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Media Contacts:
Dana Farbman, CVT
(217)-337-9751
napcc@aspc.org

ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL CENTER OFFERS PET POISON SAFETY TIPS FOR BIRD OWNERS

-- Hundreds of Birds Harmed by Common Household Items --

(Urbana, IL) – According to statistics compiled by the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, approximately 530 cases of pet birds being exposed to common household items have been reported to the Center in 2005. Of these cases, 37% involved medications, 23% involved miscellaneous toxicants, 18% involved cleaning agents, 13% involved pesticides (including rat bait and insecticides), and 9% involved plants. The ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) which provides national leadership in humane education, government affairs and public policy, shelter support, and animal poison control, is the oldest animal welfare organization in the country.

As the majority of pet birds have limited activity outside their cages, poisonings are not common. However, birds with free household access are at potential risk of becoming exposed to toxicants. Birds are curious in nature and certain objects may be attractive to them. Therefore, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control is providing bird owners with some helpful poison prevention tips to keep their feathered friends safe.

- Be aware of the plants you have in your home. The ingestion of azalea, oleander, yew or rhododendron could produce life-threatening clinical problems.
- Store all cleaners, pesticides, prescription and over-the-counter medications out of your bird's reach.
 - Some cleaning agents may cause mild stomach upset, but others can cause severe burns of the tongue, mouth and crop.

- Most pesticide baits contain ingredients such as grains or sugars, which can attract your bird. When using rat and mouse bait or ant or roach traps, place the products in areas that are inaccessible to your bird.
- Never give your bird medication unless you are directed to do so by a veterinarian.
Many medications that are safe for humans can be potentially deadly for birds, even in small amounts. This includes painkillers, cold medicines, anti-cancer medications, antidepressants, vitamins and diet pills.

-2-

- Food and beverage items that could be dangerous to birds include: onions, garlic, chocolate (bakers, semi sweet, milk, dark), coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered espresso beans), tea, yeast dough, salt, tomato leaves and stems (green parts), potato leaves and stems (green parts), rhubarb leaves, avocados, cigarettes and other tobacco products, moldy or spoiled foods and alcoholic beverages.
- Mothballs, potpourri oils, pennies (minted after 1982), homemade play dough, fabric softener sheets, automatic dishwashing detergent and batteries could cause problems if ingested by birds.
- Make sure your bird does not enter areas in which insecticidal foggers or house sprays have been applied for the period of time indicated on the label. Birds are sensitive to inhalants and they typically require longer periods of time away from treated areas. Contact the manufacturer for recommendations if the label information is not specific.
- Birds are highly sensitive to inhalant fumes. Some common sources for fumes include aerosol products such as hairsprays, perfumes and air fresheners, insecticidal fumigants, overheated cookware, automobile exhausts, tobacco or other forms of smoke, glues and paints.

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About ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

For over 27 years, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center has been the premier animal poison control center in North America. The center, an allied agency of the University of Illinois, is the only facility of its kind staffed by 25 veterinarians including 10 board-certified toxicologists and 14 certified veterinary technicians. Located in Urbana, Illinois, the specially trained staff provides assistance to pet owners and specific analysis and treatment recommendations to veterinarians pertaining to toxic chemicals and dangerous plants, products or substances 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In 2005, the center handled over 100,000 cases. In addition, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center provides extensive veterinary toxicology consulting on a wide array of subjects including legal cases, formulation issues, product liability, regulatory reporting and bio surveillance. To reach the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, call 1-888-426-4435. For more information on the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center visit www.aspc.org/apcc (1/06)

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (ASPCA) was the first humane organization established in the Western Hemisphere and today has one million supporters. The ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. The ASPCA® provides national leadership in humane education, government affairs and public policy, shelter support, and animal poison control. The NYC headquarters houses a full-service animal hospital, animal behavior center, and adoption facility. The Humane Law Enforcement department enforces New York's animal cruelty laws and is featured on the reality television series Animal Precinct on Animal Planet. Visit www.asPCA.org for more information.