

## ----- Breeding

Breeding budgies is also a wonderful hobby. Hand-raising the youngsters can turn into a rewarding past time. Many owners enjoy seeing two budgie birds together & may wish to breed them. The colour of the area containing the nostrils differs between the sexes; royal blue in males, pale-brown to white (non-breeding) or brown (breeding) in females and pink in immatures of both sexes (usually of a more even purplish-pink colour in young males). Some female budgerigars develop brown cere only during breeding time and it later disappears.

In the wild, virtually all parrot species require a hollow tree or a hollow log as a nest site. Because of this natural behavior, budgerigars most easily breed in captivity when provided with a nest box. Female budgerigars can lay eggs without a male partner but these eggs are unfertilized and will not hatch. 4-6 eggs are incubated for 18-21 days, with the young fledging about 30 days after hatching. Over breeding can kill the female, 2 clutches per year maximum.

**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 Budgie 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)
- Budgie (appropriate) Seed
- Millet sprays (seed)
- Clips for doors & food treats

## Budgies

**A small bird, 17-18 cm long with an average wing length of 115 mm & noted for their long slender tails**



**Life Span: 10 - 13 years on average in captivity, may live longer, if well cared for.**

## ----- Personality

The Budgerigar: often called a budgie or parakeet, is a small parrot and the only species in the Australian genus *Melopsittacus*. A small long-tailed predominantly green and yellow bird with black scalloped markings on the wings and shoulders in the wild, the Budgerigar has been bred extensively with a profusion of colour forms resulting. Aviary birds may be blue and white, all yellow, all white, or various other combinations thereof. Budgerigars in their natural habitat in Australia are noticeably smaller than those in captivity.

The budgerigar is one of only two parrot species to be genuinely domesticated, along with the Peach-faced Lovebird. It is widely acknowledged as the most common pet parrot in the world and possibly the most common cage bird. The budgerigar has been bred in captivity since the 1850s. Breeders have worked over the decades to produce a wide range of colour, pattern and feather mutations. They are a very social bird & exhibit the same "coupling" traits as their cousin the Lovebird. Groups of Budgies can live well together in one cage & will often preen each other. Budgies are not aggressive towards one another & 'disputes' are usually settled quickly without much injury. Budgies are also very hardy & resistant to many of the diseases that threaten larger parrots. Budgies are a very old species of bird & have lived in central Australia for 4.5 million years!

They are well known to be continual babblers & their sounds can be loud at times (in groups). Budgies learn to talk often given the attention, & usually will make speech mimicking sounds that are entertaining & easy to listen to. Like all the parrot breeds, the Budgie also makes a great shoulder or companion pet. Treat them gently & with trust & the Budgie will eventually take to a person much as a larger parrot will. Small, thin framed birds require much more effort to become physically engaged with. With effort they can be trained & handled.

When a bird is raised by hand, extra time & attention has been given to ensure the bird "takes" to a human. The chick is hand nurtured by a person, supplanting the real parents with a person. The chick learns to accept food first, & then being handled by human's. **Hand raised birds require more attention & interaction than one that was not.**

## ----- Feeding



Budgies may live near 15 years, provided with the nutrition & care they need. The diet mainly consists of seeds & berries. Lovebirds require a variety of foods, including vegetables, seeds, & fruits; nevertheless, **some human foods are unsuitable or poisonous for them, including dairy products, chocolate, sugared food, avocado, rhubarb, & strawberries.** Be aware that a budgie that spends time with its owner will likely want to 'share' your meal with you. Be selective about your treats. Perishable food in the birds' housing for more than 24 hours is also likely to be unsuitable. Fresh is best! - for all animals. Grapes, carrots, beans, squash, corn, millet, quinoa & winter wheat are excellent foods. Fresh fruit & veg' should be served in a separate dish, apart from the regular seed (diced).

They also eat various manufactured food pellets & pastas. Suitable seed or pellet mixes include a large array of different seed types. Budgies can be fussy eaters & it is hard to balance the diet when seed mixes are used as the basic food for this species. Fresh greens, fruits & vegetables should be offered daily to all budgies. Pellet-eating birds tend to take these foods readily, especially when chopped & mixed with their pellets. Change any moistened foods frequently to prevent spoilage. Fresh corn on the cob or lettuce are favorites of most birds. For a young bird, avoid weaning onto seed if possible (use a much healthier formulated diet for weaning). These contain vitamins and minerals so there is no need to add supplements to the drinking water each day. Offer calcium in the form of a mineral block or cuttle bone.

## ----- Care, Training & Behavior

Budgies are pretty easy to manage for most people. They are small & tend to be tidy. Budgies don't tend to throw their food around & are not as destructive or as noisy as larger counterparts. They can be aggressive towards other animals (including birds), but mostly they are rather shy. It really is important to learn to understand them & to guide their behavior before an undesirable behavior has been established. Birds are no different than other household pets; they get upset or act out because they miss you if you ignore them. Budgies, if properly cared for & engaged, can become an incredible talking pet. Most would not identify a budgie as being one of their best speaking birds. The record for largest vocabulary by a bird is held by the tiny Budgie & not by one of the larger parrot species as many might expect. They are smart & will require toys or shiny things to keep them entertained (don't we all?).

A hand raised bird requires more attention than does a standard (natural) raised bird; You must be prepared to give these birds the level of physical interaction they will require. A hand-raised bird **MUST HAVE** interaction with you at least **TWICE A DAY** (this can include "fly" time, finger games, riding on you, baths in the sink or with you & their favorite; naps on your shoulder).



Make sure cages are properly locked when birds are left alone, they are surprisingly smart & will find away out if they put their mind to it. Be aware of open doors & windows also. Get in & out of the house as quickly as possible if your birds are aloud to roam free when you are not there. Many owners trim their budgies's wings in the summer months when the pet is more likely to escape through an open window or door. Wing trimming is not difficult & is easily learned from a veterinarian or pet supplier.

Use perches of different diameters to exercise the feet properly. Most veterinarians recommend fresh, natural branches as part of the cage furniture. Your bird will enjoy perching on these & peeling the bark from species such as apple, alder, beech, maple, eucalyptus, citrus & many others. Toys are highly recommended for such intelligent birds as budgies. Those with mirrors, open bells & chewable items such as rawhide & plaster are particularly valuable for budgies. Mirrors are a huge favorite toy of budgies & highly recommended. Check with your retailer or veterinarian about toy safety for your particular bird. Like Lovebirds, Budgies will couple with another bird (given the chance) & are known to get lonely when separated. Budgies are happiest with company & more than one is ideal.

Always allow your bird(s) out once daily; check the "flight room" for safety first. Kitchens are not recommended as they contain many hazards such as hot pans, non-stick bake ware fumes & oil or grease. Make sure other family pets are kept separate. Don't forget to give your budgie the opportunity to bathe several times weekly. A gentle mist from a plant mister is ideal. Many budgies also enjoy playing in a dish of clean water.

Budgies are vocal birds. They make noise all day, but especially at certain times of day. Happy, healthy budgies mostly make interesting squeaks & pops, which is an appealing sound. Often budgies will mimic entire phrases in a rapid style delivery, much like listening to a tape recording on high speed. As birds go, they are not regarded as a "noisy" breed, but are prolific babblers. Budgies do not squawk or make very loud calls, more of a continual chatter which is loud in larger groups. Budgies are well known for lecturing their shadows or reflections. They are busy by nature & very attentive to each other. This bird breed needs toys & things to do. Giving your bird some paper or a book to tear up entertains, exercises & keeps them busy.

m  
r  
p  
e  
t  
s  
c  
a  
r  
e  
g  
u  
i  
d  
e

m  
r  
p  
e  
t  
s  
c  
a  
r  
e  
g  
u  
i  
d  
e