

Last Child in the Woods

Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

by **Cathy Schlott**, Lead Trainer

In an era of staggering technological advances — the internet, video games, television and multimedia — at every turn we are faced with a strange and disturbing trend in society: The current generation of children, for the first time in history, has a shorter life expectancy than their parents. In *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv correlates the rise of childhood obesity, attention-deficit disorders and skyrocketing rates of anti-depressant prescriptions for children to their separation from nature. The next generation is simply not going outdoors, and a powerful body of evidence is suggesting that they are the worse for it.

Grounding his book with social, psychological and scientific studies on the effects of nature on human development, Louv presents a strong case for parents to showcase what the natural world has to offer their children. Much of the book is nostalgic — it reminded me of times when I was young and out playing in the woods, swinging on vines, playing with slugs and watching birds soar in the sky. These experiences are what made me interested in science. This book reminds us of all the simple joys that we had in our childhood that may be missing from today's generation. But more importantly, it alerts us to some of the more detrimental side effects that may occur when we take nature for granted, and how important it is to preserve that world for our children and grandchildren.

I found *Last Child in the Woods* to be both well written and timely, considering the increasingly common news reports on the mental and physical health of children today. It manages to avoid romanticism and provides solid and practical suggestions to get out into nature, while addressing modern concerns parents may have. Whether you are a parent or not, this book is an interesting and valuable read. I would recommend it to anyone who has an interest in the future of our children and the future of our environment.



Please consider leaving an enduring legacy to the National Aviary by becoming a member of the Phoenix Society.



Contact your estate planning advisor or the National Aviary Development Office for more information.

species spotlight:

Rainbow Lorikeet

by **Christa Wright**, Trainer, Animal Programs

The Rainbow Lorikeet is one of the most colorful species of bird at the National Aviary both in looks and in personality. Rainbow Lorikeets are mainly found in the rainforests, coastal bush and woodland areas of Australia. There are many subspecies of the Rainbow Lorikeet, but all are very similar. Each bird has several colors including yellow, orange, red, light green and a variety of blues. Their beaks are a dark orange with hollow nostrils and their eyes are black and brown. Their toenails are very sharp so they can hold onto trees.

Lorikeets are a small species of parrot. They are social birds and spend much time in groups flocking and feeding together. Sometimes these groups number in the thousands. Individuals pair for life and build their nests in the cavities of trees. They are noisy birds. Like most parrots, they have the capability of mimicking. They are very playful as well, often seen rolling on their backs, nipping, and kicking at each other.

Rainbow Lorikeets feed primarily on pollen and nectar. They eat nectar from many different species of flowers, though they will also eat fruit, vegetables, and sunflower seeds. On occasion, they will also eat small bugs. The ends of their tongues have hair-like appendages that aid in feeding on nectar. They are beneficial to the ecosystem because their feeding habits help pollinate both flowers and trees. They have been known to fly up to 30 miles in one day, feeding along the way.

They are said to live over 20 years, and are currently abundant in the wild.



Rainbow Lorikeet

Trichoglossus haematodus

Conservation Status:

Not threatened

Range:

Southeast Asia, Australia, and several Pacific islands

Habitat:

Rainforests, coastal bush and woodlands

Diet:

Mostly pollen and nectar; also fruit, vegetables, insects and sunflower seeds

National Aviary Photo by Andy Kemmer

The Lories & Friends exhibit at the National Aviary is open during feeding times daily: 10-11AM, 12-1PM and 3-4PM. Nectar cups are available for \$2.

Kid-focused programs designed especially for children ages 2-5

LITTLE PEEPERS



STORIES AND CRAFTS

Every Monday* and Thursday at 11:30 a.m.

Stories, craft activities and songs will introduce fun and age-appropriate facts about birds, nature and conservation. The activity will be followed by a live bird presentation.

**not on Munchkin's Mondays*

MUNCHKIN'S MONDAYS

2nd Monday of every month at 11:30 a.m.

A story and song time presented in partnership with Munchkin's Bookshelf. Munchkin's story readers will present bird and nature-focused books, finger plays and songs. Story time will be followed by a live bird presentation.

Little Peepers programs are Free with Admission.

No programs on Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Eve.

Update

"Wings of the World"

The summer 2007 free-flight bird show in the Rose Garden was seen by almost 18,000 people and raised more than \$15,000 to benefit the World Parrot Trust. *Special thanks to Phipps Conservatory for the donation of many tropical plants for the "Wings of the World" stage.*



Holiday Shopping For the Birds



in the National Aviary Gift Shop

Support the National Aviary while finding that special gift for the nature lover on your list! Our Gift Shop has a wide selection of unique items for all ages. **Serious birders** will enjoy receiving the *Audubon Life List Journal*, a tote bag or one of the shop's beautifully presented birdlife books. **Children's items** include puzzles, sticker books, plush toys and an assortment of quality nature-focused educational books. Liven your **holiday baking** with our bird cookie cutters, stuff your stockings with finely crafted stationery, or browse our collection of bird art pieces. And for the families on your list, there's no better gift than a **membership to the National Aviary**. Benefits include free unlimited admission for a year and discounts on all Aviary programs. Membership dollars provide critical funding for the National Aviary's education and conservation programs. For more information, call 412-323-7235.

QUESTION: Last year I saw a Great Blue Heron when there was snow on the ground. Shouldn't it have migrated south? It was in a creek near my house in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. Could it survive through the winter?



WITH
DAVE MILLER,
TRAINER

ANSWER: Some Great Blue Herons will stay here all year long, while others migrate south for the winter. If a heron has a good fishing spot with lots of fish and crayfish to eat, it can make it until spring as long as the body of water it is fishing stays clear of solid ice build-up. If its "fishing hole" were to freeze

it would have to find another place to feed to make it through the winter. Creeks and other areas with moving water can have less-extreme temperature changes, to make winter just a bit more bearable for the herons. Remember, these are wild animals and everyday choices affect their lives. The choices they make are usually based on instinct and help them make it to another day.

Do you have a bird-related question for the National Aviary's "bird experts?" You can ask your question online at www.aviary.org or call 412-323-7235 ext. 222.

If you've found an injured or orphaned bird, please call the Pennsylvania Wildlife Center at 412-793-6900.

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