

## **Biography:**

Cassie Malina CPBT-KA, CPBC  
Owner, Awesome Animal Solutions

Cassie Malina founded Awesome Animal Solutions in 2020 to offer the most positive, least intrusive, empathetic, science based, effective solutions to anyone looking to help their animals reach their fullest potential. She offers virtual and in person consulting as well as educational webinars for people working or living with animals. Prior to 2020, Cassie spent twenty-two years with Natural Encounters, Inc., where she produced and performed in free flight bird shows at Disney's Animal Kingdom and across the country. As NEI's Director of Staff Development, she mentored countless staff and workshop attendees on the many aspects of managing and training a large bird collection. She was Parrot Kindergarten's School Counselor for the first two years that the school has operated, beginning in April 2021. Cassie has taught the art and science of animal training at numerous workshops, webinars, podcasts, and conferences across the US and abroad. She received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020 from the IAATE, commemorating her 20 years on the Executive Board. She is also a ZAA, ABMA, and IAABC member, sitting on the ZAA Welfare Committee. She was featured on the ABMA Podcast "Animal Behavior Conversations" in March 2024 discussing "How to Start a Behavior Program". She completed Dr. Susan Friedman, Ph.D.'s LLA course and maintains her IAABC CPBC and IATCB CPBT-KA certifications.

## **Webinar Topics and Descriptions:**

### **A Holistic Approach to Bird/Animal Care and Training**

When evaluating the overall wellbeing of our birds, taking a holistic approach can be incredibly beneficial. There are several considerations that are interconnected and overlapping which all come together to create the whole of bird care. Considering diet, living space, feather and body condition, socialization, and mental/cognitive stimulation can lead to an overall increase in bird welfare. This presentation will take a deep dive into these five considerations, showing how they are all interconnected and related to the physical and cognitive health of the birds we care for.

### **Reaching and Helping the Biting Bird**

We've often been told that "getting bit is just part of living with a parrot"—but it doesn't have to be. Parrots don't bite each other in the wild; biting is a behavior they learn and practice in our homes. In this talk, we'll explore why biting happens and how to prevent it by teaching clear, alternative behaviors that meet our bird's needs. We'll take a deeper look at common categories of biting, including play and exploration, communication (saying "No!"), fear, frustration,

territorial behavior, and learned aggression, so you can build safer, more trusting relationships with your birds.

### **Cooperative Care for Low Stress Veterinary Procedures**

As we increase our awareness of the link between nutrition, physical, and cognitive wellness, we also grow our awareness of how stress and illness are linked, and the detrimental side effects that can be caused by the added stress of necessary medical procedures when animals are already immunocompromised. When we prioritize training our animals to participate in their own care voluntarily and cooperatively, we can not only greatly reduce the stress associated with veterinary procedures, but we can maximize their physical and cognitive wellness while at the same time building trusting relationships with our animals. Join Cassie as she shares some of the many behaviors you can train your birds to voluntarily participate in to increase their wellbeing and achieve your behavior and relationship goals.

### **Managing a Hormonal Parrot**

During the breeding season, it is not uncommon to see an increase in behavior challenges from our birds. Some birds exhibit behaviors labeled as “hormonal” all year long. Join Cassie as she unpacks what “hormonal” looks like and shares helpful pointers on how to live cooperatively alongside our birds and minimize some of those challenging seasonal behaviors. Our goal is to be seen as a flock mate and not a sexual partner. We can change the environmental conditions that set the stage for hormonal behaviors. Rest assured, we can train hormonal birds!

### **Understanding Observable Behavior**

Body language is the universal language all animals use to communicate—and our birds are especially expressive. Subtle changes in posture, feather position, and movement can tell us a great deal about how they’re feeling. In this talk, we’ll explore how learning to observe and interpret these signals supports successful training and behavior change. Clear communication starts with observation. When we begin having two-way conversations by truly *listening* to what our birds show us, trust grows and relationships deepen quickly.

### **From Perch Potato to Playful Parrot: Teaching Independent Play**

Just like people, parrots need the right balance of nutrition and movement to live long, healthy lives. A “perch potato” parrot—one who doesn’t move or explore much—can be at risk for illness and arthritis. In this webinar, we’ll look at how thoughtful diet distribution, enriching

environments, and teaching and encouraging independent play can inspire parrots to move more, forage, and engage their minds and bodies. You'll leave with practical ideas to help your parrot become more active, enriched, curious, and confident.

## **Recall Training**

Whether furred, feathered, flighted or otherwise, all animals can learn and benefit from Recall Training. Recall Training, simply, is teaching an animal to come to a place we call them to. Whether we call them to come to us or to another perch or location, having our birds reliably respond when called is a behavior I believe should be part of their repertoire. As a professional animal trainer with over two decades of experience working in Zoological facilities, I can confidently say that strong recall training saves lives. Join us as we take a deep dive into the benefits of Recall Training and how you can easily achieve this with your flock.

## **Set Your Home and Your Bird Up for Success – Adopting a Bird with an Unknown Past**

What can you do to set your home and your bird up for success? How can you maximize your relationship and life with your bird? There are several considerations that are interconnected and overlapping which all come together to create the whole of bird care. Considering living space, diet, feather and body condition, socialization, and mental stimulation can lead to an overall increase in bird welfare. This presentation will focus on the first of these five considerations, discussing how maximizing your bird's living space is interconnected and related to the overall physical and cognitive health of your bird.

## **Step-Up and Force Free Transfers**

We've traditionally been taught that "step up" should be the first behavior a bird learns. When we look at this from the bird's perspective, it becomes clear why this behavior can be one of the most difficult to teach and maintain. We are the most variable and unpredictable perch a bird will ever encounter—nothing like what their wild counterparts have evolved to use for perching or travel. Choosing to step onto and be transported by us requires a significant amount of trust.

For birds who cannot fly from place to place, voluntary transfers are even more critical. In this presentation, you'll learn step-by-step strategies to teach your bird to reliably and willingly transfer—because they want to, not because they have to. Teaching birds to choose to transfer to a perch, hand, cage, carrier, or play gym is one of the best gifts we can give them.

## **Target Training: Fundamental for All Behavior**

Target training is so much more than teaching your bird to simply touch a stick with their beak. It is a foundational behavior you can teach your bird so you can start building a strong trusting relationship. You can use it to provide your bird physical and cognitive stimulation, teach them to forage and play with toys, get on a scale, drink from a syringe, climb into a carrier, go back into their cage, step up on a hand, and much more. This behavior takes minutes to teach and the benefits to its application are endless. Join us to get started and explore the possibilities!

## **Whole-Life Enrichment: Affordable, Meaningful Care for Companion Birds (Cost Saving Strategies)**

Avian enrichment is much more than simply hanging toys in and around enclosures. According to the AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums), enrichment is “a process to ensure the behavioral and physical needs of an animal are being met by providing opportunities for species-appropriate behaviors and choices” and AZA certified zoological facilities are required to regularly provide enrichment. As bird caregivers, we are solely responsible for ensuring their physical and cognitive wellbeing. This requires understanding the natural behavior of the individual bird species and offering environmental enrichment that allows birds to exhibit species-appropriate natural behaviors.

For parrots, enrichment should address categories such as occupational, physical, sensory, nutritional, and social needs. Parrots are social, active foragers who excavate nest cavities and explore their world with their feet and beaks. When we provide ample opportunities for them to chew, rip, and shred, and they take advantage of those opportunities, their beaks are naturally maintained, and feather destructive behaviors decrease. Providing ample foraging opportunities for parrots to problem solve to search for and procure various healthy foods, offered and consumed in healthy quantities, supports physical and cognitive wellness. Socialization, both with caregivers and others further promotes wellbeing. Training parrots to interact with enrichment devices and voluntarily cooperate in care routines, including medical procedures, enhances their cognitive and physical stimulation and fosters positive social interactions and increased independent play. Effective enrichment gives birds control over their environment, reducing stress and increasing resilience. This presentation will explore simple ways to integrate enrichment into various living spaces for parrots.

Short Description:

Being solely responsible for ensuring the physical and cognitive wellbeing of the birds in our care requires understanding the species natural behavior and offering environmental enrichment that encourages species-appropriate natural behaviors.

### **Other Deep Dive Topics**

- Carrier Training
- Syringe Training
- Scale and Towel (Voluntary Restraint) Training
- Diet, Nutrition, and Behavior
- Going in the Cage Force Free
- Screaming and Vocalizing
- Feather Destructive Behavior
- Bonding Birds – With Family and Other Birds
- Nail and Wing Trims
- Voluntary Bathing
- Station Training
- Building Trust with Fearful Birds/Animals
- Trick Training – The Value of Play
- Behind the Scenes of a Bird Show

Don't see your desired topic on our list? Reach out- we'd love to include it!

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