

## **Caring for Caged Birds**

### **NUTRITION**

Feed a pelleted diet, such as Harrison's Bird Diet, as 80-100% of your bird's diet. Seed-based diets cause malnutrition.

Offer fresh, pesticide free vegetables daily. Dark green leafy vegetables and yellow-orange vegetables are the most nutritious. Beans and grains are also acceptable items.

Be sure your bird has a clean, fresh supply of drinking water at all times. Bottled or filtered water is ideal.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Keep your bird at room temperatures that are comfortable to you. Avoid excessive heat, cold, and drafts.

Humidity can be important to your bird's health. Mist your bird anywhere from once weekly to once a day with warm water to provide a "bath" for your bird.

Direct sunlight (not through glass) or an artificial source of ultraviolet (UV) light is essential to your bird's health.

### **HOUSING**

The largest cage you can afford is best. Ensure that your bird can fully spread its wings without touching the sides of the cage. Birds with long tails need taller cages. Small birds like finches need a longer cage horizontally for flying space. Horizontally oriented bars make climbing easier for birds.

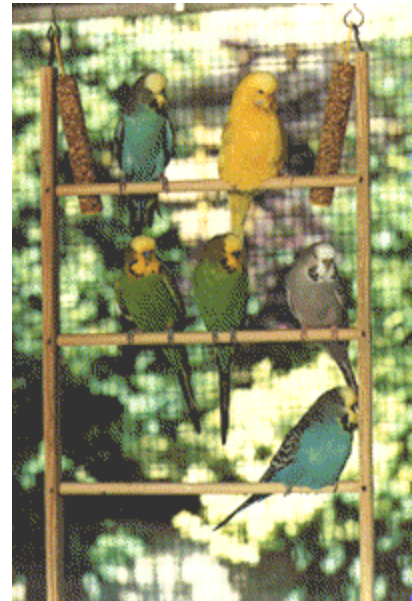
### **ACTIVITY**

Toys are essential for your bird's mental health. Make sure that the toys you select are appropriate and safe for the type of bird that you own.

Time outside of the cage with the owner is needed daily. A playpen or play gym makes a good activity center, and allows your bird time away from the cage.

### **GENERAL CARE**

Routine nail trimming and beak trimming may be required.



Remove any leg bands your bird may have - sedation may be required to avoid injuring the bird. Leg bands can get snagged and cause broken legs, so they are best removed.

Wing trimming is important for several reasons. Birds like to get into trouble - the inability to fly greatly reduces their chances of finding trouble. Birds without trimmed wings are often more aggressive and difficult to tame. A proper wing trim can be done by your avian veterinarian.

### ***AVOID***

- Sandpaper-covered perches
- Grit for Psittacine (Hookbill) birds
- Mite protectors, Mite sprays
- Dangerous toys (easily dismantled; small chain links; etc)
- Teflon-coated utensils/cookware
- Cigarette smoke, insecticides, other strong fumes
- Toxic houseplants, Avocado, Chocolate, Alcoholic beverages
- Cats, dogs, small children, ceiling fans, open toilets (fall in)
- Corncob or wood chips as cage substrate
- Taking a bird outdoors on your shoulder or hand - use carrier!

- Susan L. Leck, DVM, Diplomate ABVP

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