

Many have forgotten this truth, but you must not forget it. You remain responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.

—Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Preface

The untamed beauty of parrots has fascinated humans for centuries and keeps us in its spell to the present time. Parrots are beautiful, they can fly, they are different from us, they are intelligent, and they remain mysterious. However, our relationship with parrots has changed greatly over time. Once considered a plentiful natural resource worth exploiting, we now make great efforts to protect their dwindling natural populations. At the same time we have come a long way in how we keep parrots in our homes. They no longer are but brilliant exhibition pieces chained to a T-stand but have become members of our families whose sensitivities, cognitive abilities, and emotions we respect and try to understand.

Yet parrot-keeping is a challenging endeavor. We admire their wildness, yet we bring them into a very unnatural captive environment for which they have not evolved. We admire their flight, yet in most cases where we keep parrots as pets we need to clip their wings. We like them because they are social creatures, yet we frequently keep them as solitary birds so they will redirect their affection toward us, and in most cases we leave them alone for extended periods of time. We recognize their intelligence, yet maintain them in a very restricted and confining environment.

No wonder behavior problems in parrots are plentiful and the numbers of abandoned parrots ending up in sanctuaries is increasing. Stories of parrots relegated to small cages in the basement,

neglected, covered with a towel to keep them quiet, are much too common. Even normal parrot behavior such as vocalization, chewing, and being messy does not fit well with people's lifestyles and can result in a broken human-animal bond. This book is written by authors who understand and love parrots in order to help foster a mutually beneficial and enjoyable relationship between parrots and their humans. We hope it can set up new parrot-human relationships for success and rekindle the joy that should be inherent in such relationships in cases where it has been lost. We intend to promote a deepened understanding and responsible attitude toward parrots in the wild as well as in captivity. We hope this will contribute to the welfare of parrots and help develop a respect for and appreciation of these fascinating beings.

Although scientific interest in parrot behavior is growing, knowledge in this area is still limited. This is especially true for behavior problems of pet birds and their treatment. The information in this book is based on scientific principles and available publications but, where specific and proven information is not available, may reflect the opinion and the personal experience of the authors. Therefore, there may be some degree of contradiction or difference in interpretation between chapters. This inconsistency was intentionally maintained to offer the reader different perspectives.