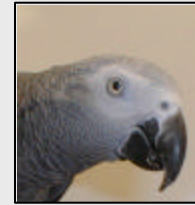


BirdSitter

Shaping Acceptable Vocal Behavior in African Grey Parrots



Millions of humans share their homes with pet parrots. Parrots are popular pets not only because of their intelligence but also because of their ability to communicate vocally with their owners. But this vocal ability evolved in the wild for interparrot communication — i.e., for maintaining connections with other members of its flock. This connection with the flock is crucial to survival: A lone parrot cannot eat and search for predators simultaneously. What happens when a parrot, brought into a human home, adopts its human family as its flock and its flock members go off to school, to work, to do chores?

Many times birds left alone engage in loud raucous calling that the owners—or neighbors—find unacceptable. Often parrots are given up for adoption because the owners cannot find ways of bringing this calling down to an acceptable decibel level. Our device is an attempt to engage the parrot and shape its behavior through positive rewards and mildly negative experiences that are completely under its own control.



Project Design

A microphone tracks the sound level that the parrot is producing

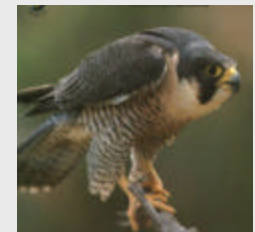


The system monitors the decibel level of the input



If decibel level is under threshold, bird sees 'positive' video: of its owner, of various people it knows, of parrots in the wild, etc.

If the decibel level is over threshold, the bird sees 'negative' video: of a raptor swooping down, of a ground predator creeping nearby, etc.



The system monitors the new decibel level of the input

The system monitors which clips are most effective

