family.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Hailey
Courtesy Marcy Shrage, New Jersey

This is our little girl, Hailey. She is a member of Marcy's In Home Daycare for children. We live in New Jersey.

The children and I (Marcy) picked out the caique species after many months traveling back and forth to the bird store. We wanted a bird that will blend well with a family daycare environment. Although I am Hailey's primary care person, she loves

visiting with my husband, daughters and of course, her flock of children. The caiques are clowns with high energy. They are also loving, affectionate, gentle and willing to share toys, food and drinks.

The weekend is usually quiet at my house so Hailey hops from a family member to one of her three playgyms or her two cages, but when Monday morning comes and she hears her little flock arriving, oh boy! Its play time!

[Click image to enlarge](#)

White-bellied caique

Pico
Courtesy Cindy Jones, Texas

I have a white-bellied caique named Pico. To describe him in one word would be "clown." He's nonstop from the time he gets up in the morning until he goes to sleep. If he's not hanging upside down playing with a toy, he's on his back wrestling another toy. Pico is also very smart. He's learned to say his name at 6 months old and speaks it with exuberance – "Pico, Pico, Pico!" He's very proud of himself and lets me and everyone else know. With that same exuberance, water is splashed all over the floor, mirror and counter top when he takes a bath in the sink. Pico is so full of life. When you meet him, you can't help but smile. Caiques make wonderful companions and friends.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Bandi
Courtesy Lin Grulke, Florida

I have a female black-headed caique, Bandi. We brought her home in July 2000. My husband and I already had a cockatiel and a mini macaw. He always wanted a caique, but I didn't know if I wanted to add to the flock. Well, we decided to go for it, and soon Bandi became a part of our lives.

I had no idea how different caiques would be. They were so playful-hanging upside down – playing with two toys at a time. And what a wonderful eater she is. She loves most fruits and veggies. She adores her showers and surfing her body all over a towel to dry off (another unique thing). And this little girl loves to cuddle. She sounds like she is purring when you scratch her head and neck.

She is a good talker, too. She says "Hi," "I love you," "Mommy," "Hi, sweetheart," "Quiet," "Right now" and "Darry" (daddy). She whistles and does some mimicking of other sounds.

One thing I really like about our caique is that she loves both my husband and me and enjoys being with us both. Another new thing we experienced with our caique is foot toys. She likes to lie on her back and hold toys in her foot and mouth and just wave them back and forth, or I dangle a noisy toy over her and she will box at it with her feet.

She loves visitors and enjoys watching everyone talk and interact. The more the merrier in her opinion. When we have people stay over for a few days, she adopts them into her flock and from then forward has to keep tabs on them – has to know where they are, etc.

She sleeps lying down in her tent. It's so cute every morning when she pokes her head out.

This picture shows how sweet she is. She is a living doll and I am so happy my husband talked me into adding one to our family!

[Click image to enlarge](#)

White-bellied caique

Rico

Courtesy Sophie Favé, France, Europe

Here is Rico (*Pionites leucogaster leucogaster*) who was born in 2001. Our caique is playful and dynamic, always ready to play around with anything he can find (see the spoon on the pictures). He loves interacting with us and playing with spoons, shoes, hair and carpets. He's jealous though and can't stand sharing food or sweets.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Tigger: white-bellied caique, Pooh Bear: black-headed caique

Tigger & Pooh Bear
Courtesy Shontell Ross, New Jersey

I have been owned by a white-bellied caique and a black-headed caique for about 10 months now. I cannot imagine life without them. They are sweet and playful and so very opinionated and willful when they want to be. They are, without a doubt, the complete parrot package. My girls, Tigger and Pooh Bear, adore each other and share the same cage and play areas quite willingly. If I had to pinpoint the best aspect of a caique, it is that no matter how much they love one another, they still have a big soft spot for mommy (me).

Whether it is surfing in my hair or climbing up my pants legs, I'm good for something. They have the worst speaking voices ever, but I give them a definite "A" for effort when I hear them trying out a new word or sound.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Samson
Courtesy Elena Wilson, Arkansas

In 1988, my husband and I went into our favorite neighborhood pet store to buy dog food. As I prowled around the store I heard a commotion in the back room. In response to my inquiry, Mary, the owner, asked us to come with her. There was Samson, a black-headed caique, lying on his back at the bottom of his cage in a defensive position, screaming with all he had. Mary said she needed to find him a home soon with someone who would give him a lot of attention. Samson and his cockatoo companion had been left with her on consignment. The cockatoo had been sold and Samson was extremely stressed because he'd lost his home, his friend and was in a strange place. Well, needless to say my heart broke for him, so we took him home. He immediately began the painstaking task of teaching us how to be parrot parents.

For 20 years, our little clown has laughed with us, comforted us, traveled and camped with us, entertained our friends with his antics, played with the neighborhood kids, gone to work with us and, literally, been our best friend. We now live on a river in the Ozarks, and Samson loves all the wildlife activity outside his window. He loves to sing his repertoire of songs with all the wild birds in the yard including, among many others, "Bridge on the River Kwai," "Dixie" and a happy little ditty he made up.

As he sits on my shoulder helping me write his story, he wants me to tell you about Dolly, his sun conure companion of 19 years that passed away in October, and of the newest member to our flock, Rayna, a young sun conure, to whom he's teaching the ropes.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Kiki
Courtesy Lia Pignatelli, New York

I would love to share my caique story with BirdChannel. As a matter of fact, my fiancé and I own a large pet store in

Brewster, New York, that I often recommend to your website to customers wanting to learn more about the care and ownership of pet birds. Kiki came to us as a 6-week-old baby along with many other babies that spring. Only at 12 weeks of age, when all the other babies were fully feathered and weaned, Kiki still did not have any feathers on his little body. So in attempts to help our little "Chia pet" sprout some plumage, I tried some of Avitechs "Featherrific!" supplement every day mixed into his food. By the end of the first week, Kiki's follicles had begun to show through the skin and continued to grow. Whatever was in that supplement not only stimulated his feather growth, but created gorgeous feathers as well. Everyone who sees him comments on his beautiful feathers. Because of his extended stay in our nursery, Kiki became very attached to me, practically begging me with his eyes to come back and play with him.

How could I not fall in love with this adorable little bird with all the personality in the world and an enormous love of life and playfulness to go with it? I began to see a similarity in our personalities – every day is looked forward to, and every day is a new adventure, with endless possibilities around every corner.

Kiki actually named himself. As he practiced his tiny little high-pitched vocalizations, "Kiki-Kiki-Kiki" emerged and it became his name (which he lets everyone he meets know).

Life with Kiki is so entertaining, playful and happy. Every day he travels with me to our store where he has a plethora of friends, both human and psittacine. If you are a person who has lots of energy and enjoys life to its fullest and are looking to share it with a companion bird, a caique just might be the perfect friend for you.

Click image to enlarge

White-bellied caique

Kermit
Courtesy Holli Daniels, California

I am the owner of a 6-year-old white-bellied caique. His name is Kermit. He has been nothing but joy since he's come into our lives. He is so full of love and joy. He loves to dance and whistle different tunes that he and my husband make up. Another thing he likes to do is laugh. He can laugh just like me. He loves water and he likes to dry himself in a towel when he's done washing. He loves to eat fruit and make fun of the cats. He's just a ball of energy that I would not trade for the world.

Click image to enlarge

Black-headed caique

Rickey
Courtesy Rebecca Caine, Louisiana

I was playing one sunny afternoon when I met my humans. I'm Rickey, a black-headed caique. My original family had to give me up because they had to travel often and I would get lonely. I was sent to George and Barbara, who owned Bird World bird shop in Metairie, Louisiana. My humans fell in love with me at first sight. It took only a few minutes for them to decide to take me home. I was very excited about my family.

I share a large cage with Casey, a spunky sun conure. We sometimes get into squabbles, but Casey is tough for a conure. In 2005, a scary thing happened in my home town of New Orleans. My humans went out of town and a neighbor came by to feed us, but on Monday the weather got bad and the neighbor stopped coming to feed us.

This was Hurricane Katrina. I knew my humans were worried about me. Fortunately, the neighbor left us with lots of food and water. The house got very hot and dark. I thought my humans would never return. After nine long days they finally came to get me. I was thrilled to see them, but I never let them know how scared I was while they were away.

I love to dance, play, sing, tear up newspaper and take a warm shower.

I eat lots of vegetables. My favorite food is corn on the cob. I am partial to human females and I will do anything to get

attention. A few months ago a new bird moved in. He is a drab grey-colored bird from Africa, and I resent all the attention he gets because, after all, it is all about me.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Xochipilli
Courtesy Lauren Metzger, California

Our black-headed caique, Xochipilli ("Flower Prince" in Aztec), came home to us when he was 3 months old. Imagine our excitement of having a caique in our flock after wanting one for nearly a decade! A week after Xochi had come home, I noticed that he was disoriented. When he fell off our dining room table, I rushed him to our avian vet.

Despite being vaccinated against polyoma virus, he had contracted it at the bird store before the vaccination had kicked in. We learned that Xochi's odds of survival were slim to none and that treatment options were scarce, as the virus isn't well-researched because young parrots almost always succumb to the disease. All we could do was provide lots of TLC and hope that our little guy would beat the odds and pull through. Well, it's been seven months and Xochi has not only pulled through, he's now a thriving bird that doesn't skip a beat. He fully lives up to the caique mantra that life just isn't worth living unless you're running (or bouncing, or hopping, or swinging) a million miles a minute. He's hanging upside down and swinging wildly on his toys – all in a day's work. Hopping like a crazy bunny rabbit across the kitchen counter is a caique specialty. Lying on his back fighting with a foot toy – any chance he gets.

We've been lucky enough to live with many types of birds, but there's something about a caique that makes them stand apart from the rest — they are incredibly animated and comical, and their energy level is like that of a wind-up toy that never stops. That Xochi has not only beaten polyoma but gone on to live his little caique life to the fullest is, in our minds, nothing short of a miracle!

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Black-headed caique

Aurora
Courtesy Jesse & Sandy Heithaus, Kansas

Our pet caique, Aurora, is the most intriguing and fascinating parrot we have ever owned. Never in our wildest dreams did we imagine a feathery little creature would capture and steal our hearts. We distinctly remember the day we met. Our eyes locked, we gave a wink of approval and, immediately, he hopped on my shoulder and initiated mischievousness. We knew instantly this bird was meant for us. The colorful plumage, much like the Northern Lights, is how Aurora got his name. Aurora has learned a few catchy phrases such as "I love you," and "I'm a pretty baby bird."

Packed full of energy, he is the class clown of our home. A continuous showoff of daredevil summersaults, upside down flips and kamikaze jumps, he fears nothing! He's comical, fascinating to watch and can spend endless hours playing and never tire!

What we adore the most about him is his facial expressions, such as fluffing his chin feathers (giving the appearance of an intelligent looking Albert Einstein) or the body movements of a jack hammer, swaying or wing twitch.

Aurora is not a perfect angel — he does have a temperament but is quick to forgive and forget. Knowing patience and perseverance is the key to our bonding relationship. His worst pet peeve resembles a begging hound dog. If food is present you can count on Aurora being your personal friend. A chicken leg, lake-caught crappie fish and non-dairy whipped topping are among his favorite treats.

We can openly admit our bird is very spoiled, and we wouldn't trade our commitment with our feathered best friend for anything in the world. If you are indeed a caique owner, you can agree we are a rare group of individuals who are truly in love with their caiques.

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