



## Meet and Greet: Ginger the Conure

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<https://youtube.com/watch?v=HPerHxbi2Vo>

<https://nerdfighteria.info/v/HPerHxbi2Vo>

===== (00:00) to (02:00) =====

This is Ginger. She's a parakeet, but more specifically, she's a green cheek conure, and today, I'd love to share her life story with you.

(Intro)

I love getting to talk about each of the animals as individuals. I also enjoy educating about their species and the roles they play in the environment, but sharing their personal stories and personalities is important, too, because it reminds us that animals live unique lives just like humans. I'm pretty sure I met Ginger when she was just a baby. I was at a local pet store picking up food for the animals and I saw that they had three baby conures for sale. I went over to say hello, of course, enjoying their big baby eyes, and then I noticed that they were missing a few nails on their toes.

I asked the owner and she said she'd gotten them from a breeder who said their parents had bitten their toes off. I've heard of this happening sometimes when parents are young and don't know how to take care of their chicks properly. They think they're grooming them and go a bit overboard. Poor babies.

Fast forward a year or two. I'm not exactly sure on the timing, but it's now 2010 and we get a call from the pet store owner asking if we can take in a bird that needs a little TLC. Ginger had originally been purchased by a family that had two other birds. She was hastily introduced and the two other birds picked on her relentlessly. After a bit of this, she was separated and then they tried introducing her again and either she was injured or another bird was injured, the details weren't clear. I don't know how serious it was, but it was enough to have her brought back to the pet store.

She was then purchased by another man who had three other birds and a dog. At some point, the dog got into the room and attacked the birds, knocking down all the enclosures and killing three of the four birds. Ginger was the only survivor. The man was scared that she would be hurt by the dog, too, so she was once again returned to the pet store. This is when we were called. I went in to meet Ginger and immediately noticed her unusual feet. She was missing all of the nails on her toes.

When I heard that she had been sold as a baby from that pet store with missing nails, it makes me think that she was one of those babies that I had said hello to, but instead of missing just a couple nails, she was missing all eight and her toes were malformed.

===== (02:00) to (04:00) =====

She's a very sweet girl and we've had years to build up our trust bond, so sometimes, she lets me hold her on her back to show off her toes. You can see that this toe is pointing the wrong direction. She should have two toes pointing forward and two toes pointing back. When I heard of all the traumas that she had been through, I wanted to help her by giving her a safe, stable forever home where she could live out her life without stress and full of happiness. I don't know what happened to the rest of her nails, but I can guess maybe they were bit off by the birds that were bullying her in her first home and maybe they became malformed because of the way she had to sit in order to hold on. You can see that she can perch on my finger, but she mostly prefers a flat hand because it's a moving perch and she's more stable that way, and you can see how she holds her tail straight down and sometimes she'll rest against my hand a bit. She's using it to help her balance.

When I got Ginger home, I set her up in a space with many perches of varying sizes and shapes and a few small shells in case she wanted to sit on a flat surface. She settled in immediately. Ginger

had previously been fed a seed-only diet, which isn't the healthiest and it showed in her dull, poorly formed feathers. Because she was used to seed, she didn't want to eat the parrot pellets that we offered, but after three weeks of a slow introduction, she was finally eating the pellets and she also learned to love the veggies as well.

After a few months, she molted out her old tattered feathers and grew in these beautiful, sleek and shiny new green feathers. It was at this time that we wanted to introduce her to a possible friend. When we rescue an animal that's social by nature, we always try and give them an animal companion to fulfill that need. Since parrot-type birds are social, we wanted to give her a parrot companion.

In 2011, we tried introducing her to a (?-3:50) parrot named Ringo, who was very shy and reserved. We chose Ringo because with Ginger's past of being bullied, we wanted a calm, passive bird who wouldn't instigate a fight. Unfortunately, it didn't work out.

===== (04:00) to (06:00) =====

After a few months, we tried Lovey the lovebird and it didn't work out. We then tried Sunny the parrotlet and it didn't work out again. Even though each introduction process was slow, once Ginger was given free contact with a bird, she would lash out aggressively and it was looking like she would never accept another bird as a companion. So we decided to change things up a bit. Instead of introducing her to a parrot-type bird, we tried a European starling named Jolie.

This is an unusual pairing, because parrots and starlings have very different diets and very different ways of communicating. We didn't know how it was going to go, but surprisingly, they co-habitated very well, though they were never best friends. Sadly, Jolie passed away in 2013. Shortly after Ginger lost her friend, we rescued a younger green cheek conure named Maui. She was about a year old and she wasn't getting much interaction from her humans.

When we introduced Maui to Ginger, Maui immediately sidestepped down the perch and snuggled up right next to Ginger. Ginger was completely surprised and she gave Maui a warning nip on the head and took a few steps away. Maui moved with her. Ginger warned her again and moved away again. Maui followed. Ginger was now at the end of the perch and instead of flying away, she looked at Maui, ruffled her feathers, and then settled in with Maui snuggled up right beside her.

These two have been best friends ever since. Ginger and Maui are a fun pair. Ginger's malformed toes prevent her from doing everything that other conures can do, like hanging upside down, which Maui actually prefers, but Ginger gets around well on her perches and every night, Maui will come down and snuggle up right next to her, just like the first time they met.

They also do this really cute thing where Ginger perches on the very top perch and Maui climbs over, hanging from the ceiling, and they are right next to each other, so technically they're sitting next to each other, or rather, hanging out next to each other.

Ginger is fully flighted, and when we do public presentations, she loves showing off her skills. She's closely bonded to Maui, but she also has a long trusting relationship with me. If I set her on a perch or another person's hands and walk away, she'll fly to me.

===== (06:00) to (06:59) =====

She always flies to my head, but this way, she can use her little nail-less toes to grasp on to my hair and not slip off. Ginger really isn't a fan of other humans. She'll bite Augusto multiple times if he tries to



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hold her and she won't let anyone else hold her for very long. In other words, she's a typical conure.

She's been at Animal Wonders for almost seven years and I love that we're able to give her a happy life. She's such a sweet little one, at least to me.

Thank you for letting me share Ginger's story with you. I hope you enjoyed getting to meet her and if you'd like to get her and Maui a new toy or a new perch, you can check out our Amazon wishlist, link is below, and if you'd like to meet more animals and go on an adventure with us every week, subscribe to our YouTube channel AnimalWondersMontana. Thanks and we'll see you next week.

(Endscreen/Credits)

He does not like going to the vet. When he gets his procedures done, we're usually at Animal Wonders so he can stay nice and comfortable, so he's not a happy camper right now.