Is Your Bird Meant to Travel?

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When it comes to car travel, the disposition of every bird is different. Many small birds such as canaries, finches, and budgies are high-strung and easily stressed. They are best left at home. Others, like the gregarious Amazons, love to travel. Still others may suffer separation anxiety, and thus won't abide being left at home alone.

Traveling with your bird is not difficult and can be fun, if he wants to come along. Need help determining whether your bird is an eager companion?

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is your bird accustomed to a routine (and will you be able to maintain it)?
If your bird is very young, his feeding, play, rest, and hygiene patterns may not be well established. Travel is best for those mature birds who can adapt to a change in routine.

2. How long will your bird stay comfortably in his cage?
You learn to read your bird's many moods at home. On the road, you need to pay extra attention to them to prevent stress. Before taking a long trip, we recommend that you acclimate your pet to the carrier. Then start with short trips, and gradually increasing the duration. (Cage should be in the backseat as front airbags could cause injury in an accident.)

3. Does your bird get motion sickness?
Like humans, your bird can experience motion sickness. His brain can receive conflicting messages - from his eyes and the rest of his body - about whether he is in motion. The result is disorientation in the inner ear. The most common symptom is nausea. If needed, and ok'd by your veterinarian, you can offer your bird Serene-um for Birds to reduce anxiety and help control motion sickness. This is a gentle formula of vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, developed by veterinarians, which helps reduce stress. However, acclimation to travel is always the best prevention.

4. Is your bird healthy?
Travel causes stress for owners and their pets. Schedules change. Diets change. Water consumption is often disrupted. Some birds may experience phobias, while others tire easily. Before any extended trip, it is a good idea to take your bird to your veterinarian for a health check-up. And because fatigue, anxiety, and illness can make your bird more susceptible to motion sickness, it is important to start any trip rested and in good health. Also, determine if a health certificate will be needed and if it is legal to take your bird to your destination.

5. Will the trip and the destination be safe?
While on the road, your bird needs to always be secured in a travel cage. Because birds are at great risk in high heat, they should never be left in your car unattended. There are also places you should not take your bird; for example, exceptionally cold climates. When traveling out of the country, if you can't drink the water, neither should your bird. Wherever you go, you need to take precautions not to lose your pet. A flight suit with lanyard will help keep you in

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control. Also, to prevent escape, it is always a good idea to keep wings well-trimmed.

6. Will you have time for your bird at your destination?
If your answer is "no," home care is a better option. If you will not have time to play with your bird, feed him, and deal with hygiene, find a pet-sitter.

With planning, travel can be a comfortable and rewarding experience and an excellent cure for cabin fever. If you feel comfortable your bird is meant to travel, please read the next article for some tips on how to make the trip safe and enjoyable for both of you

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