

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



well trained instead of the other way around. We're dog behaviour failures!

But the earliest of early birds in our neighbourhood are

When I was a teenager, my mother would often remind me of the proverb, "the early bird catches the worm". The proverb's meaning is to suggest that success comes to those who prepare well and put in the effort. It was her way of trying to encourage me to get out of bed and face the world each morning. It was also her way of reminding me to get cracking on that homework assignment that was due.

Our geriatric and arthritic Little Corella certainly pays no attention to this in a literal way. Our parrot Lenny is one of the last creatures in our house to face the day. I've lived with parrots before and as the sun rises, they start foraging in their food bowls. Then they start going through their repertoire of chatter until a much noisier call to action is heard to get members of the household to pay attention. Not our Len though. He barely makes a peep much before 10.00am. And mostly he wants to be uncovered when he hears me on the phone. That seems to signal to him that he should be up and about.

I can't say that I blame him though. He's over 60 years old and his arthritis and lack of mobility can't be much fun. Visitors or strangers to the house are what really gets the old bird animated. They're treated to a whole burst of enthusiastic chatter. "Hello Cocky" and "Whatcha doing?" are favourite phrases. I'll often get visiting tradespeople inside just to engage him. I must seem like a nutcase when I ask them to come over to the cage to talk to him, but if it's a small thing like this that enriches his life, then I'm happy to oblige.

The real early riser in the house is our dog Scooter. He's ready to start the day well before 6.00am and, like most dogs, doesn't understand the concept of a weekend sleep-in. At least he's stopped trying to paw through our bedroom door and now just resorts to whining.

It's a torturous noise that finally forces one of us to stumble out of bed and feed the blighter. Our dog has us

the kookaburras. These chattering, hooting and laughing natives seem to beat the crazy cockatoos, noisy minors and crows. And the 'kookies' are the early birds who catch the worm because from my kitchen window I can often see them with worms, fresh from the garden, in their beaks. I really believe they're the culprits that wake Scooter from his slumber yet I hold no malice for their pre-dawn chatter. I'm sure I would miss them if they disappeared.

As Len gets older, we know he'll have further health issues. Already, I fear for his lungs as I'm now convinced that his previous, long-term owner was a smoker and probably didn't realise the effect that smoking would have on a bird. Lenny's normal speaking voice is very raspy and croaky, mimicking that of an elderly chap with a nasty cough.

In this issue we feature an article from Dr Abbie Tipler on the topic of senior pets and their special needs, from regular health checks to diet and dental health. We've also got an interesting article on feline aggression that will make a few cat owners have an 'Aha' moment. One of our readers shares her personal experience in rescuing and relocating her Indian street dog and we round out the fun with a fashion shoot that looks at the warm and wonderful jackets and jumpers available to little fur-kids. Plus we give you all the hits with our great vets and behavioural columnists.

Here at Urban Animal, we're enjoying the feedback from our readers and outlets. In changing our format and sizing for the last edition, it's all been positive. We realise that times are tough, especially for smaller businesses out there and routinely have special offers through our Facebook page. Keep tuned in and you might be the early bird that catches the worm.

Lisa Treen
Managing Editor.

