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## Lifestyle

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# Parrot Paradise

Monk parrots, which first flocked to Edgewater in the 1970s, lately have ruffled the feathers of public officials concerned about fire safety.

Posted January 17, 2011 by [Mary Ann Castronovo Fusco](#)

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Courtesy of Alison Evans-Fragale.

Outside Vitangelo's Bakery in Edgewater, the scent of pastry is often accompanied by the squawk of parrots. The subtropical neon-lime birds—properly known as wild Quakers or monk parakeets—have built a colony of twiggy condos in a clump of sycamore trees across the street from the bakery and in a trio of ivy-covered stumps up the block, high above serpentine Route 5, just before it merges into River Road at the Edgewater ferry landing on the Hudson River.

The chatty parrots would seem to be welcome neighbors, but because they often make their down-lined, three-chamber nests—which can be 4 feet long—on utility pole transformers, they have occasionally ruffled the feathers of public officials and residents concerned about fire safety.

Native to South America, Quakers have been in the borough since the 1970s, when a crate of them is said to have broken open at John F. Kennedy International Airport. With plenty of grass seed (thanks to Veterans Field), water (from the river) and sturdy trees and poles, Edgewater offered an ideal habitat for the community-oriented birds. But because they're an alien species, "they're technically an illegal pest," even though there's no evidence that they endanger the state's agriculture, says Don Torino, education chairperson of the Bergen County Audubon Society.

"Most people are for the birds," says Alison Evans-Fragale, a nurse practitioner and founder of the Edgewater Parrots Foundation ([edgewaterparrots.com](#)).

Hoping to get "green cards for the green 'keets," Evans-Fragale spearheaded a drive to have the birds delisted as a potentially dangerous species. "Any of the birds living here now were born here," she says. A bill to delist the parrots, A454, is currently before the Assembly.

Evans-Fragale's group also works with PSE&G and local residents to help ensure troublesome nests are removed only before breeding or after fledgling season, and to construct alternate nesting platforms. But with that Manhattan view and easy access to cannoli crumbs, who'd want to move?



Courtesy of Alison Evans-Fragale.



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Courtesy of Alison Evans-Fragale.

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It is the goldmine of advertisements—a publicity jackpot, if you will. Lady O (the media maven, not FLOTUS) puts her stamp of approval on something and sales skyrocket. That is exactly what happened to the small kitchen product company Prepara. The company's Herb Savor, a simple device that helps preserve the life of fresh herbs for up to three weeks, was included on the 2010 list of Oprah's Favorite Things.

By [Candace Wells](#)

#### Two Birds

[NJ My Way](#)

2011/02/25

It is almost March and my young son wants to build a house for the two bluebirds that will soon return. We see them every year in the spring, flitting among the trees, deciding where to nest, and complaining loudly about the mercurial weather. It can't be easy returning to New Jersey after spending a winter in Daytona.

#### Stuffed

[Plain Sight: A Jersey Photo Blog](#)

2011/02/24

By [Eric Levin](#)

#### Getting Ready to 'Get Fit'

[Lost in the Suburbs](#)

2010/01/04

Starting this afternoon, I will be taking part in Get Fit New Jersey, a rigorous, 24-week fitness program at Life Time Athletic in Florham Park. Naturally, I spent the weekend stuffing my face with as much holiday chocolate and other goodies as possible.

By [Ken Schlager](#)

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Parrot Paradise

It was very interesting to read that these Quakers, native of South America, have chosen to make their home in Edgewater. I'll have to make a special trip to see them close up. It will save me a trip to South America, and while I'm there, I'll check out the cannoli at Vitangelo's bakery.

Posted by: Dolores M. Fabiano, Union City, NJ 07087-4328 | Jan 30, 2011 18:21:08 PM |

Parrot Paradise

I am a friend to exotic birds, especially parrots. These gentle, feral, free flying, chatting, monk parakeets (latin name Myiopsitta monachus) are no more dangerous than wild pigeons that were probably intended as pets. With time, these Quakers adapted and established colonies in the residential community of Edgewater, with its abundant grass seed, water, sturdy trees, and poles, as their home. They should be delisted especially if one realizes that the domestic cat is an alien species responsible for the extinction of many bird species.

In addition to removing the troublesome nests on utility poles, one might consider placing visual or electronic scare/repellent devices to wean them off the poles and making the site an Important Bird Area (IBA).

Posted by: Joseph A. Fabiano, Union City, NJ 07087-4328 | Jan 30, 2011 20:32:48 PM |

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Posted by: Joseph A. Fabiano, Union City, NJ 07087-4328 | Jan 30, 2011 20:35:55 PM |

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