

Your Bird is Smarter Than You Think

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bird intelligence

In addition to the basics your bird needs - food, water, shelter, sleep, and social interaction - she also requires intellectual stimulation, the kind that can only be derived from play and training. Researchers are finding that birds can solve problems by insight, and even learn by example, as do human children. How much conscious thought is taking place, versus instinctive behavior, is the subject of ongoing study.

Parrots are considered to be the smartest of birds. They can be taught to distinguish colors, shapes, objects, and even people. The African Grey Parrot is now believed to have the intelligence and emotional make-up of a 3 to 4 year old child.

Birds' capacity for analytical thinking appears to be on the rise:

- **Birds can be very resourceful** - "Tool user," once a term used exclusively to define and distinguish mankind, is now applied to birds as well. Wild birds have been observed to lay walnuts in the roadway so passing cars will crack them open. Captive cockatoos will clip small sticks of wood, and then use them to scratch various parts of their body. Keep an eye on how your bird uses her [toys](#), [ropes](#), [chew sticks](#), and the like. The items just might be put to new uses.

- 2. Some birds can understand...and use...human language** - At one time parrots were thought only to mimic speech. Hence, the term "parroting" was coined. Now, it appears this was in error. How would you react if, after you clean your bird's cage, she commented, "Looks good!" Alex, an African Grey Parrot being studied by Irene Pepperberg, did just that. Reportedly, Alex has developed a 100-word vocabulary and can identify 50 different objects, recognize quantities up to six, distinguish seven colors and five shapes, and understand the difference between big and small, same and different, and over and under. Amazingly, Alex puts words together in new and meaningful phrases.
- 3. Birds may have exceptional memory** - Wild birds can collect and bury thousands of seeds across hundreds of square miles, then retrieve over 90%. It is thought that these species have developed a specialized portion of their brain to accomplish the task. In captivity, Alex, the African Grey, can tell you that corn is yellow, even if there is no corn in view. Though Alex's memory is exceptional, his ability suggests you should make every effort to optimize your bird's potential.
- 4. Birds may display emotions** - According to scientists, birds have the right equipment for emotion. They have a limbic system, a specialized portion of the brain necessary for true emotional behavior, found only in other higher vertebrates - humans and mammals. Bird owners have long felt they can tell whether their pets are happy or sad, fearful or content. Now research is underway to determine whether birds are aware of their own emotions, and the impact this awareness may have on their individual behavior.
- 5. Birds take enjoyment in intelligent play** - Frolicking in a bird bath may, or may not, be simple instinct. But what about dropping marbles into a water bowl to study the splash? Turning somersaults? Or climbing a rope with their beak? Clearly, birds do many things just for the fun of it. Provided the right [interactive toy](#), they will invest hours in play to satisfy their curiosity, and possibly earn intellectual reward.

Research is proving what most bird owners already know...their bird is a smart companion. Don't miss an opportunity to open new doors for your pet.

WE RECOMMEND



[Teach Box and Bank](#)

helps teach your bird to recognize and name colors and shapes.



[Cotton Wreath Bird Toy](#)

Colorful chewable bird toys created for mind-stretching, beak-challenging play.



[Mineral Logs](#)

Long-lasting treat activity with delicious rewards.