

## CLIPPING YOUR BIRD'S WINGS

The first time you have your bird's wings trimmed it should be done by a professional who can show you exactly what to do. It is NOT recommended that you do this without an in-person demonstration the first time because doing it wrong could lead to a significant bleeding and possible death.

Bird owners are often advised to clip the wings of their birds. A common first reaction is that it is a cruel thing to do. After all, birds are meant to fly. However, there are valid reasons for clipping. First and foremost is the bird's safety, but there are other reasons as well.

**Loss Prevention** - An open door or window is an invitation to an unclipped bird. No matter how tame, birds will fly out and may be lost forever.

**Safety** - Unclipped birds can easily panic and fly into windows, glass doors, or mirrors, injuring themselves.

**Training** - Birds, like children, must be taught where they are allowed and where they are not allowed. They should be trained to stay, when placed on a gym or other permissible area. A bird with clipped wings will be more likely to stay where you place him.

Mickaboo Cockatiel Rescue is a non

profit bird rescue organization, lo-

cated in the San Francisco Bay Area.

We are dedicated to the rescue, re-

habilitation and placement of parrot

type birds that have been sick, in-

jured abused or neglected



Mickaboo Cockatiel Rescue

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PROPER AVIAN  
CARE  
*www.mickaboo.org*

Proper and adequate avian nutrition combined with good husbandry is probably the single most important factor in insuring that your pet bird lives a long and healthy life. The good husbandry aspect is very straight forward; supply your companion with a roomy, clean environment with full spectrum lighting, plenty of toys, quality time with you, regular veterinary care and most important of all plenty of mental and physical stimulation.



## FEEDING YOUR PET BIRD:

Seed is high in fat and low in most nutrients necessary for good health. Parrots that eat seed only will suffer from malnutrition and may be overweight, even though they look healthy.

Ideally, the diet of companion birds should be composed of a minimum of 50-60% pellets, with the remainder in healthy table foods and produce.

Some of the most beneficial foods are dark, leafy green vegetables like kale, broccoli, dandelion greens, Swiss chard, mustard greens, etc., as well as carrots, cooked sweet potatoes and squash.

Lettuce and celery are not recommended since they contain mostly water and sodium and no nutrients.

Healthy table foods, such as cooked egg, corn, peas, beans, pasta, rice (brown is best), and low sugar and low sodium cereals etc., can also be offered in small amounts.

Grit, gravel and oyster shell should *never* be fed to companion birds. They naturally contain lead and could give your bird lead poisoning.

## CONVERTING YOUR BIRD TO PELLETS:

Some birds convert to pellets quickly and willingly, while others may take weeks or months. Owner persistence is the key to successful dietary conversion. Initially the pellets should be offered in a separate dish and left in the cage at all times along with fresh vegetables.

Usual food items (such as seed and table food) should be restricted to one hour twice daily, preferably morning and evening.

***It is extremely important that you don't forget to feed your bird his normal seed and table food twice daily until he eats sufficient amounts of vegetables and pellets. Many birds do not initially recognize pellets as food and can starve themselves to death.***

This is sufficient to maintain the birds normal body weight so the owner needn't worry. Most birds will start to nibble on the formulated food within a few days to a few weeks and the usual foods are gradually withdrawn until they compose 25% or less of the diet.

## VETERINARY CARE:

It can be hard to tell if a bird is ill. Being prey animals they hide their illness so a predator doesn't target them as easy game. Your best chance of catching a disease in the early, treatable stage is to know your bird well and to stay alert for significant changes. Taking your bird for annual checkups to an avian vet is the best insurance you can have for maintaining your bird's health. To find an avian vet near you, please check this web site: [www.aav.org](http://www.aav.org)

## OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION:

You should never treat your bird's illness with over-the-counter remedies. By the time you know a bird is ill the sickness is usually well advanced. Delaying a visit with an avian vet and masking the condition with over-the-counter medicines is very likely to cost your bird's life.

## BATHING:

Birds like to get wet. Water makes them feel good and it stimulates normal preening behavior. You can dampen your bird by using a spray bottle set to "mist". If your bird is tame, you can take him in the shower, or you can add a shallow bathing dish with an inch or so of water.

## THE CAGE:

You can't have too big a cage for your bird. Be sure the bars of the cage are spaced close enough that your bird can not accidentally get its head or wing stuck between the bars. Try to ensure your bird does not become a prisoner in his cage, so make sure your birds get plenty of time outside the cage for socialization.

## PERCHES:

Tree branches makes the best perches. Dowel perches are not recommended because of their even surface, and sand-paper perches should never be used!

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