

The Record

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East Rutherford residents return with Season 2 of Urban Animals

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They feature the animals that live among New Yorkers and New Jerseyans – octopuses, bats, goats and even camels. Pet owners, animal enthusiasts, and conservationists alike can look forward to March when East Rutherford's Tony Sawicki and Hugo Lopez return with the second season of "Urban Animals."

The television program premiered in August 2014 on NYC Life, which serves as the official TV/radio network and production entity of New York City. "Urban Animals" is a half-hour weekly program that focuses on "urban dwellers, the many varieties of creatures that impact our lives, and the unique relationships that exist between people and animals in the kinetic, urban jungle," according to Lopez.



In its first season, "Urban Animals" featured "Paws and Pints" in Long Island City where dog owners could bring their pets to the park and enjoy a drink in the process, conservation efforts of TLC Rescue in Union City which aims to humanely control the feral cat population in neighborhoods by providing vaccination and neutering, and Harsimus Cemetery's use of the environmentally friendly Green Goat service to clear invasive weeds from the historic property.

PHOTO COURTESY/HUGO LOPEZ

Associate Producer Kevin "Clover" Welsh with author/creator of the children's book series, "Thumperino Superbunny," and rabbit adopter, Amber L. Spradlin.

Now in its second season, and with an eye toward national distribution, Producer/Host Sawicki and Associate Producers Lopez and Clover Welsh are focusing on intriguing local stories that have a broader appeal. One of these stories is the wild parrot population in the New York metropolitan area. According to Sawicki, these parrot flocks are also present in Chicago and in California, but Sawicki and Lopez traveled to Howard Beach, Queens, Brooklyn, JFK Airport and to Edgewater in search of these populations. The segment explores the issue in Edgewater, which is divisive. Some residents consider parrots a nuisance, as they eat resident's flowers and also pose safety risks as the parrots build their nests on telephone poles. Others enjoy their presence, like the Edgewater Parrot Society, who is working toward having the parrots placed on the protected species list, according to Sawicki.

The show's success can be attributed to Sawicki and Lopez's efforts to engage and interact with the local community. Sawicki and Lopez promote the program by visiting local pet hospitals, groomers, pet stores and shelters and agreeing to advertise the location on their Web site in exchange for the location hanging up an "Urban Animals" poster.

Continued: <http://www.northjersey.com/community-news/pets/bats-goats-and-salamanders-oh-my-1.1232418>