



BIRD CARE

If you're thinking of adopting a bird, consider adopting one from the Ontario SPCA and read the bird-care tips below. Information includes everything from nutrition to housing, and more!

Careful consideration before adopting, including research and planning, plus plenty of love, patience and a sense of humour, will foster a strong and loving relationship that will help you discover the joy of birds, and make you friends for life!

Nutrition

Every bird species has different dietary requirements, so consult your veterinarian for specific information on your bird to promote their health and avoid medical conditions from arising. A good diet generally consists of a variety of foods, which also stimulates and entertains them. Natural foods can be offered in a separate container from seeds or pellets, and can include:

Corn on the cob • Leafy greens • Broccoli • Oranges • Peas • Apples • Squash • Sweet potatoes • Whole grain breads • Cooked eggs • Tofu • Pasta

Placement of food can also create entertaining challenges for your bird, which will make them happier and healthier.

Fresh water is required daily, and is best placed away from perches to avoid spoiling from droppings.

Things to avoid

To provide your pet bird with a safe environment, avoid the following potential hazards:

- Cigarette smoke
- Insecticide sprays
- Access to treated or painted wood
- Poisonous foods such as avocado, chocolate, coffee beans and household plants
- Kitchen fumes created by overheated nonstick cookware and self-cleaning ovens
- Teflon-coated gas fireplace inserts
- Bird-seed grit

Talk to your veterinarian about having your bird's wings clipped. This is a painless procedure, equivalent to having your hair cut, which will allow your bird to fly short distances but prevent full flight. Should your bird ever accidentally get outside through an open door or window, it will make them a lot easier to catch.

Life spans

Canary, Finch, Parakeet 5-10 years • Cockatiel 12-15 years • Parrot 60-100 years!

Health

In addition to good nutrition, birds can benefit greatly from supervised flying time around the house and toys for stimulation and entertainment.

Regular observation of your bird's overall health will quickly alert you if they are not well. Signs to watch for include:

- Disposition - weak, bleeding, discharge, fluffed-up feathers, sitting on the cage floor, inflammation of any body parts.
- Breathing - difficulty breathing or audible wheezing or clicking.
- Food consumption - changes in the amount they regularly eat.
- Behaviour - stop vocalizing, sleep longer, inactive.
- Droppings - change in the dark portion or lack of a white portion, overly wet.

Contact your veterinarian immediately for any medical concerns you may have about your pet bird.

Housing

Cages should be as large as you can accommodate. There must be enough space for the bird to stretch their wings out fully and to fly short distances. Different bird species require different types of cages - parakeets and cockatiels like height, while finches and canaries prefer width.

Regular exposure to natural daylight is required, so placing the cage in a room with a window is best, but not in direct light. Provide your bird with some time outdoors during summer months, but place the cage where shade is available. At all times, birds should be kept in warm environments and away from drafts.

Many items can be added to the cage to provide stimulation and promote the health of your bird, such as toys, hiding places, mirrors and tree branches for perching. Avoid using sandpaper perches, and perches that are all the same size.

Grooming

Bathing dishes must be provided several times each week, or warm water can be misted onto the bird to promote healthy feather condition. Some birds prefer dust baths - check with Ontario SPCA staff or your veterinarian to find out if your bird is one of them. Bathing opportunities and plenty of perches comprise the essence of adequate bird grooming!

Wild birds

The best pet bird is one that has been bred and raised for companionship. If you find a wild bird that is in need of help, contact your local Branch or Affiliate Society immediately!

Thank you for giving an animal in need a second chance at a loving home!