

# F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S.inBC

Friends for Ethical Avian Treatment, finding Homes, sharing Education, Resources and Support.

## Our Vision

The vision behind F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. is to organize a group of parrot lovers for the purposes of fun and camaraderie but also to find ways to help birds (and bird owners) in need. Needs can range from education on behaviour ,nutrition, health issues and crisis intervention, to fostering, assistance in re-homing a bird, advice on habitat enrichment, toys, etc. We wish to ultimately build a solid base of sound knowledge and talents and share that with other bird lovers.

Since F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. began in November 2004, we have found homes for many birds; these have ranged from budgies to large macaws & cockatoos. Although we are based on Vancouver Island, we welcome new members from other areas of Canada. If you live here on the Island or the mainland, please join us & participate at our monthly get together's, barbeques' and special events!

## Friends

F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. was created as a social type of organization where those of us who love birds (of all persuasions) can get together to share information and anecdotes. We discuss behaviour, diet and care of our feathered companions. And we provide support through the good and the bad – all the special challenges that can come when we share our homes and our lives with these special creatures

## Ethical

Members of F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. are encouraged to speak out on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. We do not support or subscribe to radical or violent “interventions” etc. But, there are times when it is important to step forward try to alleviate suffering or inhumane treatment. Whether that be in a pet shop, a private home or even in a so called rescue or sanctuary type setting. Our avian friends, like any and all animals in our care deserve the very best in the way of housing, food/nutrition, enrichment and health/vet/medical care. Sometimes it is merely a matter of education. However, one should never walk away from any creature in need of help

## Avian

F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. welcomes bird lovers of all kinds. While it may seem that the organization is focused on large parrots, we believe that all feathered creatures deserve respect and care. We welcome bird lovers from all walks to join our organization

## Treatment

Birds kept in captivity have been denied a world of freedom for our enjoyment. They need and deserve to be provided with large clean cages, ample nutritious foods, toys and all types of enrichments, specialized medical care and of course, companionship – both human and even more importantly the company of their own kind whenever possible

## Homes

Many birds, especially large parrots, are very long lived. They are also very labour intensive and expensive to keep. And sadly, many people don't understand the huge commitment it takes to keep a parrot happily for his/her entire lifespan. Also a tragedy, but some birds lose their homes due to the death of their companion human. Sometimes it is a matter of health problems, divorce or even the birth of a new baby. F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. is committed to helping find homes for these birds, regardless of the circumstances that lead to the need. We will help place birds that are perfect, as well as those who have issues like biting, screaming, plucking, aggression or health/special needs. Foster homes and loving, permanent homes are always needed.

## Education

Birds have been kept in captivity as pets for hundreds if not thousands of years. However, it is a fairly recent phenomenon that so many birds are now being bred and kept in individual homes. Many new bird owners believe that their new birds will live happily in small cages, eating seeds and need nothing more than a chunk of wood or a cuttlebone to chew. F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. is dedicated to dispelling those “myths” and providing education on what it actually takes to keep our avian companions as healthy and happy as it is possible to do in our living rooms. Remember, at the end of the day, these creatures are really wild animals and it is our duty to go that extra mile to ensure their health and happiness. They did not ask to become our friends.

## Resources

With the astounding amount of information available to us today, by way of the internet, books, videos etc. it is easy to be overwhelmed. And, not all the information that is out there is accurate or even safe. F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. members will share what they know about the care of our birds. What works in the real world. We exchange ideas and sources. Where to get that special toy or treat. Who makes the best cages, covers, food mixes etc. Sharing these items saves everyone time and quite possibly a lot of heartache.

## Support

Members of F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. are willing and able to provide support in all the previously mentioned areas. We recognize that sometimes a shoulder to lean on is all someone needs to get through problems with their avian companion. Sometimes that is all that it takes to keep a bird in their home and for the owner to keep their sanity.

## “Our mission statement”

The “A” in F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. could also stand for ADOPTION. There is a saying out there amongst the rescues and sanctuaries...”Until there are none, adopt one”. There are many ethical breeders out there, and far more that are not ethical. A good breeder will check YOU out. Will ask YOU questions. And will make sure you ask questions too. They would never, ever, sell you an unweaned baby. They would make sure you have an adequate cage, abundant toys and enrichments, know what your new baby should be eating etc. They would follow up with you and should be able to tell you where every single one of their babies has ended up. They are not just in it for the money.

Unfortunately, as stated, not all breeders do those things. They breed and breed their pairs, sometimes in awful conditions. They take the babies away from their parents, sometimes as eggs. The offspring are raised not even knowing that they are birds but equally confused as to the fact that they are not quite human either. These are the practices that often create problem parrots. These are the sad creatures that though no fault of their own, go through home after home after home. So, F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. advocates adoption of “unwanted” birds whenever possible. We do not hate breeders in general but abhor unethical breeders- unequivocally. There will never be an end to breeders and baby birds and tragically, so many of those precious souls may some day need our help. That fact is perhaps the main reason why this group was formed. We may not be able to change things but we can help to pick up some of the pieces.

# What makes us Different from other Clubs or Organizations?

F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. is neither a bird club or a Rescue but in some ways we are both. By adopting a bird through our organization, or by putting your own bird up for adoption to a suitable, screened and approved home, you can help, even if only in a small way, to end the cycle of breeding and the ever increasing numbers of homeless birds. There are many people who truly wish to share their lives with an avian companion. If unwanted birds are merely warehoused, unavailable to those who would love them, it simply opens the door for more and more to be born.

At this time, F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. does not charge adoption fees or charge fees to owners looking to rehome their birds. However, it is important to remember that there is no such thing as a “free” bird. Birds are far more costly to keep than other companion animals. The costs are related to the varied diets they require, expensive cages/habitats, and the never ending enrichments (toys etc. ) that they require. Adoptions arranged through F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. are subject to thorough screenings and intensive aftercare. We do not abandon our adoptive families once the “ink is dry”. Most importantly, although birds adopted through F.E.A.T.H.E.R.S. are 100% part of their new families, they may never be sold, traded or given away by their new owners. A bird that cannot remain with their adoptive family **MUST** be returned to our organization.

## Funding

This is an “all volunteer” organization. We raise funds through our small membership fees but also through special events that are held annually. Funds raised go primarily to helping needy birds and their families (with things like vet bills etc.) We also occasionally use our funds for community outreach and public education.