Using Treats to Teach Tricks: Nodding

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Treats are an effective way to train your bird to do all sorts of tricks. Birds quickly associate them as a reward for a job well done. Nodding, for instance, is an extension of normal parrot behavior, and a favorite treat is a great way to help your bird learn the motion of the nod. Here is how.

1. **Hold a treat** just beyond the reach of your bird's beak and above her head.

2. **Slowly move the treat** directly in front of her beak, then slightly below it, so your bird's head moves up and down as it follows the treat with her eyes.

3. **Use a verbal cue**, such as "Do you agree?" when going through these steps.

4. **Reward your bird** for "nodding" with the treat in your hand.
5. **Repeat** this sequence in every training session, gradually moving your hand further away from your pet and by using praise to gradually phase out the treat.

To make training with treats more effective, vary the treats within any training session, so your bird won't know what to expect as a reward. Also, make sure that you alternate verbal praise with edible treats so she won't become too focused on eating as a reward for a job well done. Training your bird using treats is a special way to bond with your bird and develop trust, and soon you will have your bird doing all sorts of tricks.

Small, delicious, and healthy treats like Popcorn Nutri-Berries or Kaytee Yogurt Dips make training sessions more successful and more fun for your bird.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*