

Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"

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Summer 2019 Update from the Telegraph Hill Conure Team

By Sarah Lemarie



Those of you who joined us for the 2018 Mickaboo holiday celebration might remember the update we gave there -- the San Francisco Telegraph Hill Conure team talked about a rise each year in health issues the team has seen. We promised 'more to come on this soon'. We are very proud to share that in March 2019, a study we supported was finally published in the academic online journal [PLOS ONE](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.plosone.0214444).

This research shows the wild conures Mickaboo regularly takes in are suffering frequently from bromethalin toxicosis. Having this paper to lay evidence to the problem is a massive step forward in enabling us to tackle this issue.

Publishing an academic paper is a long term endeavour. While it has been hard for the team to balance holding back this valuable knowledge ahead of the paper being published, having the academic paper benefits us as we tackle a growing issue that has plagued the wild flock for years.

This year alone Mickaboo has taken in eight wild SF conures. Of those eight, at least five have shown strong symptoms of bromethalin poisoning and three have died from their symptoms. Here are some of their stories:



Russell - Taken in by Mickaboo May 8, 2019

Russell was found by a contractor who brought him to a non-avian vet. Mickaboo was contacted and while we brought him to an avian vet for further treatment Russell's condition was too serious for him to survive.

Beldon - Taken in by Mickaboo May 16, 2019

Beldon was taken to SFACC and Mickaboo immediately had a volunteer bring him to Bay Area Bird Hospital. Unfortunately Beldon was so severely impacted from his symptoms that he was not able to stabilize.



Mateo - Taken in by Mickaboo June 1, 2019

Mateo was found and brought to the San Francisco shelter on June 1. One of Mickaboo's volunteers was able to get him to Bay Area Bird Hospital the same day and from there we eventually transferred him to For The Birds where all our long-term Telegraph Hill Conure ("THC") patients reside. Mateo fought his health issues bravely but ultimately he was unable to feed himself and he deteriorated.



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While it's incredibly distressing to see these stories, we feel it's important to show directly the impact that bromethalin is having on this otherwise healthy wild population, and the cost that it is bringing to Mickaboo. Each of these birds requires intense medical support, resulting in medical bills as high as \$1500-2000 per week.

The survivors - Capp and Harlow

While the bromethalin is often fatal, we do have some lucky survivors this year who have not been as severely affected and have been able to stabilize.



Capp

Capp is a curious case! Capp showed up at San Francisco Animal Care & Control in the middle of May. He was not as skittish as most of the wild flock, sparking a debate about his origins. So, our THC team lead took him home to see whether he would speak with her wild flock fosters OR her cherry head parrot fosters who had been captive pets all their lives.

Capp immediately proved himself to be an San Francisco wild flock bird based on his dialect. But he also showed signs of having been kept indoors for a period of time based on redness and spotting on his inner ears - a sign of poor air quality, never seen in the San Francisco wild parrots.

Since his move to our foster home, Capp has settled in nicely and is even accepting scratches (begrudgingly). We hope to help him convert to a life indoors with the help of the rest of his San Francisco foster flock. Capp is available for adoption!

Harlow - May 24, 2019

Harlow came into Mickaboo's care recently. While she is not as severe a case of bromethalin poisoning, she is clearly affected. We continue to treat her in hospital care. We hope she will be ready for foster home care in the next month. During foster home care, we will try to match her to a flockmate for long-term companionship, as we always do with the wild flock birds.



Foster homes needed!

If you are interested to learn more about providing a foster home for these charming San Francisco wild flock intakes, please contact our [Mickaboo team lead](#). We have a growing number of THCs in need of foster homes and we'd love to have more homes prepared to offer them a place to land.