

Reputable Organization Criteria

by: Founder, Paula N Ashfield © 2012 Under My Wing Avian Refuge

The future of your parrot depends on how much homework you do before placing it .

Under My Wing Avian Refuge is sharing this important information to assist you in finding a reputable rescue or sanctuary when you are planning to surrender or adopt a bird. Although there are many trustworthy and reputable rescues and sanctuaries, there are also many that provide only substandard care for their resident birds and/or engage in unethical practices, such as getting birds for free and then running a profitable breeding operation, or selling the birds for breeding or entertainment purposes. You want to be certain when dealing with a rescue or sanctuary for any reason – adoption, placement, fostering, or even financial support – that it is legitimate, ethical, and trustworthy, and provides a level of care meeting the standards recommended by the [American Sanctuary Association](#) and [Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries](#) for avian rescue, adoption, and sanctuary facilities. You may also want to check if the organization status has not been revoked at IRS website [Exempt Organizations Select Check](#). Here is where you will have the opportunity to check if the organizations are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions, were automatically revoked or have filed Form 990-N (e-Postcard). The other option is to access same information on [GuideStar](#).

A number of websites give very detailed information that you could find helpful in evaluating avian rescues for adoption or placement of a bird (see links below). To this we would like to add several of our own insights and recommendations.

Evaluating Bird Rescues and Sanctuaries

We believe that you, as a bird owner or caregiver, have the right to know and receive proof that the rescue or sanctuary you are considering is trustworthy. A reputable organization will provide the following:

- The organization's facility address, listed on its website and in printed materials and local directories, even if the organization operates out of a private home
- The organization's mailing address, if it differs from that of the facility
- If the organization's state of incorporation is not the same as the documentation on filed with the State in which it was incorporated. All nonprofit organizations must comply with the laws and reporting requirement of States. Re-incorporation documentation will be sufficing proof. For more information on the re-location of nonprofit organization can be found on the Hurwit & Associates website under [Nonprofit Law](#).
- Telephone number, operating hours, and hours open to the public (if applicable)
- Contact information for the organization Director and at least one Board Member or volunteer
- Affiliate information, which will be an indicator of whether the organization operates in accordance with the high standards of care advocated by the animal community at large

A reputable organization will not brush you off with a "Take my word" type answer, and avoid providing, or actually refuse to provide, proof of trustworthiness and legitimacy. Rather, a reputable organization will do everything possible to assure you not only that it is legitimate, but also that it operates with integrity.

You should in all instances be allowed to have the following:

- Documentation of the organization's nonprofit status. Check with the IRS (telephone or website) to assure that its status has not been revoked or listed as questionable
- The organization's financial report. This will be an indicator of the organization's ability to accommodate your bird's needs over the long term
- A release form allowing you to contact the organization's avian veterinarian and laboratory for references. Most reputable organizations will have an avian veterinarian on call for emergencies
- If adopting - a copy of the history of the bird you wish to adopt. This should include the intake date, a quarantine check-list form signed by the director of the organization, and a veterinarian's report showing dates of visits and procedures performed, with copies of all blood and disease test results. If testing was done by an outside laboratory, obtain full copies of the laboratory reports (not just a summary report). Such reports will have the laboratory's name, address, and contact information
- If adopting – a copy of the adoption contract prior to signing it. Take the time to read the contract carefully. Consider including a clause stating that the bird can be returned if the situation does not work out or you cannot provide adequately for the bird.
- If surrendering –a surrender form with a clause allowing for visitation while your bird is in quarantine (or after, if the bird is surrendered to a sanctuary). Additionally, the form should have clauses indicating a period of time during which you can reclaim your bird and providing for re-adoption (eg, in cases of foreclosure, lengthy illness, military deployment). Lastly, in the case of a sanctuary bird, the surrender form should contain a clause stipulating that you are to be notified and receive a full accounting should your bird become ill or die while in the organization's care.
- Visitation to the facility before making any commitment

Do not assume that a rescue is an ethical operation just because it has 501 C3 nonprofit statuses. Be aware that rescues that promote, advertise, or engage in domestic parrot breeding, or have affiliations with other organizations that do this, are compromised. Check if the rescue you are evaluating appears on any Bird Expo or Bird Mart website in your state, or on any other website, such as craigslist, that promotes or engages in baby bird

sales. An ethical rescue will never breed birds or allow birds to be placed in homes where they will be bred, or used for profit or entertainment.

Be leery of organizations that:

- Solicit the public to buy a bird before it has been evaluated, gone through quarantine, and received any needed veterinary care
- Push for a high yearly adoption rate, much like a business trying to sell a product
- Do not allow prospective adopters to spend sufficient time at the facility to get acquainted with and help care for the bird they wish to adopt

You can also judge a refuge or sanctuary by checking its physical appearance when you visit. Are the food and water bowls, as well as the floors and walls, clean and free of accumulated debris, food, and feces? (Keep in mind, though, that parrots tend to be quite messy, throwing their food around and taking baths in their water dishes – necessitating daily clean-up.) Also, check the cages – are they the proper size for the birds they house, and are they in good condition, or rusted and in need of repair because of broken bars, doors, locks, etc? Also, very importantly, do birds have access to enrichment activities, such as such as toys and swings in their cages and out-of-cage play stations?

Paula N Ashfield has written this educational article. She hopes to have helped you to finding the proper rescue or sanctuary to relinquish or adopt your bird from.

As with all Mrs. Ashfield's article's content written for Under My Wing web site or media sites the following copyright apply.

All trademarks mentioned herein belong to their respective owners. Unless identified with the designation "COPY FREE", the contents of this website (www.undermywing.org) are copyrighted by UNDER MY WING AVIAN REFUGE aka UNDER MY WING and aka UMWAR. Thus, you are NOT authorized to copy documents published by UNDER MY WING AVIAN REFUGE on the World Wide Web for either commercial or noncommercial use. You may not otherwise copy or transmit the contents of this website either electronically or in hard copy. You may not alter the content of this website in any manner. If you are interested in using the contents of this website in any manner except as described above, please contact us at info@undermywing.org for information on licensing.

Individual documents published by **UNDER MY WING AVIAN REFUGE** on the World Wide Web may contain other proprietary notices and copyright information specific to that individual document. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as conferring by implication, estoppel or otherwise any license or right under any patent, trademark or other property right of **UNDER MY WING AVIAN REFUGE** or any third party. Except as expressly provided above nothing contained herein shall be construed as conferring any license or right under any copyright or other property right of **UNDER MY WING AVIAN REFUGE** or any third party. Note that any product, process, or technology in this document may be the subject of other intellectual property rights reserved by **UNDER MY WING AVIAN REFUGE** and may not be licensed here under.

Please consider making a monetary contribution to support the birds at Under My Wing Avian Refuge and the overall sanctuary operational cost.

Thank you!

