

# When Word Spreads Birds Come Flying

By : Juggernaut

A word gets around very fast in bird community, Juggernaut learned this first hand very fast.



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## *When Word Spreads Birds Come Flying*

Subba Rao

Loud street noise and without elevators, the condo on Walua Road was certainly over priced but again the bright sun sets to watch from the porch compensates. On clear days, shades of yellow to crimson light linger on the horizon well after the sun sets into the ocean. Juggernaut understood from the meteorology course at the college long time ago that it was the scattering of violet and blue lights by the air molecules that generate hues of yellow to red sun sets and for this to happen the clean air is crucial. In Hawaii, with far less air pollution, the sun at dawn and dusk were always spectacular under the clear skies. The sun sets at Kailua-Kona were as good as seen at Negril beach in Western Jamaica or from Old Seven Mile Bridge in Marathon, Florida or Sombrero Beach on the Florida Keys.

During the walks on Alii or Walua Road, Juggernaut noticed several birds either in flight or resting on the trees, on one occasion a group of parrots flew over a nearby tree, raising hopes that parrots do exist on the Big Island. There were more birds to be seen at Kona on west side of the island though it is dry with less tress unlike the rainforest on Puna district on the southeast side of the island. With the idea of attracting the parrots, Juggernaut placed bird feed on the narrow porch and watched eagerly to see a house finch landing suspiciously to feed on the seeds. Then came few Java sparrows with colorful head gear followed by few doves, and then came two bright yellow saffron finches to join the group. The narrow porch besides offering sunset views also provided a feeding ground for the finches, doves and sparrows. The bird population multiplied quickly as if the word went around fast among the bird community of a bird feeder. Though no parrots were noticed thus far, a lone red cardinal appeared on the porch to check out the surroundings, the cardinal came alone for the first time just like saffron finch lone visit earlier joined by its mate later. Sooner or later, the word should spread beyond the doves, finches, sparrows and cardinals into the parrot community to come and join the feeding frenzy on the porch.

While feeding the birds on the porch, Juggernaut's thoughts went back to his boyhood days growing up; his father, a doctor turned their huge backyard into a rainforest and a petting zoo. He spent more time in the backyard with plants and animals than in the clinic considering his medical practice as a distraction to his real interest; the plants and animals. He was good with his hands; he built vertical and horizontal trellis to support gourd vines using tree limbs tied together with fiber peels from Banana and coconut trees. From the large dried gourds, he made hanging ornaments and bird cages. Using discarded plywood boxes from pharmacies, he built animal cages. Among his bird collection were several parrots, few dozen pigeons in rare colors, Guinea and Turkey fowls, Peacocks and few exotic love birds given plenty space in an aviary he built himself. Just to see a pigeon chick cracking open its egg shell to get out and grow up fast into an adult in no time was amazing to Juggernaut and feeding birds later from his own hand was a thrilling experience.

During the monsoon when the rains persist for days, the moist air and the muddy ground made few birds sick and die from it. On occasions when hurricane winds blew the roof of aviary, the Pea cocks, Turkey and Guinea fowls took a flight to a nearby neighborhood known for lawlessness, here the locals hide the captured birds for a ransom. The negotiations were not always easy for the return of the birds; sometimes, the local cops have to involve in returning the birds before they were eaten. While the fancy Peacocks and Guinea fowls were seen as pets at the backyard petting zoo, the neighborhood poor and hungry considered the birds as delicacy. The safety of birds was a constant worry if the birds were to escape during storms, this lead to give away gradually all the birds and other pet animals to Juggernaut's disappointment.

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Feeding the wild birds on the porch was less cumbersome than managing the birds 24/7 in the cages. The wild birds arrive on time around 6:30 am and pm on the porch for morning and evening meal. If Juggernaut were to be late in putting out the feed, the Java sparrows more in numbers get boisterous and begin to knock the glass door with their beaks to remind Juggernaut that it was about time to put out the feed. The saffron finches walk back and forth looking through the glass door to see anybody there? Only the doves wait with intermittent cooing showing their patience with the feeder.

â There must be a universal language that all bird species understand otherwise how a word spreads that quickly from one house Finch to doves to Java sparrows to saffron Finches to red Cardinals? May be parrots didnâ t like what they heard about the menu wanting a different type of feed, perhaps a variety of fruits,â thought Juggernaut still waiting for parrots to arrive anytime soon on the porch fighting for the feed with their fellow fethern.

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