

## Reader's Stories

### Bird owners share thier Eclectus story

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Biker  
Courtesy Dee Fox, Nevada

This is my lil' green man, as I like to call him. His real name is Biker due to the fact he came home on the back of a Harley. He is now 5 years old and one of the sweetest birds I have ever had the pleasure of being a parent to. He had a rough start. The day he was due to come home the breeder was getting ready to feed him and, someone opened the door, and out he flew. The poor thing was stuck in a 50-foot palm tree on a cold, wet, windy Saturday morning. After several hours of waiting for him to get tired and fly; he finally tried to fly but, by then he was soaking wet and since he was just a baby – he crashed into a couple buildings before he finally landed on a lower roof and I was able to scoop him up. We sat for hours wrapped in a warm towel together just quietly talking and that's when the real bond began. And even though he has his issues, he is very talkative and just a sweetheart.

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Simon  
Courtesy Gina Walker-Klinzak, Alabama

Simon came to me about three years ago from a home where he was becoming a bit neurotic, but he settled right into my household. He has become a real flirt and one of the sweetest fids anyone could ask for. If he's out of his cage, he'll leave it to come looking for me and, if he happens to see my little dog first, he'll chase her. She knows to run and jump on something so Simon can't get to her, but he sure does like to make her run. Simon loves women - he likes everyone, but he LOVES women, and when he's on a girl's shoulder he'll lean against her cheek and try to look into her eyes. He's such a flirt, but I love him and can't imagine my world without Simon!

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Ruthye  
Courtesy Rosi Blanck, Florida

I am the proud "parront" of a beautiful Solomon Islands Eclectus girl named Ruthye. She came into my life after caring for my mother with cancer. My mother's passing left a deep hole in my heart. Very often my mother wore the color red with denim. I saw this bird at a marketplace in a pet emporium and, she was being very disagreeable with her caretakers – biting and running from them. They didn't like her and she obviously didn't like them either. Her exceptional beauty as well as her fear caught my attention. I gently walked over to her, kneeled down, lovingly focused on her dilemma and stretched forth my gentle hand. While offering a kind way out of trouble, she cocked her head as if she smiled at me – and without hesitation – climbed aboard. Her anxiety was felt by me immediately, and I assured her that she was safe now and I was there to rescue her. She believed me and I knew it was love at first sight. I discerned a mysterious presence of kinship. I made arrangements to purchase her and shopped for a big, beautiful cage and all the necessary toys and accessories. We made our journey home and life with Ruthye is great. Just like Mom, she and I have our time together on the front porch becoming great friends. You see, this is strange to some people, but my mom said she would send a "red bird" to confirm her presence with God. I thought it would be a wild cardinal, but now I realize it is this lovely lady of the Eclectus kind. Just like my mother, she is gentle, friendly and says what's on her mind. I have a forever friend in this lovely creature and she brings me so much happiness and blessing.

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Jeremiah  
Courtesy Natalie Alcee-Seepersad, New York

My Solomon Islands Eclectus name is Jeremiah. I've had him since he was 3 months old. One of Jeremiah's favorite activities is playing with the soccer ball or basketball. He likes to growl and push the ball all around the house. Another activity Jeremiah loves is running under the blanket on our bed when he wants to sleep. (Once I'm ready to sleep, he is moved to his cage.) Jeremiah loves to travel with us on vacation. He went to Weston, Florida last year when I drove. He is the center of attention no matter where he is. Owning an Eclectus is a wonderful experience. Once I get home, he whistles to come out of his cage and play. Eclectus love affection and are very affectionate in return. What makes Eclectus unique is their color (one of the only species in which the sex is known by the bird's color orientation) and personality. Jeremiah loves to give kisses and snuggle up when watching a movie. If you are a first-time parrot owner, this is one species that should be looked into.

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Olivia Roxanne, In Memory of Oliver  
Courtesy Stacey Fortson, Georgia

This is Olivia Roxanne. She was a gift to me from a Florida woman I had never met. This is Oliver. He came to me as an expensive purchase from a NY breeder. He died of a genetic illness in Jan 07, at 13 months of age.

I'm 54 years old and can't work any more following three back surgeries. I certainly never expected to be living on Social Security in my 40s, but that's what happened. I tell you this so you can truly understand this story.

I subscribe to a list managed by Carolyn Swicegood, a well-known expert on Eclectus parrots and owner of [www.landofvos.com](http://www.landofvos.com) website. The night Oliver died, I reached out to my list family and the day after his death, I got a note from Debbie, a woman I had never met. Debbie wrote that her heart broke when she read about my little green guy dying. She wanted to tell me that she had a little baby that had hatched just four weeks before, and she wanted me to have the little one. Here is how she ended that note, "So please at least think about it when the tears stop flowing. I'm not trying to replace Oliver for you. That can never be - as he lives in your heart and memories and forever will. My heart goes out to you and yours."

I couldn't believe it. I immediately wrote back asking if she was certain - she was. She also thought the little one was a boy. A few weeks later, I got an e-mail that starts, "She's a girl!" It was from Debbie who had the idea to name her Olivia in memory of Oliver. I had wanted the name Roxy so we settled on Olivia-Roxanne. Well, finally after waiting two months, I drove the six hours to meet Olivia and my birdie angel, Debbie. As soon as I walked in the door, that little redhead came right to me. It was as if she knew. She was and is the most beautiful, sweet, smart loving creature I have ever known. I love her dearly. She has crash landed only a handful of times and can even land on my shoulder. She's too young to form words but you can hear her doing that baby talk blubbering. She sleeps lying down and dominates my little 4-year-old Solomon Islands Eclectus, Tucker. I've been told that she's teaching him how to treat her. Carolyn refers to the redheads as, "she who must be obeyed." If you have an Eclectus hen, I know you agree.

I wanted to share this little Eclectus story to show how there are some wonderful people in this world. Debbie is by no means a wealthy woman and has personal struggles of her own. I offered to pay her over time but she refused. She doesn't have a big aviary or commercial breeding operation. She is just a kind lady who has a beautiful pair of Vosmaeri Eclectus who had a clutch of one and she wanted to help me in my grief. She knew in her heart she was supposed to do this. She also said she didn't think she would do it again and quickly corrected herself saying, "never say never." See why she's the birdie angel?

By the way, this redhead is way too classy to be a Roxy. Debbie was right, she's an Olivia. Olivia is a very well-loved bird.  
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Elliot  
Courtesy Dawn Hyatt, Indiana

This is my male Vosmaeri Eclectus, Elliot. He came to me at 21 months of age just over a year ago. I am his third home. Elliot's first owner loved him dearly, and then there were family problems. His breeder got him back and then he went to another home with children. When they got loud, he got loud. When the man of the house spoke, Elliot got scared and yelled. He came back to the breeder's house again, and when I would visit, Elliot would come out of his shell. He made sweet sounds and "beaked" me in the nose. I truly believe that he picked me to be his mom. I took him home and he is the sweetest most loving bird that I have. He will sit with me and watch movies, only moving to go potty. Elliot is

unique in that he has bonded strongly with me, and he seems to have no interest in others. Eclectus are usually "people parrots."

I have three Vosmaeri Eclectus parrots (two male and one female). They are really fun to watch, especially if you have a female around. She is definitely the boss. She lets everyone know where they are allowed to sit or eat – all without making a peep. She uses her "eye language" to speak to the boys.

Once I let Eclectus parrots into my life, I realized what I was missing all along.

One of the funniest things that Elliot does is yell "Uh-oh" when I come in the door after work. It is like he is telling everyone to straighten up because Mom is home.

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Lovey  
Courtesy Jill Holien, California

My favorite red head, Lovey is almost 2 years old now. Her first words were "Peek-a-boo" and she not only says it daily, but teaches it to every bird she comes into contact with.

I live across from the 17th green on a golf course, and when Lovey is outside in her cage, she calls out "Hello" to the golfers.

If this doesn't work for attention, it's "Peek-a-boo" louder and louder 'till they've heard her – whether they're putting or not.

Lovey loves football, and no wonder since she was named for Lovey Smith, manager of the Chicago Bears. When the team has the ball, she encouragingly shouts out, "Go! Go!" along with the roar of the crowd. Sometimes she gets confused and yells out, "homerun," but we forgive her. She's only 2.

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Charmin  
Courtesy JoAnn Douthwaite, South Carolina

In early February 2007, we got a 1 ½-year-old Solomon Islands female Eclectus from a rescue here in Wisconsin. We figured the Eclectus would be a good first bird for us. She certainly is. She is so sweet. When the rescue got her, she would walk aimlessly on the bottom of her cage. They had to teach her to perch, Step Up and come out of her cage. The first time we gave her "Ekkie" food she devoured it. She soon learned to come off her perch and eat with us when we have lunch or dinner. She will also call for us when she wants to find out where the rest of the flock is. She will walk across the floor, go into her cage and put herself to bed. It is like a labor of love with her. She learns new things all the time. Due to our love, patience and caring, she is becoming a great companion to both of us. She is a part of our family and we are her flock. By the way, her name is Charmin.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Simon  
Courtesy Joan E. Phelps, Ohio

Simon is an Eclectus, most likely a combination of Solomon Island and Vosmaerie. His parentage is unknown!

He is 4 years old and has lived with me for 3 1/2 years – he is a re-homed bird.

Simon invented a game to play with me. Last year, he was perched on the dome top of his cage, and I was adding pellets to one of the food bowls on the cage side. He scrambled down the cage bars until he was near me. And, with beak closed, bumped my fingers, hopped back to the top of the cage and made a giggling sound, "Tee hee. Tee hee."

While watching him, I said, "You're a funny bird, Simon," at which time he trotted back to where my hands were on the food bars. This time, he stared at my fingers and wove back and forth doing his Ray Charles at the piano imitation.

With my right index finger, I reached under his left wing and said, "Do you want to tickle?" For many parrot people, including

me, this was indeed a brave move. Simon can be a cuddly bird, but only in certain surroundings, and any touches near or around his wings will elicit a bite. This time, though. He made the "Tee hee. Tee hee" sound and ran back to his boing on the cage top.

Since the time of that first experience, he has broadened the tickle game. Sometimes he hops around on the kitchen floor daring me to tickle him. Other times, he'll repeat the process on a playstand.

What is interesting to me is that he had never heard me say, "Tee hee," so I don't know how or where he picked it up. And, to use those words in a silly game that he created was a real hoot.

By the way, when Simon does the tickle game with me, Rudy, the Congo, yells, "Ouch" every time Simon gets near my fingers.

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Gonzo  
Courtesy Darlene Newbury, Louisiana

I am proudly owned by a 7-month-old male Solomon Islands Eclectus named Gonzo. I bought Gonzo from a local breeder at 10 weeks old and had "visitation rights" with him until he was 16 weeks old and ready to come home with me. I have other birds, and I must say, Gonzo has stolen my heart. He loves to sit on the couch with me and cuddle and watch TV. His other favorite pastime is sitting on my computer desk – as he is now – watching me surf the net. If anyone asks me what kind of bird makes a good pet, it's a Solomon Islands hands down. I love my Gonzo and would not trade him for the world!

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Jasmine Mari  
Courtesy Missi Brody, Florida

I am owned by Jasmine Mari, a 1-year-old Solomon Islands Eclectus hen. She is the love of my life! I came to know Jazzy, as I like to call her, shortly after my beloved Indian ringneck passed away. I could not stand life without a feathered kid, so I went to the local bird shop and fell in love with my little red-head. I knew she was special from Day 1. She always loved to cuddle with me and be right by my side, which is somewhat rare for the typically independent Eclectus species. If I was not in sight, she would fly to find me. As she matures and gets into the "cursed" female Eclectus hormonal phase, I have noticed some things changing but not our close bond. I have an anxiety disorder so I believe that the Eclectus are the perfect species for me because of their generally calm demeanor. Eclectus like to just sit and take it all in! Don't get me wrong, they have their clownish moments too and all of that is why I think Ekkies are the perfect species!

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Fergie  
Courtesy Alys Radtke, Illinois

Fergie loves foot toys and ball-type toys that she can whip around!  
She also likes the natural toys that she can chew apart.

I love the noises that my Eclectus makes. They are almost baby-like noises that you hear in the background. She is extremely quiet, except for the one loud noise she makes when she is excited, it sounds like a bike horn!

I love Eclectus birds for many reasons. Their color, they are smart; inquisitive birds, everything is eye contact with them, very quiet (aside from the bicycle horn noise, ha ha) and gentle. Fergie came into my life 10 years ago. She is my best buddy and loves to eat dinner with us, travel, hang out on the play gym in our living room – and especially taking showers

with me. She spreads her wings out and lays her head on my hand – I have never seen any other bird do this!  
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Marley  
Courtesy Cheryl Susi, Ohio

My name is Marley, I am 6 months old. I love to eat and toss my food. I love all the fruits and veggies my parents feed me! My favorites are bananas, dried pasta veggie flavors, of course, and cherry tomatoes. I have this cool stuffed kitty who says meow when I play with him. I have learned to talk back to him saying “Meow” too! I have a brother, Tucker, who is an African grey but he wishes he was green and beautiful like me! Ekkies rule!

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Noella  
Courtesy Anne Thigpen, Louisiana

Before I met my husband, I thought I would never have a pet. I’m allergic to cats and dogs. And then when I moved in with my husband, I shared the pleasure of owning cockatiels. After Hurricane Katrina, we lost them.

Last year, at a bird show in New Orleans, we got two little cockatiels. Getting a bigger bird was on our mind and we opted for a Vosmaeri Eclectus. We talked to a lot of different breeders to learn about the needs, care, foods, health, cages, environments, etc. We decided to make a deposit for a neonate female, after long conversations with the breeder of our choice. That was a month before Christmas. On the way back home, I said a name for the baby bird – Noella. We kept close contact with Noella’s breeders. They sent us weekly pictures of Noella, and told us about how she was doing and the progress she was making.

When we got her, Noella still needed to be hand-fed. The breeder taught me how to do it the correct way. So we did for few months until Noella got by herself on regular food.

Noella has her own personality. She loves to sing her name and “I love you” following the rhythm of classic rock music. Often she will go in the little cockatiels’ cage and stay there just to see what it’s like to be a smaller bird.

As much we love our cockatiels, Noella is special. The cute noises she does tells about her mood. The “I love you” she gives back to us is so precious.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Kiwi  
Courtesy Ellen Dianella, California

Living with my 4-year-old male red-sided Eclectus Kiwi has been the joy of my life. My bird says about 40 words. He sings “Follow the yellow brick road” – just a little of it – and a little bit of “Somewhere over the rainbow.” He loves to take a shower and will scream if I take the water away. Who ever said birds don’t think? A few weeks ago I said to Kiwi, “If you don’t be quiet I am going to put you to sleep” and he said, “Wow.” When the phone rings he says, “Say hello.” When ever I go to work he says, “Bye bye.” He says, “I love you” and also sings “I Love you, and you Love me.” He has such a great vocabulary and every word is as clear as a bell. He is very friendly since I take him to a lot of different places.

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Scarlett

Courtesy Carolyn Freund, Florida

We are owned by a female Eclectus named Scarlett with two T's like Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind." From what I have been told by her prior owners, we are her fourth home. They gave her to us because she had terrorized them with her biting. We know she was hatched in 1996 the band on her leg. On Mother's Day she will have been with us for three years.

For the first year, we could not pick her up or handle her. She would either run from us or bite us. I would let her out to play on her cage top playgym, and when it was time to go back in I would coax her in with a treat. We spent a lot of time talking to her and sitting by her.

Gradually, she came to trust us and we came to trust her. Now we can pick her up and carry her around without fear of being bitten. She likes to sit with me while I read or watch TV. Scarlett also likes to watch TV. She especially likes the children's shows on the public TV channel and sports, such as football games. She also likes to listen to music and will sometime dance on her perch.

Scarlett likes toys that she can shred and wood and leather toys to chew, but best of all she likes to shred newspaper. I put newspapers on her playgym and hide treats in them, and that entertains her for hours! Unfortunately she thinks all newspapers are hers to shred, so the one thing I cannot do with her on my arm is quietly read the morning paper!

Scarlett loves attention and likes to show off for company. She has several favorite words and phrases. She says "Hello" to the telephone, the fax machine, the timer on the stove and sometimes to the tea kettle. She also says "Hi Scarlett", "I love you", "What's up Don" (my husband's name) and calls for "Mom" when I'm out of sight. She can do several whistles and has a very wicked laugh. It sounds like an old witch's cackle! The funniest thing she does is hang upside down from the top of her cage and flap her wings when she sees the vacuum cleaner.

We really enjoy having Scarlett as part of our family and are so glad she has decided that we are worthy of her trust and affection.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Elvis

Courtesy Sandra Humphrey and Eric Nilsen, Florida

It was exactly two years ago when Elvis, our male Solomon Islands Eclectus, entered our lives ? and we cannot imagine life without him. When we adopted Elvis he was 2, already on his second home, had not been finger trained and was left in his cage on a screened porch with little attention.

I'd had budgies when young, but neither my husband nor I were experienced with larger birds, so we were apprehensive about our decision to adopt him. He'd only been handled with gloves or a towel for cage cleaning or vet appointments, so we knew we'd have a challenge. He needed his wings clipped, but we wanted to give him a few weeks to get used to his new home. Our first mistake was using the towel or glove to catch him (something he still hates). Once his wings were clipped and beak trimmed (he tends to overgrow), he became very subdued and within a day, we began working with him on finger training. He quickly grew to trust us and soon we were taking him for walks around the house or yard. He developed a routine and, within just a few months, we could let him roam between his cage and play-top at will during the day. He began joining us nightly at the dinner table on his play-stand, and it is absolutely true that the way to an Eclectus' heart is through his stomach.

Today, Elvis is a loving and, of course, spoiled parrot who likes kisses and hugs and will even lift a wing so my husband can kiss him under his wing. Elvis has several expressions such as; "We saw parrots", "Talk to the parrots", "Hello", "Up", "Wha'sa matter" and "What are you doing." He is quick to say "Stop screaming" or "Why are you screaming" when anyone but him is making too much noise.

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Cockatiel

May 2007 Conure

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