How to Enjoy Travel With Your Bird

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Traveling with your pet bird? Good idea. Taking your pet along can add fun to the trip, and be beneficial to her as well. Here are some tips to add to your mutual enjoyment and safety.

Before you go, have reservations. If you need to arrange overnight accommodations, make sure the pet-only rooms are also non-smoking rooms. Smoke fumes can make your bird ill.

Comply with state and federal regulations. If you are traveling interstate you may need a permit or a health certificate signed by your veterinarian within ten days prior to your departure. The website, Animal Import Regulations, has links to the latest regulations on interstate movement. If traveling by air, be sure to also contact your airlines to determine if they have any restrictions.

Pack everything you and your bird will need. You can bring all you need for your bird and still pack light as a feather:

- **Cages and restraint** – For car travel we recommend a travel cage that is designed to fasten securely with a seat belt, and hold up to jostling on the highway. Do NOT place the cage in the front seat since in the event an air bag would inflate, it could cause injury to the bird. When it comes to cage furnishings, you will not want to fill the travel cage with hard or swinging objects that could cause injury during a sudden stop. Instead, think "soft." Soft rope toys like the Bird Rope Knots, or

3 Ways To Provide Safe Water:

1. Carry a portable water filter. Water filters can get rid of heavy metals and other elements boiling does not address.
2. Boil water from home and store it in airtight bottles.
3. Use commercial bottled water (remember to get your bird used to the taste of commercial waters before your trip).

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a Shredder attached firmly to the cage will amuse your pet for hours.

Never travel with a bird loose in your car or in the trunk; and, because birds expire quickly in high heat, they should NEVER be left in your car unattended.

Wherever you go, you need to take precautions not to lose your pet. A Flight Suit with lanyard will help keep you in control. Also, to prevent escape, it is always a good idea to keep wings well-trimmed.

- **Food and water** – Though just before and during the trip you will not want to overfeed your bird, on arrival, you will need a good supply of his regular diet. Because you probably will not want to invest the time to shop for pet food, be sure to pack plenty. Also, bring bottled water you can trust your bird will enjoy.

  Don't be lax and feed your bird the wrong foods just because you are "on vacation." Your bird needs his regular daily food to be the main portion of her diet. Remember that foods full of fats and sugars — such as fast foods — are unhealthy for your avian friend. Proper nutrition is also important for managing stress in your bird. For entertainment and for a low-fat treat, secure small pieces of spray millet, such as Golden Sunburst Millet, in holders. If this is a new treat for your bird, be sure to offer it to your bird several days prior to the trip to get her digestive system used to it. Suddenly changing food, especially during the stress of travel, could cause severe digestive problems.

Tips For Carrying Foods On The Go:

- Use a cooler with plenty of ice for fresh foods.
- Store foods in non-breakable jars, such as plastic containers or tight closing plastic bags.
- While traveling, take advantage of fresh-from-the-garden vegetables. Vegetables contain essential vitamins and minerals as well as fiber.

Some other helpful food-related hints include:

- Food cups should be deep and secured to the cage or crate.
- Provide one dish for his regular diet (pellets recommended) and one for fresh vegetables or fruits.

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- Use a Cage Guard or similar item to reduce seed mess from the cage onto the car floor.

  - **Cleaning Supplies** – Hygiene never takes a holiday. To clean or touch up the cage, pack Poop-Off and cage wipes. To freshen the cage bottom, bring Cage Catcher Liners. And for your bird, don't forget a Bath Spray. This will help freshen up your pet and help her relax.
  - **First Aid Kit** – Be prepared in the event of an emergency by bringing along a first aid kit. Our First Aid Kit for birds contains everything you need to provide basic first aid for your bird.

Keep to the routine. The key to successful travel is minimizing the changes in your bird's routine. Here are some important to-dos before and during your trip:

- **Pre-trip** – Keep your bird's normal play, feeding, rest, and hygiene schedule. If you will be using a new travel cage, familiarize your bird with it in advance by taking local trips. A week before, during, and a week after traveling, fortify his diet with stress-formula vitamins and minerals. A few days before departure, you may wish to bathe your bird. You may not have time for a full bath until you reach your destination. Also clip your bird's wings and nails, if necessary.

- **En route** – Like you, your bird needs a rest stop every few hours. During breaks, in addition to food and water, be sure to provide your bird a few minutes of personal attention. Observe your pet's mood. If needed, and ok'd by your veterinarian, you can offer your pet Serene-um for Birds to reduce anxiety and help control motion sickness. Covering the cage may also help reduce the symptoms. Any time your bird is out of the cage, use a flight suit with its lanyard attached. This will control droppings, and help prevent escape...the last thing you want while away from home!
- **At your destination** – Because of their compact size, travel cages are not recommended for daily use on an extended trip. Upon arrival, transfer your pet to his regular cage, and/or allow him to be out on a play gym. Position the cage and gym in a quiet location, away from any windows. Spend time with your pet. Keep attention from friends, family, and others under control. And continue your effort to maintain a normal pet maintenance schedule.

A stress-free trip takes planning. Plan the basics, like food and water, and there will be less for you to think about and more time to enjoy travel with your bird.

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The planning and preparation on your part can make the trip fun and very worthwhile.

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