



ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT CONTEST 2021



Pet Psittacine Scenario

2021 Animal Welfare Assessment Contest

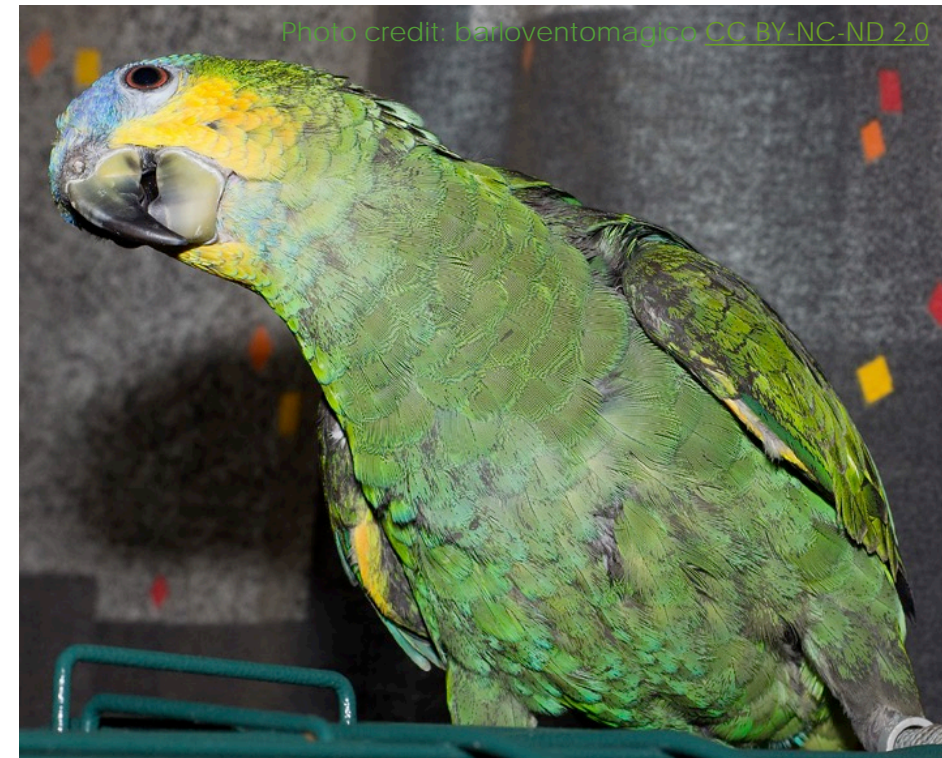
Prepared by J. Siegford [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

NOTES

1. THESE ARE FICTITIOUS ANIMALS AND SITUATIONS. They have been created using pictures and information collected from multiple sources to generate realistic, yet fabricated scenarios. Neither situation exists as presented here.
2. Please use the images provided throughout the presentation as well as text when making your assessment.

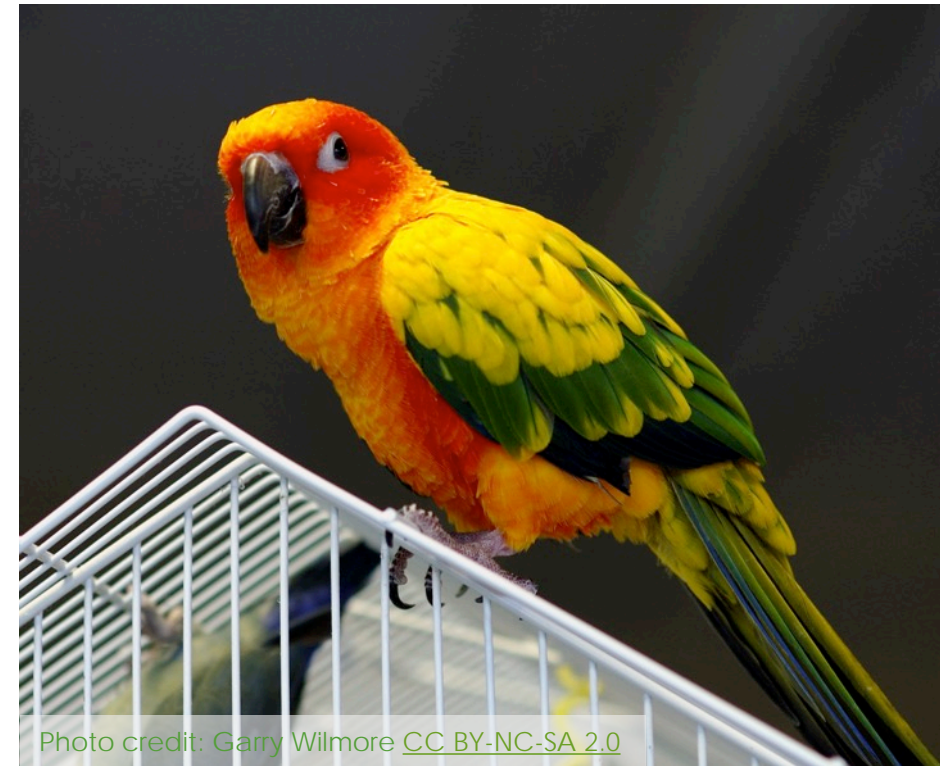
The Birds: Loro

- 18-year-old, female orange-winged Amazon parrot (*Amazona amazonica*)
- Obtained from breeder at 6 months of age
 - Breeder did not see Loro when the clutch hatched
 - Loro's mom initially cared for her in cage bottom
 - She was discovered at 4 days old and removed for hand rearing



The Birds: Sunny

- 10-year-old, male sun conure (*Aratinga solstitialis*)
- Obtained from local pet store that specializes in birds
 - Hand raised until purchased at 3 months of age
 - Other conures and birds of other species were present in rearing environment



Overview of Home

Loro

- Single-family home with large deck and fenced back yard
- No other birds in the house
 - A house cat (13 years old) and a beagle (2 years old) also live in the house
- Avg. summer temp = 81°F (27°C); Avg. winter temp = 63°F (17°C)

Sunny

- Duplex with screened porch facing small back yard
- Male, green-cheeked conure (Cheeky; *Pyrrhura molinae*) joined household when Sunny was almost 1 year old
- Avg. summer temp = 86°F (30°C); Avg. winter temp = 27°F (3°C)

People

Loro

- Mom, Dad, and two boys (4 and 7)
- Dad bought Loro when he graduated from college
 - Had budgies and zebra finches as a kid
- Mom brought her cat (3 years old at the time) to the relationship
 - Had dogs, cats and small mammals as childhood pets
- Mom and Dad work full time
- Boys go to school and to after school care

Sunny

- Couple in their mid-70s
- Bought Sunny upon retiring
 - Spent time researching the type of bird they wanted, attending workshops at the pet store, and joined online forum for conure owners before getting Sunny
- They volunteer at local food bank part time 3 days a week and are active members of garden club
- 2 grown children and 5 grandchildren (ranging from 8-17) visit during holidays

Housing: Loro

- 23.5" L x 19.5" W x 34.75" H (60 x 50 x 88 cm) cage
 - 0.75" (2 cm) spacing between wires
- 3 perches at various locations in cage
 - 2 = 1" (2.5 cm) diameter wooden dowels (came with cage)
 - 1 = ~1" (2.5 cm) diameter natural branch
- Several hanging toys and small mirror inside
- Loro moves between natural branch, toys, dishes and cage floor
 - Rarely sits on other perches
- Loro can climb to forage and play area on cage top when door is open
 - She often waits to be placed there



©Prevue



Housing: Sunny

- Housed singly, in sight of Cheeky
- 18.1" L x 14.2" W x 39.6" H (46 x 36 x 100 cm) cage
 - 0.39" (1 cm) spacing between wires
- 2 perches in cage (replacing ones that came w/cage)
 - 0.75-1.5" (0.75-3.81 cm) diameter natural branch
 - 1" (2.5 cm) diameter rough cement perch
- Hanging bungee rope, bell, and ball in cage
 - Sunny sleeps touching stuffed toy attached to cage side
- Sunny uses cage wire, perches, toys and dishes to move around cage, using most of the vertical area
 - Rarely visits cage bottom
- Sunny climbs onto cage top or flies to external perch stand



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Housing

Loro

- Cage is placed by sliding door in family room leading to back deck
 - Part of cage is in sun most of the day
 - Screen door is often used, allowing outdoor sounds, smells and breezes to reach cage
 - Loro can see deck and back yard

Sunny

- Typical cage location is near window by kitchen table
 - Entire cage is in morning sun (3-4 h)
 - Window is occasionally opened by pushing top pane down ~2", limited air comes in
 - Sunny can see into back yards of home and neighboring duplex
- Cage and/or perch stand are regularly moved between rooms so Sunny is close to people

Cleaning

Loro

- Bowls washed weekly in dishwasher
- Paper in cage bottom replaced at same time
- Wire cage cleaned in back yard (~4x/year)
 - Sprayed with bathroom cleaner
 - Scrubbed with brush
 - Rinsed with hose water

Sunny

- Water bowls and tube drinker cleaned every day
- Food bowls cleaned every other day
- Paper in cage bottom is replaced when food bowls are cleaned
- Entire cage and toys cleaned and perches replaced (~8x/year)
- Cage, drinker, and bowls cleaned with Dawn dish soap and hot water
 - Vinegar solution used 2x per year

Food & Water: Loro



- 1 food dish and 1 nipple drinker in cage
 - Fed a premium pelleted food for maintenance of medium-sized parrots
 - Dish and drinker are checked daily
 - More pellets/water added when $<1/3$ full
- 2 dishes on cage top for fruits and vegetables
 - Apples, corn cobs, kale, bell peppers
- Raw almonds and sunflower seeds used for treats during handling and in enrichment



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Food & Water: Sunny

- 2 food bowls and 1 water bowl in cage
 - Fed seed mix for conures
 - Food checked 2x/day
 - Feed dumped and refilled after Sunny eats most of it (usually every other day)
 - Water dumped and refilled morning and evening
- Eats fruit regularly (oranges, grapes, berries)
 - Fruit in dish on perch stand and with human meals
 - Tears at veggies but does not consume much
- Gets small bites other foods the couple eats
- Transitioning to tube water dispenser
 - Sunny pecks at colored spout, does not drink yet



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Nail, Beak and Wing Care

Loro

- Wings and nails clipped by Dad about every 2 months
- Beak is examined and Dremel tool used if needed at the same time
- Loro tolerates clipping and Dremel relatively well
 - Behaves best when Dad does it when he's home alone
 - Grasps his finger with her beak when she's ready to be done

Sunny

- Sunny is not wing clipped
- Rough textured perch of in cage provided to wear nails and beak down
- Sunny nips when he occasionally has his beak or nails trimmed
 - He avoids the couple afterwards for a few days

Bathing

Loro

- Bathes in shallow dish in kitchen sink with faucet dripping 1x/week
 - Loro says 'bath' over and over when she sees them getting sink ready with her dish
- Sometimes Loro comes to sink while family is washing dishes
 - Tries to get into rinse water
 - Bites at bubbles
 - Splashes around

Sunny

- Bathes daily in water dish in cage
 - Splashes water out
 - Leaves feed and feathers behind
- He does not use bigger bathing dish owners bought
 - Never seen near/touching it
- Sunny does not like to bathe outside of cage
 - Owners tried shower perch and kitchen and bathroom sinks

Veterinary Care

Loro

- Loro goes to veterinarian when dog and cat go for annual exam
 - Clinic is large, mixed practice with many partners and technicians
 - Loro has been examined by numerous staff
- Loro has been taken to vet for feather picking several times
- Loro visited vet recently due to changes in behavior (lethargy, inappetence)

Sunny

- Sunny was taken to board-certified avian veterinarian annually until he was 6 years old
 - Sunny would come out of cage, jump on the vet's finger, rub her hand with his beak during exams
- Owners stopped taking Sunny to vet after she retired
 - No other avian vets within 100 miles

Health: Loro

- Loro appears generally healthy with a few exceptions
 - Beak, feet, and nails are in good condition
 - She is slightly underweight
 - Her feathers sometimes look a bit dull or rough
- Loro has shown periodic feather plucking
 - Worst episodes when she was 8, 11, 14, and 16 years old
 - At these times she caused some minor tissue damage
 - Most frequently plucked spot now stays bald
- Recently Loro has not been very interested in food, is a bit lethargic and her urates are yellow/green and wetter than normal



Photo credit: RageZ CC BY 2.0

Health: Sunny

- Sunny is generally healthy
 - His beak is in excellent condition
 - He molts twice a year and his feathers are glossy and smooth
- The owners recently noticed the bottom of his left foot is somewhat red and swollen



Time Out of Cage: Loro

- Time spent out of cage varies from 0-2 h/day
 - More time out on weekends
 - Usually only out in evening during weekdays
 - Mostly on cage top play area
- When placed on chairs or sofa, she often climbs down to floor and walks around
 - She has chewed on door frames and legs of wooden chairs
 - Sometimes is Loro is hard to find and does not usually come when called
 - Loro snuggles into Dad's clothes when they are left on floor or chair
- Dad sometimes takes Loro to backyard when he's on his own
- Loro likes to ride on handle of vacuum cleaner
 - Calls and bobs her head when it comes out of the closet
- She once got into kitchen trash and was found carrying an avocado peel



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Time Out of Cage: Sunny

- Sunny spends ~2 hours out of cage each day
 - Split between morning and afternoon/evening
 - Sunny rotates time out with Cheeky
- He prefers to ride on a shoulder or sit on lap when out
- He also sits on chair backs, external perch and cage top
- Sunny flies from location to location
 - Flies to owners when called—especially by wife
- Sometimes uses beak to poke holes in leather armchair with beak, pull sequins off throw pillows on the couch, and pull earrings out of wife's ears



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Human-Bird Interactions: Loro

- Makes contact calls to Dad and willingly approaches when she sees him
 - Jumps onto his hand and walks up his arm to sit on shoulder
- Loro will climb on Mom's shoulder if Mom leans down near cage
 - Usually retreats from Mom's hands
- Mostly avoids the boys, especially the younger one
 - If they get too close, she spreads her wings, raises her feathers and hisses
 - She may start screaming if they don't move away
 - Loro does beg boys for food at dinner
 - Loves spaghetti, chicken, hamburger and crackers



Human-Bird Interactions: Sunny

- Approaches owners whether in cage or out
 - Willingly steps up on finger when asked
- Sunny likes to eat meals with owners
 - Mostly his food or small pieces of what they are having (whole grain bread, oatmeal)
 - Sometimes sneaks drinks of their coffee
- Sunny gets nippy if kept up past his regular bedtime
- When people visit, Sunny flies to those he likes and perches on their shoulder or finger/hand
- When younger grandkids come over, he retreats into his cage
 - He screams at them if they race around or get loud



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Daily Schedule

	Loro	Sunny
Mornings	Family wakes up at 6am on weekdays and after 8am on weekends	Couple wakes up around 7am each day. Sunny's cage is uncovered at 8am
Nights	Family goes to sleep between 9-11pm each night	Couple goes to sleep around 10pm each night. Sunny's cage is covered at 9pm
Daily Routines	During the week, the family is out of the house from 7:30am-5:30pm. The cat and dog have free run of house, and Loro is closed in her cage when they are gone	The couple's schedule is similar across the week. They are generally home except for 4-5 h/day, usually between 10am-3pm and for 2-3 h in the evening 1-2x/week. Sunny is closed in cage when they are gone
Vacations	The family takes vacations each year during spring break, summer, and Christmas. A house sitter from a pet sitting service comes to stay—not usually the same person	When the couple travels in their RV in the summer to visit friends and family, Sunny and Cheeky travel with them in their normal cages. The trip usually lasts about a month

Behavior Notes: Loro

- Loro uses beak and feet to forage in and shred enrichment the boys make
 - Boxes stuffed with paper, seeds and pieces of dried fruit (mainly papaya, apple, pear)
 - She gets these every 2x/month and quickly approaches and interacts with enrichment
 - At Christmas they make her something big and complex
- When the beagle was young, it tried to play with Loro several times when she was on the floor
 - Once the beagle pulled out a few of Loro's tail feathers
- Loro regularly vocalizes in morning and evening
- She knows 6 different words and makes sounds like car keys rattling and plastic bags crinkling
- She screams when startled by the cat, who frequently jumps up on the back of the chair near Loro's cage



Behavior Notes: Sunny

- When new items are added to cage or rearranged, Sunny ruffles feathers, avoids new items and does not use as much of cage for 1-2 weeks
- Sunny goes potty on command when taken out of cage in the morning
- He likes to play peek a boo with owners
- He repetitively walks his perch and hides in the back of his cage for the first few days when summer travel starts
- Sunny can imitate the microwave beep
 - He beeps to ask for attention
- Sunny calls to Cheeky and his owners when they are out of sight
 - Also vocalizes when he hears the couple's cars come into the driveway
- He gives an alarm call when doorbell rings

