



# *Paws, Claws & Wings*

*Physical and Behavioral Rehabilitation for Animals*



## Parrot Husbandry

Parrots make amazing pets as long as you ensure that you have the time and energy to care for them properly. As there are many different species available, all with different personalities and needs, you will need to carefully select the correct parrot for you. A captive bred bird is always the best choice as they have been reared around people so tend to become tamer and carry less diseases. If you want a baby bird always choose a weaned baby as there will be less opportunities for accidental mistakes. Try to buy birds from breeders who provide a certificate proving that the bird is free of diseases (see Important Bird Disease Pamphlet).



Lovebirds

## Environment

The bird's cage needs to be at least 1m x 1m x 1m to house one adult African Grey, but as with all animals, bigger is definitely better. The bird needs to be able to stretch his wings and flap without any hindrance.



Yellow Crowned Amazon

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As parrots come from different areas and climates environmental requirements are very important. They will appreciate a full spectrum UV bulb, especially if they are not allowed access to sunlight (unfiltered by a window as glass blocks UV rays.) to encourage the production of Vit D. Parrots also see very differently to humans as they see into the UV spectrum and will only see blurry faded colours if always kept under artificial light.



African Grey

Some birds are very sensitive to dry air which can cause their skin dry out so give the bird a daily spraying, take him into the bathroom while you are having a shower or use a humidifier to increase the humidity.



Rainbow Lorikeet

The best cage setup for most birds is to have a cage with an indoor and an outdoor area, as this satisfies the birds need for sunshine and the goings on outside also prevent the bird from becoming bored. The indoor portion can be the dark, warm sleeping area.

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Male Eclectus

Birds need at least 10 to 12 hours of sleep per day. This mimics the hours of darkness they would receive in the wild. If they do not get enough sleep they, as people do, become grouchy and irritable. Make sure the bird is allowed enough sleep. Give him a quiet, dark area in his cage to sleep in.



Budgerigars

Most birds love being a part of their 'flocks' daily activities so put your birds cage in an area where he can see everything that is going on but ensure he is not in the main traffic flow as he may need a time out from all the action.



Hyacinth Macaw

Birds are very sensitive to environmental allergens so ensure that none of the following are being used anywhere around the bird: cigarette smoke, incense, aerosol cleaning products, perfume or deodorant and that there is minimal exposure to mould and pollens. Nonstick pots and pans (Teflon) can release toxins into the air that destroy the bird's lungs, especially if overheated or left on the stove without food in them. Birds exposed to burning oil, overheated Teflon or smoke can die within minutes.

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Mollucan Cockatoo

Being extremely curious animals (known as the monkeys of the avian world) birds love to chew anything they can reach. Ensure that your bird toys and cage are safe for your pet. Cages and toys with flaky bits of metal that the bird can ingest can lead to heavy metal toxicity. This can be diagnosed on a radiograph and can be reasonably easily treated if diagnosed early. Untreated metal poisoning is often fatal. Powder-coated cages are better than galvanized cages and Stainless Steel cages are the safest for this reason.



Cockatiels

## Entertainment

The bird's cage should be situated where he can watch activities during the day. If you work all day, allow him a view of the outdoors so that he can watch the outside birds, or a view of the street so he can watch the passersby. (Just make sure he is not being terrorized by anything outside.)

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Blue Fronted Amazon

Toys are very important to your pet's mental wellbeing. As a bird spends the majority of his time in a cage, he must have lots to do (remember that wild birds spend many hours every day foraging for food and will become terribly bored without sufficient stimulation). Rope perches are great for exercising his beak and feet (Ensure he cannot get his feet tangled in any loose strands of rope). It is highly recommended to use food to keep the bird entertained. Put nuts in toilet paper rolls, tape up the end and enjoy watching the bird destroy the cardboard to find the treats. Birds do need different toys so that they don't become bored. Rotate the toys in the cage every week, so that the bird gets something 'new' and exciting on a regular basis. Cheap homemade toys are also enjoyable: newspaper, wild tree branches (Karee, White Stinkwood, Apple and Sekelbos are safe), cardboard boxes and mealies. Destructible wooden toys help combat boredom and that irrepressible chewing impulse. This will also help to save your household objects from destruction. Rawhide toys make great chews and it also keeps them busy to hide treats in PVC pipes, cover bowls with newspaper so they have to destroy the newspaper to get to their food or to use foraging toys designed to make them work for treats. A radio or TV can also be left on for stimulation.



Maximillians Pionus

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Make certain that your bird has enough to entertain him while you are not present. Birds must learn to entertain themselves and not be dependent on you for all their play.

If this occurs you will have a large problem in the form of a needy, over bonded bird. Your bird should enjoy your company but not need to be with you constantly. When you are at home, allow the bird to spend time with you, even if it is only while you are doing chores.



Blue and Gold Macaws

Many owners enjoy allowing their bird out of his cage to explore. Birds love discovering new environments and being free to walk, or waddle, where they wish. Remember to ensure that the area the bird will be in is 'Bird Proof", with no cables, toxic substances, foods, etc lying around. Remember that he will chew on almost anything so be certain to keep an eye on him while he is out of the cage.



African Grey

## Wing Trimming

The correct way to trim a parrot's wings is a controversial subject. We recommend clipping between 5 and 8 (depending on the birds ability to fly) flight feathers (the first long feathers from the tip of the wing). This must be performed on both wings to

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balance the bird. These first feathers are those used to gain height and leaving the 'balance' feathers enables him to make a safe landing.



Umbrella Cockatoos

## Food

Parrots need a balanced diet to be at their optimum health, (see Parrot Diet Pamphlet). It is recommended to feed a balanced, high quality pelleted diet as the majority of the food. The rest of the diet may consist of fruit, vegetables and human food. A tablespoon of seed may be given once a day as a treat as oil rich seeds such as sunflower and peanuts are deficient in multiple vitamins and minerals and are of poor nutritional value.

Always remember when feeding your parrot that a tiny bit of food for them is the equivalent to a huge amount to a person due to the size differences. Fresh clean water must be available at all times. If your bird has the habit of bathing in his water bowl, provide another bowl, specifically for bathing.

Different species of birds also have different dietary needs so check with your vet what the specific recommendations for your pet are.

Sr. Emmylou Rivers



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