

Parrots Given “Names” by Their Parents and Use Them Throughout Their Lives

Curious Cat Science and Engineering Blog

[Parrots learn their ‘names’ from their parents](#) [1]

Parrots, which have long amused us for their ability to imitate our vocal patterns, actually learn to caw their “names” from their parents, says a new Cornell study. The research offers the first evidence that parrots learn their unique signature calls from their parents and shows that vocal signaling in wild parrots is a socially acquired rather than a genetically wired trait.

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Previous research had shown that all wild parrots use unique “contact calls” that not only distinguish each bird individually, but also communicate their gender, and the mate and larger group they belong to.

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“Parrots can have extremely long periods [leading up] to independence, and this is thought to be related to their large brains,” explained Berg. The same goes for primates, he said, with humans in particular being “off the charts” when it comes to a lengthy stage of child dependence.

More research is required, to better understand the evolution of and interaction between these physical and behavioral traits, he said. “We still don’t have good explanations of how these behaviors help wild individuals survive and reproduce in nature,” he said.

The paper offers some possible explanations: Perhaps the parrots’ far-ranging journeys to “communal foraging sights” are what impress upon each parent the need to have their fledglings’ names sorted out — not unlike human parents’ need to call for their children by name at a crowded fair.

I enjoy learning more fun and cool stuff about the animals we share the world with. They are quite an interesting bunch of creatures.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/25/2015 - 8:18am):

http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2012/11/parrots-given-%E2%80%9Cnames%E2%80%9D-their-parents-and-use-them-throughout-their-lives?qt-most_popular=0

Links:

[1] <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/July11/ParrotNaming.html>