

## Welcome 2014....

By Michelle Yesney, Chief Executive Officer



Well, we've made it through another year. Because of all of you, there are more companion birds that are alive, healthy, and in good homes than there would have been without you. Like all of our years together, there have been some sad times, some nasty encounters with reality, and some occasions of great joy. The significance of the joy we experience is greater because of the sadness that we know lurks always in the background.

I want to again remind all of you that pour your time, your energy, your patience, your love, and your money into Mickaboo: ***You, all of you, provide the fuel that keeps our birds alive, restores their health, and finds them homes.***

You do it with your donations, your time, the intensity of your feelings, and the energy of your devotion. On behalf of Mickaboo's Board of Directors, I want to thank you for everything you have given and done to make us so very good at what we all do. Mickaboo is about the generosity of individuals. None of us, not the Board of Directors, not the species coordinators, not our tech team, not me - NONE OF US - ARE GETTING PAID FOR WHAT WE DO. As we all keep reminding each other, "it's all about the birds". The basis of our organization, the object of our efforts, the measure of our successes - it's all about the birds.

### REPORT FOR 2013 THE STATE OF MICKABOO

As many of you know, we keep records of all of our birds. Our data system is called "Animal Shelter Manager" or ASM. It tracks incoming birds, records who surrendered them, and documents the foster parents and adopters who give them homes. Since Mickaboo takes responsibility for life for each bird we take in, this information is literally the "lifeline" of the birds we rescue.

So, what do those numbers look like for 2013, compared to say 2012? Well, Vinny Hrovat has, once again, been kind enough to spend part of the holiday season compiling the statistics about birds we took in and birds for whom we found adoptive homes. Table 1 below lists the number of incoming birds by month and the number of adoptions, also by month, for both 2012 and 2013. Table 2 lists the number of incoming birds and the number of adoptions by species, also for both 2012 and 2013. There are some interesting variations.

The number of incoming birds for 2013 may actually be slightly less than in 2012, although these numbers do not include any birds we have taken in during December of this year. But since we have been in a moratorium since mid-October, our intake has been severely curtailed, compared to the same time period last year (see Table 1 below). This second moratorium of 2013 became necessary because our veterinary bills were so high that, despite the incredible generosity of our supporters and the reductions offered by most of our vets, we were running out of funds. More of the birds that we took in this year were sick or injured, and more required lengthy hospitalization. We are finding ways to reduce some of the extremely high costs, including relying more on skilled outpatient nursing by some of our volunteers and emphasizing our reliance on vets who reduce the fees that they charge us. We are extremely fortunate to have skilled veterinarians that value their relationship with Mickaboo and support what we do.

The most painful lesson of this year has been that we cannot follow the same operating pattern and still expect to continue to rescue birds indefinitely into the future. As I said at the Holiday Party, the Board has reluctantly determined that we must implement some changes. The most significant change is that we will have to ask for a surrender fee for any bird we accept from a private party (i.e., not from a shelter or a stray) as we have been doing during the moratorium. The details of how the new system will function are still being worked out. How we can work with surrenderers who are unable to pay a fee, and what we tell people who simply refuse to pay, are still being clarified.

We take in a number of birds from shelters that cannot pay a surrender fee; we are and always have been the last resort for such birds and it is critical that we continue to take birds from the shelters. We take in birds of all sizes - the big expensive parrots and the smallest of the companion birds; and we take in birds that are far too often injured and sick. Again, we are the last resort for birds that have been abandoned or for whom there is no other option, and we hope to continue in that role. We are hoping to continue to operate under the same principles and values that have characterized Mickaboo for over 15 years because those standards are why most of us are part of the organization.

The surrender fee we have asked for during the moratorium is \$200. That will not pay the full costs of veterinary care for some birds, but it helps. It reduces the strain on our resources that each incoming bird creates, and helps protect our ability to care for the birds we already have.

Like many, maybe most of you, I share my home with birds that came to me through Mickaboo. Like most of you, I cannot imagine a world in which many of these birds would have been euthanized, would have died from malnutrition or disease, or been left to suffer from neglect or indifference. I am grateful to have them here and I am grateful to be part of such an incredible group of human beings.

Wishing all of you and your flock (feathered, furry, scaled and human), a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful Happy New Year.

**Table 1**

<b>Number of Birds Surrendered/Adopted By Month Comparison Between 2012 and 2013</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>2012 (full year)</b>	<b>2013 (Jan-Nov)</b>
January	17/20	35/15
February	21/16	24/20
March	53/13	26/14
April	26/19	37/24
May	19/23	32/38
June	17/14	24/10
July	31/16	28/29
August	34/18	29/17
September	29/78	28/15
October	20/21	13/6
November	29/22	8/15
December	23/18	0/1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>319/278</b>	<b>284/204</b>

**Table 2**

<b>Number of Birds Surrendered/Adopted By Species Comparison Between 2012 and 2013</b>		
<b>Species</b>	<b>2012 (full year)</b>	<b>2013 (Jan-Nov)</b>
African Grey	18/13	11/15
Amazon	7/10	13/7
Cockatiel	53/90	58/33
Cockatoo	32/23	18/16
Conure	28/21	28/18
Conure (Wild Flock)	11/4	14/3
Eclectus	5/4	3/2
Finch/Canary	11/12	12/15
Lorikeet	0/1	3/2
Lovebird	36/23	21/13
Macaw	16/17	17/16
Nonparrot	2/1	1/1
Other Rare	2/2	0/0
Parakeet	68/36	72/55
Parrotlet	9/9	4/1
Pionus	5/3	3/0
Poicephalus	8/7	3/4
Ringneck	7/2	3/3
Rosella	1/0	0/0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>319/278</b>	<b>284/204</b>