Bird Care... the Basics

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Basics of Bird Care

"We believe that the basics of bird care are essential not only for the beginning bird owner, but as a refresher for the bird expert as well."

The way our birds are housed and fed has a tremendous impact on their susceptibility to disease, behavior problems, and breeding capabilities. The number one rule: Learn all you can about your bird's specific environmental and nutritional needs. Beyond that, here are some of our general recommendations:

Housing

The most important item needed for your feathered friend is a cage. Even birds that come out of the cage to socialize spend most of their day in their cage.

Bigger is better as long as the spacing between the bars is narrow enough to prevent injury if the bird tries to escape. Your bird's head should not be able to fit between the bars.

The door should be large enough to comfortably put your hand through, catch him, and put him back. Make sure the latch is escape-proof - birds have a lot of time to figure out how to open it! Some owners place a padlock device on their Houdini-esque bird's cage. One of our favorites is the Cage Lock.

Cage covers are used to signal your bird that it is bedtime and quiet time. While an old sheet or pillowcase will work, cage covers are made to fit and generally look better in your home. Do not use cage covers for extended periods of time outside of sleeping hours.

Perches

A variety of perches is a necessity. For leg and foot health, different diameters and different textures are of great importance. Our Nail and Beak Conditioning Perch provides texture and diameter choices in one perch. Perches are not only used to climb on and off, they also provide a vital function of helping the bird keep his beak and his nails trim.

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Nutrition

Whether seedeaters, nut eaters, or fruit eaters, know and follow guidelines for appropriate food. In addition to his main diet, provide plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and treats as well as nutritional supplements, such as Quiko Vitamins to augment his diet.

Exercise/Entertainment

Toys and stimulation are both essential for a bird's health and happiness. Use treat-toys that make your bird figure out how to get the treat himself, and ladders for exercise and muscle development. Birds are very social animals - especially bigger birds like cockatoos and parrots. Handle your birds so that the necessary bond between you will be established and your bird will feel secure. Handling also serves as entertainment.

Grooming

For minor grooming and helping your bird feel his best, purchase some nail clippers especially for birds, a pair of sharp scissors, a spray mister, and a birdbath. All birds like to feel clean and fresh, and being able to take a dunk into a bath or misted down with cool water on a hot day will go a long way towards creating an environment your bird will enjoy. You may also want to consider bringing your bird into the shower with you. Our shower perches are easy to attach, and showers are like gentle rain to birds.

Ultimately, enjoying your bird means that you care about your bird's health and safety. Your daily care routine can be fun and interactive.

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