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Fancy – the Macaw that Came Down from the Tree

By Shauna Hill, with photography by Jeff Kondo, Scott Shipley, and Susan Zuniga



It is always a joy to share stories of companion birds rescued from the outside world because generally, when a pet bird finds itself outside of its familiar home, the outcome is not good. If s/he does not find food, water, and shelter quickly, the odds of survival are significantly reduced. Threats include predators like hawks, dogs, cats, and people who see lost birds as nothing more than objects to sell to anyone for the money. This is a story with a happy ending because complete strangers who cared came together in a flash to help this lost bird.

Fancy is a gorgeous military macaw who had found her way to a South Bay home in September 2014. (We are calling Fancy a "she" but we do not know her gender for sure - she could very well be a "he".) The lady of the house, Corrine, reached out to Mickaboo to get help. Mickaboo's CEO saw Corinne's email and quickly put out the SOS to Mickaboo's volunteers. On that same day, volunteers Susan, Tania, and Sarah went to assess the situation.



Corrine and Fancy - look how close Corrine got!

Susan reported on her first sighting of Fancy:

"I went to visit with the macaw today. He showed some interest when I was talking to him and when Corrine came out of the house he came down closer to see her. He moved all around the tree and at one point he almost fell. He eventually came down to the lowest branch where they've been putting out food

and took a nut from Corrine's hand and went up higher to eat it. When he came down the second time to get a nut, I tried to block him with my arm so that he couldn't climb back up, but he did exactly what I expected him to do - he flew away. I made a grab for him as he flew but wasn't able to get him. He came back to the tree and let Corrine feed him some more. Ultimately I think that the only ones that have a chance at catching him are Corrine and her boyfriend. He seems to trust them and feels comfortable with them and I think that they will be the only ones that can get close enough to him to either grab him or for him to hop on their arm.

The main problem that I see is the neighbors. While well intentioned, they keep coming up to the tree and looking at the bird, sometimes 4-5 of them. Including my kids, Corinne and her family, and me we can have anywhere from 3 to 14 people standing near the tree which isn't conducive to bird catching. I'm not sure what to do about that. They care about the bird and I don't feel comfortable telling them to go away but at one critical point where the bird was coming down to get the 2nd nut and I was preparing to grab him, a neighbor walked up and I had to hold up my hand and make a pushing motion for her to stay back. She walked back to her house.

Tomorrow I will go visit with my blue and gold macaw and see if that interests him. I also got to meet Jeff [another Mickaboo volunteer who would play a big part in the rescue] who came by again to help out."

Susan's point about others making it difficult is a good one. Some people mean well and are just interested in what's going on. They don't mean to interfere, but to a parrot that is trying to keep alive and not draw unwanted attention, seeing a large group of people can be stressful and frightening. If you observe a rescue effort in progress please ... allow the folks to do their work and avoid the temptation to stop and ask questions or watch. It will be the best thing you can do to help!



Capture cage

Back to Fancy's story: Fancy's behavior became routine, with Fancy continuing to wake up Corrine and Troy on a regular basis for breakfast and calling Corrine's mother in the afternoon. Fancy became used to the "nut" diet and started demanding them at every feeding. Just before the rains started in October, our amazing macaw coordinator, Scott Shipley, brought a large cage and a big bag of walnuts from Sacramento. He had Fancy's attention but alas, she grew leery when seeing his other hand come around and she moved away. She was a smart gal with a very secure hiding place in a big tree across the street and was not going to trust just anyone. Who can blame her? Her instincts were telling her to be wary of predators. But she did recognize the kindness of those trying to help her and would come and take nuts from them. What macaw could resist nuts!

The plan was to have Fancy become used to eating near the cage until she got comfortable, and then move the food inside. We now noticed Fancy's nares were stained brown, as if she had discharge from them, so it was hoped she would be caught soon and taken to the avian vet. Fancy became used to flying onto the cage but was leery of going inside. We would need to exercise patience. There is no way to speed rescue activities with a fully-flighted parrot. (Here is a [video](#) showing Fancy flying to and from the capture cage.) One must wait patiently and hope they eventually get comfortable enough with the trap.



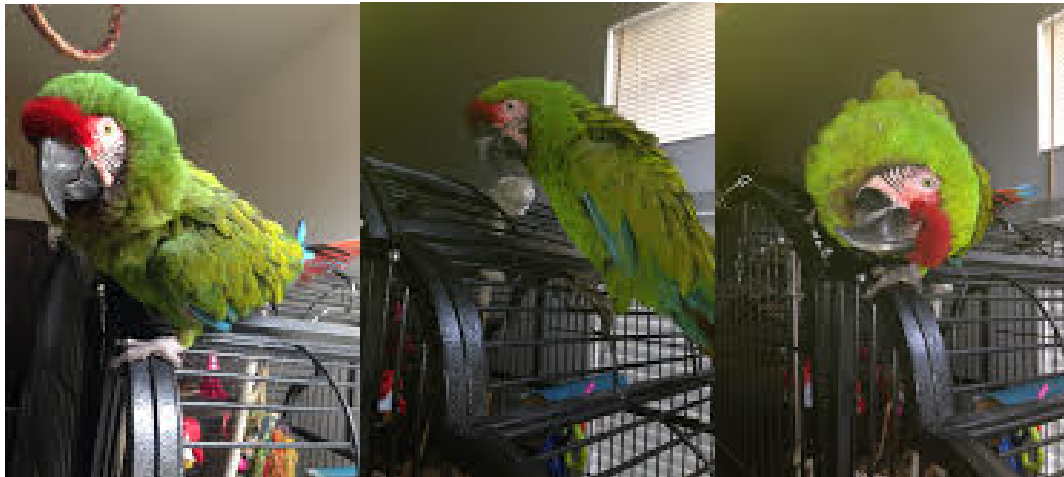
Fancy perched on cage door



Jeff and Fancy, ready to go to the vet

And then it HAPPENED!!! In late November 2014, Corrine's boyfriend, Troy, was able to close the cage after Fancy had gotten inside it. Now it was a matter of getting Fancy to our avian veterinarians at For the Birds in San Jose. She was checked from head to toe and had lab work; she was underweight but had no other visible major problems. Fancy was then taken to a temporary foster home. Fancy took her newfound safety and big comfy cage in stride and was a pretty mellow birdie for her foster parronts.

In early January Fancy went to her long term foster home in Sacramento. She has settled in just beautifully. Here is a [video](#) and some recent pictures of this beauty. See more information [here](#), and [contact us](#) if you would like to consider adopting her!



This rescue was an excellent effort by all and showed how patience and perseverance can pay off for those who came together to help. If you spot a loose parrot or lose your parrot, please visit our [website](#) for helpful tips on what to do, such as putting ads in your local papers, posting fliers in the area, notifying your local veterinary offices and animal shelters, and more.