

Care Sheet

Budgies, canaries, finches, small parakeets and lovebirds

This group of birds are all basically described as seed eaters. They are generally easy to keep and breed and most species make good beginners birds or pets.

Housing

Most of these birds can be kept in aviaries or cages. They must all have access to draught and wind free accommodation so outdoor aviaries must have a shelter area for the birds to retreat to when they need to. Some of the more exotic species may require heating in winter. Take expert advice before mixing different species in the same cages or aviaries.

These birds require security so, if you choose a cage, they are best housed in box style cages with open wire or bars on just one side. Pet birds kept in all wire cages should have the security of a wall nearby. Cages should be as large as possible.

Please avoid keeping your birds in the kitchen as fumes from Teflon utensils can kill almost instantly. Try to avoid sudden temperature changes.

Parakeets and other 'hookbills' will probably enjoy playing with destructible toys. These should be made of wood and cardboard. Make sure they are made of non-toxic timbers by buying from a reputable shop or make your own with fruit tree timber.

Perches should offer a variety of sizes to exercise the feet. Products such as **Sandy Perches** give your birds a manicure so save you the job of toe clipping.

Consider all spectrum (**Arcadia**) lighting. This definitely enhances the welfare of the birds.

Hygiene

Cages, perches, drinkers and feeders need regular disinfection to prevent the build up of too many germs. We recommend that you use the broad spectrum, bio-degradable disinfectant/cleaner **Avisafe**.

Water is a major source of infection as birds contaminate it so easily. Adding **Aviclens** to the drinking and bathing water stops germs multiplying and so causing disease.

Feeding

Just because these birds are seed eaters does not mean that dry seed and water is all your birds need. Wild birds eat green, sappy seeds that are far more nutritious than dry 'birdseed'. So seed diets should be supplemented with trace minerals, vitamins and limiting amino acids. The best modern supplements also contain herbal ingredients to support immune and digestive systems and so maintain excellent health.

For individual birds or very small collections here is our recommended diet:

*Suitable clean seed mix - 50-75%.

***Gold Label Feast** - 25-50%.

*Supplement the water with **Calcivet** at the rate of 2 mls per 100 mls of water (18 drops to a fl oz of water). Do this five times a week for the first month you own the bird and twice a week from then on. If any birds start laying eggs revert to five times a week.

* Offer fresh greens, fruits or vegetables if your birds will take them. Please wash them first to remove pesticides. Some small finches and waxbills may also take mealworms.

This diet will provide your bird(s) with a full spectrum of vitamins, minerals and limiting amino acids as well as health promoting herbs, essential oils and many other important nutrients.

For emergencies we suggest you keep a small pot of **Guardian Angel** in the cupboard and, at the first sign of illness, add 1/2 teaspoon to 100mls of water (2 pinches per fl oz). Ring The Birdcare Company for sick bird advice.

Gold Label Feast, Calcivet and Guardian Angel are readily available from 250 specialist bird retailers around the UK or direct from the manufacturer by mail. Please contact The Birdcare Company (details below) for more information.

This care sheet has been brought to you by:

For more information about the health and nutrition of your birds please contact the free advice service of:

THE BIRDCARE COMPANY

Tel: 0845 130 8600 (local call charge only)

E-mail: advice@BirdcareCo.com

Web:

www.BirdcareCo.com



Care Sheet

Parrots

Most of this group of birds are basically described as seed eaters though many also eat large quantities of fruits and vegetables.

Housing

Most of these birds can be kept in aviaries or cages. They must all have access to draught and wind free accommodation so outdoor aviaries must have a shelter area for the birds to retreat to when they need to. Some of the more exotic species may require heating in winter. Take expert advice before mixing different species in the same cages or aviaries.

These birds have very strong beaks and a desire to chew. So they need to be housed in metal. They also require security so cage and aviary design should give them privacy to be on their own in their own secure environment. However they should be trained to allow you full access for cleaning. You must be the leader of the flock! Cages should be as large as possible and as a bare minimum your bird should always be able to spread its wings.

Please avoid keeping your birds in the kitchen as fumes from Teflon utensils can kill almost instantly. Try to avoid sudden temperature changes.

Parrots will enjoy playing with destructible toys. These should be made of wood and cardboard. Make sure they are made of non-toxic timbers by buying from a reputable shop or make your own with fruit tree timber.

Perches should offer a variety of sizes to exercise the feet. Products such as **Sandy Perches** give your birds a manicure so save you the job of toe clipping.

Consider all spectrum (**Arcadia**) lighting. This definitely enhances the welfare of the birds.

Training

Pet parrots are intelligent animals. They need regular stimulation. You must be the leader of their flock. Failure to achieve this may lead to a destructive, noisy pet bird. This is not in your interest or the bird's. Sound advice is available on the Internet or in books. Or contact The Birdcare Company for a referral to a pet parrot behavioural consultant.

Hygiene

Cages, perches, drinkers and feeders need regular disinfection to prevent the build up of too many germs. We recommend that you use the broad spectrum, bio-degradable disinfectant/cleaner **Avisafe**.

Water is a major source of infection as birds contaminate it so easily. Adding **Aviclens** to the drinking and bathing water

stops germs multiplying and so causing disease.

Feeding

Just because these birds are seed eaters does not mean that dry seed and water is all your birds need. Wild birds eat green, sappy seeds and our fresh fruits and vegetables that are far more nutritious than dry 'birdseed'. Seed diets should be supplemented with trace minerals, vitamins and limiting amino acids. The best modern supplements also contain herbal ingredients to support immune and digestive systems and so maintain excellent health.

For individual birds or very small collections here is our recommended diet:

*Suitable clean seed mix - 50-75%.

*Fresh fruits, veggies or selected human foods 25-50%. Please wash well to remove pesticides.

*Supplement the fresh foods with 2 pinches of **Daily Essentials3** for a 4-500 gram bird every day (a grey or Amazon weighs 400-500 grams, a large macaw 1,000-1,200 grams). Make sure the bird actually consumes this amount.

*Add one pinch daily of **Flourish** or 2-4 teaspoons of **Gold Label Feast** to the fresh or human foods.

*Supplement the fresh foods with **Calcivet** at the rate of 0.5 mls (15 drops) per 500 gram bird. Do this *five times a week* for the first month you own the bird and *twice a week* from then on. If any birds start egg laying revert to five times a week. NB calcium deficiency is probably the most common problem in bird keeping!

This diet will provide your bird(s) with a full spectrum of vitamins, minerals and limiting amino acids as well as health promoting herbs, essential oils and many other important nutrients.

Some species, notably African Greys and Cockatoos can be difficult to get to eat fresh foods. Ring the Birdcare Company if you need help with this.

For emergencies we recommend you keep a small pot of **Guardian Angel** in the cupboard and, at the first sign of illness, add 12 pinches to the fresh foods of a 500 gram bird. Ring The Birdcare Company for advice on sick birds.

Daily Essentials3, Flourish, Gold Label Feast, Calcivet and Guardian Angel are readily available from 250 specialist bird retailers around the UK or direct from the manufacturer by mail. Please contact The Birdcare Company (details below) for more information.

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