Handling

Birds stress very easily, so let yours get used to you over several days. Sit by the cage without doing anything before building up to putting food through the bars and talking to your bird. Gradually open the cage door and put your hand in with food. Eventually your bird should step onto your finger.

If your bird is not tame and you must catch it, place a towel (for large parrots) or a handkerchief (for small parrots, finches and canaries) over it and move it quickly to where it needs to go.

tip: Dim lights will calm birds and make catching them easier.

Should They Have a Friend?

Birds enjoy the company of other birds. In general, it's a good idea to keep the same beak types together, i.e. parrots with parrots, and finches with canaries are fine together.

In aviaries where space is not a problem, this is not so crucial and so most species will co-exist. However be careful when putting large parrots with small parrots or passerines (e.g. finches, canaries etc.).

tip: Check with your local wildlife agency or council for information on permits that may be required to own specific bird species.



bird checklist

- [ ] Cage
- [ ] Seed mix or quality pellets
- [ ] Cuttlefish
- [ ] Other treats
- [ ] Floor covering
- [ ] Vitamin & mineral supplement
- [ ] Grit
- [ ] Bath
- [ ] Toys (including those which can be shredded)
- [ ] Millet
- [ ] Water and seed bowls

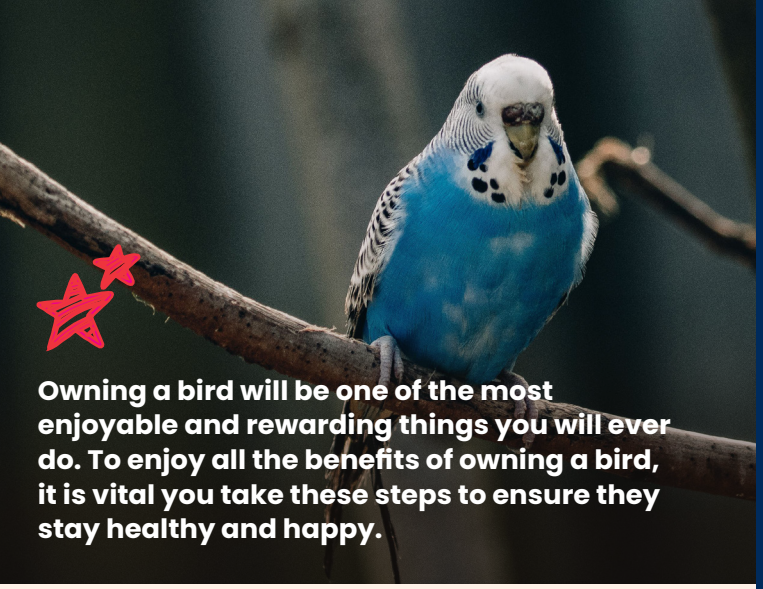
This brochure contains general information only.
Please consult your vet for specific pet health advice.

13 PETS
www.petstock.com.au

your bird care guide



petstock



Owning a bird will be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding things you will ever do. To enjoy all the benefits of owning a bird, it is vital you take these steps to ensure they stay healthy and happy.

Housing

Birds are housed in aviaries or cages. Aviaries are great for colony housing and are generally considered better for the health of birds, as they allow them to get more exercise. Smaller cages are acceptable but should be big enough for your bird to stretch their wings and fly fully extended from one side of the cage to the other.

Get advice on the cage you buy - avoid cheap, galvanized metal cages as birds may chew them and contract zinc poisoning. Your bird shouldn't be able to fit its head through the bars of the cage and it should be strong enough so your bird can't bend them (a cocky will easily chew through the bars of a budgie cage!).

Cover the floor of the cage with sand grit, newspaper, or anything that is solid and can be removed for regular cleaning. You should clean the cage once a week with a pet safe disinfectant.

Perches

Most cages come with wooden or plastic dowel perches. These are generally too smooth and predispose your bird to overgrown nails and skin lesions of the feet. Ensure you add large diameter sticks and ensure that they're rough! Branches from fruit trees make great perches. It's also a good idea to have at least three different width perches in your bird's enclosure, to mimic its normal habitat.

tip: Don't place perches above food or water containers as they will get contaminated with droppings.

Bathing

We all need to bathe and birds are no exception! Provide a bird bath with fresh, clean water or keep a water spray bottle handy and spray your bird down regularly. This will reduce feather dust and keep your bird's plumage healthy.

Air Quality and Drafts

Aviaries and cages should not be placed in areas that are prone to dust, excessive tobacco smoke, or too close to a microwave. Cages should be kept away from drafts, such as open windows, doorways and air conditioning units, as your bird can catch a cold that may develop into life threatening pneumonia.

Aviaries should have a protected area where birds can escape cold, harsh conditions.

tip: Keep cages out of the kitchen and away from fumes created by cooking.

Exercise and Toys

Tamed cage birds should be let out regularly, to maintain fitness and avoid becoming overweight. Toys (zinc free) are very important to alleviate boredom. Toys provide entertainment and mirrors are particularly good as your bird will think it has a mate. Shiny toys really capture the imagination of birds and toys that can be shredded are beneficial for stimulation so include some of these, too.

tip: Only add one or two toys at a time as your bird will grow tired and bored of the same ones. Change toys regularly.

Feeding

Feeding can be very easy, as there's a variety of bird seed mixes readily available. Petstock offers a great range of quality seed and team members will ensure you get the right seed for your breed of bird.

Ensure you provide fresh water and change your bird's seed daily.

All birds should be offered fresh fruit and vegetables such as grated carrot, apples, broccoli and sprouts. Many more choices are available and it is best to consult a specific breed book to find the best greens for your bird. Birds are foragers by nature so it is best to offer a wide variety.

Cuttlefish should be constantly available as this is a great source of calcium and trace elements for your bird and important for beak health and shape.

Grit is also essential for aiding the breakdown of seed in the gut. It is also important in breeding birds, to help form egg shell.

Avian vitamin supplements are important and these are available in block or spray form.

tip: Millet is a great treat for finches and canaries. Some birds don't react well to lettuce and be aware that avocado is toxic to many birds.
Place food items in foraging toys to help alleviate boredom and increase fitness – in the wild, birds spend most of their time foraging.

