

Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"
Published October 2013

Torie the Congo African Grey
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Rescuing a parrot can be both rewarding and heartbreaking. Sometimes it is a bunch of both. Torie was a young female Congo African Grey. She was friendly, playful, and liked being cuddled. Being trusted and loved by one of these creatures is a precious treasure. Unfortunately she was also very ill. This story is the account of how she came to Mickaboo and the dedication and care put into saving her life.

Torie was having trouble breathing and was near death when her owners brought her to a veterinary hospital. Her lungs and air sacs were very congested. The vet had to argue with the owners to have blood work done to discover what was wrong. The vet suspected the culprit to be *Aspergillus* infection. Torie needed hospitalization but the owners were only willing to take her home with antibiotics

and anti-fungal medication. The owners were advised to call the vet if she stopped eating or became lethargic. For financial reasons, the owners delayed bringing Torie back to the hospital even though she had stopped eating, had black tarry feces (indicative of internal bleeding) and was still having respiratory difficulty. The vet implored the owners to bring her in for hospitalization immediately or death would be imminent. Torie was surrendered to Mickaboo and the surrenderer agreed to pay for two days of hospitalization.

Radiographs confirmed Aspergillosis. The anti-fungal medication was switched to another after the vet suspected it of causing nausea. Torie received oxygen, gavage tube feeding, subcutaneous fluids, twice-daily hour-long anti-fungal nebulizer treatments, oral antibiotics, and oral anti-fungals. Her response to this treatment was good enough that the vet decided not to do a risky endoscopy and direct antibiotic lung infusion.

After almost three weeks in the hospital, Torie was released into the care of Mickaboo foster parent, Louisa Jaskulski, an experienced RVT (Registered Veterinary Technician) qualified to provide the medical treatments that Torie still required.

Foster Days 1-3: Torie was sent to her foster home with oral, injectable, and nebulizer medications. She was eating, playing, preening, and gaining weight. Her foster parent found her to be a sweet and friendly little girl.

Foster Day 4: Torie started to have trouble breathing. Though time-consuming, her foster parent reacted by giving Torie her oral medications in very small portions with frequent breaks to prevent aspiration.

Foster Day 5: Torie's respiratory sounds were much louder and she was not eating. She was taken back to the vet hospital where she was given another type of antibiotic and received food and medication gavages. She was sent back home and kept in an oxygen tank 24/7.

Foster Day 6: Torie had a great day. She ate on her own and gained weight.

Foster Day 7: Torie had sudden trouble breathing and would not eat. She returned to the vet hospital where she received yet more food and medication gavages. Torie was still breathing hard but was alert, strong, preening, and playing with toys. The vet advised a breathing treatment with a drug that would break up the mucous to be administered the next day. Torie went home with her foster parent to be in an oxygen tank, get her treatments and be loved. Torie ate some cooked food and seeds after being nebulized. She wanted some cuddle time and then went to sleep in her oxygen tank and slept peacefully. Her breathing was not normal but she was not in active distress.

Foster Day 8: Torie's body was found early in the morning by her water dish. Her foster parent believes that she coughed up mucous which blocked her trachea so she could not breathe.

The vet did a necropsy and found Torie's lungs to be full of fungus and mucous. It was a miracle that she survived as long as she did. Torie should have started treatment much sooner - it was just too late when Mickaboo was able to intervene. Birds are prey animals and instinctually mask signs of illness to avoid appearing vulnerable to predators. They should be brought in for immediate medical attention at any sign of illness.

The foster parent and veterinarian made valiant efforts to save Torie. More aggressive vet treatment would have lessened the quality of her remaining time and might have hastened her demise. Mickaboo takes in the neediest of birds and we are fortunate to have skilled volunteers like Louisa Jaskulski who can give medical vet care at home, thereby lessening Mickaboo's financial burden. Louisa is grateful that Torie was able to have a few good weeks where she was able to eat and play and let her sweet personality shine.

Donations may be made in Torie's memory [here](#).