



Benito, a Hyacinth Macaw, is secure and comfortable during routine beak grooming and shaping.

to medication, the veterinary staff vigilantly checks each dosage because even a small error in dosage could harm the bird. Administering medicines to patients who don't cooperate requires clever techniques, and Amy is skilled at making sure the birds receive their medications. Twice a day, she catches the birds and places the medications in their mouths. In most birds, the medicine must be placed past the patients' windpipes so the birds do not choke. Some birds can be tricked into taking medicine by hiding it in their food, but most birds will figure it out and then need to be medicated by hand.

Routine grooming may not seem like an essential part of medical care. But because birds in captivity are not as active as wild birds, they need their nails and beaks trimmed on a regular basis — something that wild birds accomplish through their usual feeding and other activities.

The hospital has a rotary tool to sand, shape, and buff the birds' beaks. Dr. Fish's innovative approaches for the birds' medical care was featured on *Animal Planet's Animal Report*, scheduled to run in March. She used dental acrylics and dental bridges to repair the broken beak of Wanda, a Peregrine Falcon, last year. Repairs like these are crucial for the birds to eat properly.

The National Aviary is one of the few zoos in the country to take a proactive role in preventive healthcare for birds. Dr. Fish implemented routine Polyoma and Pacheco's Virus vaccinations for the Aviary's parrots. These are common parrot viruses and the vaccines are important because a bird can carry

the virus and look healthy, but infect other birds before it becomes ill. The vaccines can prevent an individual bird from becoming ill and prevent mass outbreaks.

The parrots are placed on a special restraint board in order to perform safe and effective vaccinations. The process is complex: a parrot is a delicate bird that needs to be handled gently; on the other hand, a large parrot's bite is powerful enough to remove a human finger. In time, Dr. Fish hopes to teach other veterinarians and the public about the importance of Polyoma vaccinations for pet parrots as well.

Another preventive measure that the National Aviary exercises is to periodically screen the eagles, ducks and penguins for Aspergillosis. This condition is a common respiratory fungus that affects raptors, waterfowl and penguins. Left untreated, it can cause respiratory disease and even death. Any bird that tests positive receives a custom-made antifungal capsule hidden in a fish to treat the condition.

Amy and Dr. Fish are especially excited to have recently acquired an x-ray processor, and they're working on converting an unused back stairwell into a darkroom for developing the x-rays. With our new equipment, improved facilities and outstanding staff, we've gone in a short time from providing a basic standard of care to *setting the standard* for avian medical care.

Providing the best medical care for our collection comes at a high price. Thus, the National Aviary highlighted the hospital during the 2005 Year-End Appeal to cover some of its expenses. We are pleased

to announce that with your generosity, over \$15,000 was raised to benefit the Avian Veterinary and Research Hospital Fund.

With a veterinary staff as dedicated and talented as Dr. Pilar Fish and Amy Smith, the hospital has a promising and exciting future. In just three years, the hospital staff's accomplishments are numerous and significant. We know we are saving more birds with new equipment and techniques, and we're proud to now have a truly world-class facility. We anticipate that the staff of the Avian Veterinary and Research Hospital at the National Aviary will continue to raise the standards for quality avian healthcare in the region and throughout the world.



A Great Indian Hornbill is prepared for an x-ray of his distinctive casque as part of a research project.