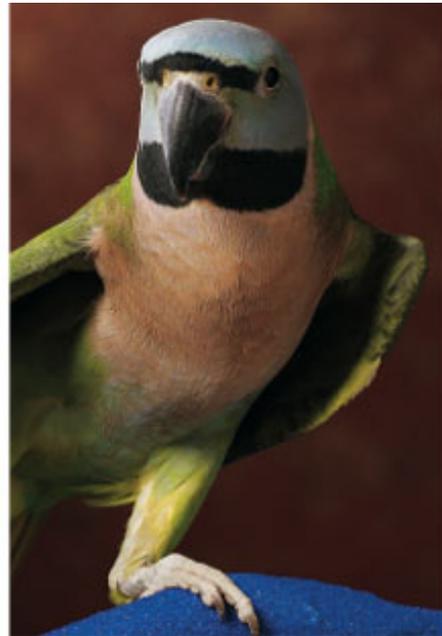


Bird Behavior: Influences and Solutions

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GOOD BIRD, BAD BIRD

simple ways to encourage
EXCELLENT BEHAVIOR



Bird behavior – both good and bad – is tied to your feathered friend's basic needs in concerns to food, water, shelter, sleep, and social interaction. That is, birds don't scream, bite, or feather pick for the fun of it. Fortunately, there are simple ways to help keep your bird calm, cool, and collected.

CRAMPED QUARTERS

Overly small cages cause stress, which often leads to behavior problems. As a general rule, the absolute minimum cage size for larger birds is 1-1/2 times their wingspan in width, depth, and height. For smaller birds, choose a [flight cage](#) over a smaller shelf-top model. Both [large](#) and flight cages allow your bird to stretch, fly, or move about without damaging her wing or tail feathers.

SO-SO SURROUNDINGS

Cage location is critical. Some birds are very social and need to be in the midst of all the action in your home. Other, more nervous, birds relish a quieter room that is still occupied by family for social interaction. For agitated birds, try keeping one side of the cage against a wall or offer a [hiding place](#) inside the cage to help your bird relax.

The height your bird can attain in her cage or on her [playgym](#) can also influence bad behavior. If your bird is at or above shoulder/head level, she believes herself to be higher ranking than anyone who is lower, including children. The misconceived perception causes your bird to believe she has every right to bite, ignore, and scream at people lower than her. To avoid this, lower [perches](#) and cage stands so your bird is at or just below eye level. Also, offer a stepstool for people to stand on to elevate the person's ranking in the bird's eyes.

BIRD BOREDOM

Boredom is the most common cause behind behavior problems. Birds are intelligent animals that need outlets for their curiosity and energy. Without physical and mental stimulation, many birds turn to undesirable behaviors to occupy their time. Unfortunately, many of our bird's family members are at work or in school for 8-10 hours per day. This means your bird relies on [toys](#) and [treats](#) to keep her busy.

To help prevent boredom, keep a variety of [toys](#) on hand. However, your bird only needs access to a few toys at a time. In fact, a cage full of toys over-stimulates birds and often causes even more destructive or undesirable behaviors. Instead, rotate one or two toys

Bad bird behaviors are unnerving. But they can also be dangerous – for both you and your bird. Birds that bite can terrorize entire families and anyone else who comes within reach of their cage. Screaming birds have gotten owners evicted from their apartments. Birds that feather pluck can continue to self-mutilate themselves and open the door for secondary infections, or worse.



into the cage every couple of days. Also, hide food in toys or use specific [puzzle toys](#) to encourage your feathered friend to play.

LACK OF SLEEP

Most birds need between 10 and 12 hours of sleep each night. That is because many are native to the tropics, where they experience 10-12 hours of darkness year-round. However, many companion birds do not get the sleep they need. Instead, their nights are often disrupted by televisions, late night work schedules, and more. Birds, like many humans, become irritable when they do not sleep enough.



There are a couple of options to help your bird get the sleep she needs. The best option is to move your bird from an active family room to a quiet, darkened room for sleeping. In the morning, she can then be moved back to the family room where she is able to interact with her family. A small sleep cage can be set up and left in your bird's bedroom and her [regular cage](#) left in the family room. At the very least, use a suitable [cage cover](#) to help darken your bird's cage at night and try to limit activity in the room in which her cage is kept.

No matter how your bird acts, the key is to understand that you are the greatest influence over your bird's good and bad behavior. Your bird expects you to teach her proper behavior and set rules. After all, in your bird's eyes you are the leader of her flock.

RELATED ARTICLES

- [Is Your Bird So Bored She Could Scream?](#)
- [Bird Stress Checklist](#)
- [Correcting Bird Biting Behavior](#)
- [Behavior Problems May be Linked to Your Bird's Cage](#)

WE RECOMMEND



[Lafeber's Avi-Cakes](#)