

----- Breeding

Breeding birds is also a wonderful hobby. Hand-raising the youngsters can turn into a rewarding past time. Many owners enjoy seeing two birds together & may wish to breed them. Sexing birds is always a problem - males and females look alike. Ask your pet retailer for more information as even trained professionals can get sexing wrong. If you have a mating pair, many birds breed well in captivity.

You will need to research their natural nesting behavior & give them a suitable replacement or supplies they will need to construct a nest. Pet retailers & veterinarians can usually provide some advice.

To keep them healthy, birds should have only 2 or 3 nests a year. Responsible breeding is important, do not over-breed any animal.

Egg laying is particularly stressful on females. Too much mating & egg laying physically drains them. If you choose to breed your birds, you must monitor your parent birds closely.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.



check-list ✓

Your pet bird requires...

- Cage of appropriate size & wire size
- Perches of assorted sizes (must have)
- A variety of play & health conditioning toys
- Food / Seed dish(s)
- Daily water source
- Bathing dish or bowl
- Fruits & Veg ' dish (separate from seed)
- Cuttle bone or Mineral Block (supplement)
- Bird (appropriate) Seed
- Millet sprays (seed)
- Clips for doors & food treats

Starter's guide to bird keeping



Getting the right bird starts with gathering information on the different types of birds.

Learn all you can about the type of bird you are interested in to see if the breed is right for you & your lifestyle. With knowledge & understanding, you will have a better experience & a better pet. You'll be able to provide the pet bird the care it needs & the result will be maximum enjoyment with a healthy, happy pet.

----- Personality

Some birds like handling, Cockatiels & Lovebirds for instance, yet others are simply fun to watch. Some are great talkers like Budgies or Finches, while others have a beautiful song. They come in all sizes & colors. Groups or types of birds, such as the Parrots or Finches, will have a shared set of behaviors, but every individual bird will have its own unique personality as also.

Choose your bird species based on the level of physical interaction you plan to give your pet. Look for characteristics that are most important to you. Some birds can be handled, while others are not, some are enjoyed for their song or are fun to watch. Some like to be cuddled & others just want to talk. Some birds take to only one person & others like everyone they meet. Many birds enjoy close contact.

Some birds just love to talk or sing to you, giving you friendship & relaxation. Parrot breeds will often enjoy sharing meals with you, napping with you, or even showering with you. Pet birds love to interact with their human companions & often show a genuine desire to be with you, much as a pet dog or cat behaves towards its keeper or owner. Hand raised birds REQUIRE MORE ATTENTION than does a standard (naturally raised) bird. You must select your pet according to the amount of time YOU will devote to IT.

----- selecting cages



The most important thing to remember when purchasing a cage is that the cage meets the birds needs. The cage is the bird's home. Make sure your pet will be healthy, entertained & well exercised in a clean, well maintained environment.

Here are a few general rules you should follow as the minimum requirements when choosing a cage for your bird or birds:

All birds should be housed in a cage that is as roomy as possible, this is especially important for birds that will spend most or all of their time in the cage.

Birds need to be able to stretch their wings and flap them without hitting anything. They should also be able to make short flights. Birds that live exclusively in a cage will need a space of three times their wing span as an absolute minimum, with more space always being the better choice.

Horizontal bars on the sides of bird cages are very important for birds that like to climb, such as parakeets, cockatiels & parrots. Bar spacing needs to be small enough that the bird cannot get its head through them. Metal bars are good for birds that like to chew & cages must have perches for the bird to sit & sleep on.

Bird cages should be placed in a draft free area that is well lit, but not in direct sunlight. To make your birds feel secure & comfortable keep their cage against a wall or in a corner. Birds often like their cages near a regularly visited spot so they can keep tabs on you & feel secure knowing you are around as you are their primary life giver. Look for a cage that is easy to clean.

Many bird cages have a slide out tray, a stand & an easily removable grate or bottom for easy cleaning.

Bowls: Bowls are needed for foods & treats, water, grit & crushed shell. Small birds can use plastic bowls. Ceramic or stainless steel bowls generally are needed for medium & large parrots. These bigger birds will often chew up plastic bowls, or even pick up their bowls & dump them or toss them to the floor. Built in bowl holders are often a part of the cage & may be designed to keep the bird from removing the bowl. Other bowls are attached with hooks, bolts or clips, & may mount inside or outside the cage depending on the design.

Perches: All cages must have a proper perch for the bird.



Perches provide standing places for birds & also give them an opportunity to exercise & keep their beaks trim. Cages without perches cause birds to stand flat footed & foot bones to displace resulting in deformed feet. Easily preventable, yet difficult to remedy. For your birds well being, do not overlook this important item. Perch size & shape can vary depending on the bird, but should fit their feet. A 1" perch is comfortable for most large parrots & a 1/2" perch suits medium sized birds. 1/4" for small sizes like finches will be required. Round & oval wooden perches are often used, or sometimes plastic perches for small birds. Variety in both size & shape is important to exercise your birds feet. Natural branches are great for providing this. Concrete perches make nice additional perches to keep both nails & beak trim.

Toys: Bird toys are a great way to entertain & provide exercise for your pet bird. Toys for birds are designed in lots of combinations of woods, leathers, ropes, chains, bells, balls & various colours to attract their attention. Toys such as swings & ladders are designed for chewing & climbing, while mirrors are for giving company. The wide range of non-toxic colors, fun textures, shapes & sizes, available will keep both you & your bird well entertained. Small wood or cardboard boxes are a great favorite of many birds to play in. Shiny plastic wrappers or an unwanted magazine for them to shred are always welcome. Don't be afraid to make your own toys for your bird. A simple natural rope strand or cord cut into short pieces for them to pull the fibres off of mimics a natural nesting behavior, as does the shredding of paper. The possibilities are endless once you get to know your pet bird.

----- feeding

Know your bird: All birds have different requirements & most breeds will have specialty seed or pellet mixes available. Refrain from too many oily seeds; like cashews, peanuts & almonds. Provide the bird with a calcium source in the form of a cuttle bone or mineral block.

Fresh is best: All birds will enjoy a portion of fresh fruits & vegetables which should be diced finely & served in a dish apart from their regular seed. **Some human foods are unsuitable or poisonous for them, including dairy products, chocolate, sugared food, avocado, rhubarb, tomato & strawberries.** Suitable fruits & veg' include; Apples • Bananas • Peas • Melon • Kiwi Fruit • Tangerine • Cherries • Watermelon • Grapes • Fennel • Cucumber • Cooked Potato • Kohlrabi • Grated Carrot • Radishes • Soybean Sprouts • Zucchini • Broccoli • Basil • Endive • Corn • Cress • Fresh Grass • Chervil • Lettuce • Dandelion Greens • Parsley • Spinach • Chickweed • Plantain