

Introduction to Birds as Pets
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Pet birds have recently become very popular as pets. And for good reason. They have many positive attributes, but very few negative characteristics. Many people who meet a good bird for the first time are amazed at how friendly and affectionate birds can be. They offer a great deal of companionship and will return all of the love you can give. We, as a society, are becoming more and more concentrated. Less and less space is available. Therefore we are forced into living in smaller dwellings. Apartment life has become the norm. This may be one of the reasons for an increased popularity in owning a pet bird. Birds do not need to be taken for walks; they are not susceptible to fleas; they do not have an odor; and most apartment complexes do not require a pet deposit for a bird. In addition, they are small, requiring less room than other pets. Another factor dictating the popularity of birds is the cost. Birds are the cheapest pet to own and manage. The initial cost of purchasing a bird varies depending on which bird you get. The monthly feeding cost is less than five dollars in most cases. In addition, they do not need costly, monthly heartworm prevention. Regular maintenance is very low. Cage paper should be changed daily. Fresh food and water should be given daily (or more often if necessary). The cage should be scrubbed and disinfected weekly. These tasks should take less than ten minutes per day and less than 45 minutes on the week end. Birds are very clean animals. Mites and other parasites are not a common problem. Their droppings have no odor nor do birds need to go out when it is raining. There are some concerns that usually come when people are considering a bird for a pet. Below are some of the questions commonly asked.

Commonly asked question:

1. What if I have dogs and/or cats?

Most people who have birds also have other pets. When the bird is out of his cage, you must make sure the other pets are not around or you can supervise them very closely. Most birds end up "ruling the roost", being dominant over the

other pets.

2. Are birds quiet at night?

Birds cannot see very well in the dark, so when it is dark they go to sleep, and thus are quiet.

3. What veterinary care is required?

Birds should be taken to a qualified avian veterinarian for annual checkups. This will ensure that your bird stays healthy for its lifetime. Annual vaccination against avian polyomavirus is recommended. Birds do not need to be spayed or castrated. They do not have fleas, and does not need heartworm prevention medication.

4. How long do birds live?

Life spans can range from 15 years for smaller parrots such as budgies, lovebirds, and cockatiels to well over 70 years for the larger species such as macaws.

5. What do I feed a bird?

The best diet is a formulated or pelleted diet that is given as a staple. Birds can consume nearly anything that people can. As a treat you may feed birds vegetables, fruits, pasta, rice, etc. Basically, if we can eat it, then they can eat it (with a few exceptions).

6. What if I work, will my bird be lonely while I am away? Do I need two birds?

If you are considering a pet bird, then become very educated on what it takes to care for a bird and do some research to find the best bird for your situation and to find the best place to purchase the right bird. Look for a place that offers extensive counseling and healthy birds with access to a qualified avian veterinarian.

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