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PARROT HUSBANDRY AND CARE

CAGING

The cage should be large enough for the bird to have adequate room to play. We recommend purchasing the largest cage that you can afford and accommodate in your home. Multiple perches of varying diameter/textures will keep the feet healthy and they should be positioned to prevent the food and the water from becoming contaminated with droppings. Toys and other enrichment activities may be placed in the cage, but be sure that the cage is not over crowded. Exercise is an important part of your parrot's life. Play perches/stands are a great way to give your bird extra attention and to help it get the exercise it needs. If you have multiple birds, each should have its own cage to help prevent fighting and injuries. If they get along, you can allow supervised play time on the play perch/stand.

SUBSTRATE

Newspaper or other paper products are most appropriate. Avoid corn cob bedding, shavings and other similar substrates because they can cause health problems. Changing the paper daily is important so you can monitor the number and consistency of the droppings. Often this is the first warning that you will get that something is wrong with your bird. You do not need a grate in the cage bottom, they difficult to clean and some birds like to eat food that they drop on the cage floor.

DIET

A high quality pelleted diet, such as Harrison's Bird Diet (<http://www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com>) is recommended as majority of the diet. Pellets provide a more complete source of nutrients for birds that allow them to live a healthy life. They make vitamin supplements unnecessary in the normal bird. The remaining diet should consist of dark leafy greens, broccoli, sweet potato, carrots, and other vegetables. Healthy fruits include: kiwi, papaya, mango, melons and any berries that are in season. Offer your parrot fresh water daily. Remember that proper bird portions for foods other than pellets are much smaller than you think. Converting a bird from other diets onto pellets should be discussed with a veterinarian before starting.

LIGHTING AND TEMPTURE

Birds are fairly temperature tolerant and can comfortable in temperatures between 55-85 degrees F, as long as they are not exposed to sudden extreme temperature changes. Keep the bird in an active part of your house where they can interact with the family and the comings and goings of the household. If you place them near a window, be sure that a portion of the cage is hidden/covered, so your bird is not inadvertently frightened by predators and other birds it may view through the window. Placing a light with an UVb light bulb over your parrot's cage can help with feather quality and the general well-being of your parrot. Ensure the cords cannot be chewed on by your bird and that it is the proper distance from the bird.

BATHING

There are many ways to give your bird a bath. How you do it depends on their preference which you will discover through trial and error. Options includes: gently spraying with a garden mister, letting them play under a faucet in the sink or taking them into the shower. When bathing your bird, it is important to get them soaking wet and to allow them to air dry in an area free from drafts. Allowing them to dry on their own will encourage preening and give them something to do. Ideally this should be done on a daily basis but at least a few times a week will keep the feathers looking good and their nostrils free from debris.

Exclusively for Birds, Reptiles and Exotic Mammals



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PARROT CONTINUED

NIGHT TIME

It is important for birds to get approximately 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep. Having a sleep cage will help ensure that your bird is in a quiet area out of the activity center if you are still awake. This cage does not need to be as big as the bird's regular cage. Covering the cage at night will help the bird sleep more soundly and, in cockatiels, will help prevent "night frights". Make sure that the bird has access to water and possibly a small amount of food if it wakes up before you uncover the cage in the morning. When birds do not get enough sleep behavioral problems and reproductive problems can develop.

VETERINARY CARE

Yearly examination is recommended for most birds. It is especially important to have newly acquired birds to visit the vet to ensure they are healthy and free from zoonotic diseases such as Psittacosis (*Chlamydia psittaci*) that they can pass to humans. In older birds, more visits may be necessary to help ensure their health. If you would like to schedule an appointment please contact our office at 240-687-1414.

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