

Some frequent causes of behavioural issues

Changes to their regular routine may result in instability, neurosis or other behavioural problems.

Behavioural problems usually relate to boredom or anxiety states (neurosis), but another trigger may be due to disturbances or changes at home which may unsettle the bird such as:

- A recent move
- Additions to the family, frequent visitors or another pet in the same house
- Frequent arguments within the house
- Long periods away from the owner

In the wild the dominant birds have the highest perches, in a domestic situation you need to be the 'dominant bird'. The highest perch in the cage should be no higher than your eye level. Whilst standing you will be above the bird but this hierarchy will dramatically change when you sit down. This issue can be combated by siting the cage away from chairs where you often sit. It is best to avoid an overly dominant bird sitting on your shoulder or head, in other words raising it's position above you.

Birds who are of a nervous disposition may be frightened of direct eye contact with humans. Set one perch above human eye level in a far corner to help them feel more secure.

Please note

This care sheet is intended as a basic guide only.

If you have concerns regarding your bird's health please contact

**Daisy Street Veterinary Centre on
01254 53622 to arrange an
appointment**

Please ask us for a copy of "Stress in parrots: what it looks like and considerations to avoid distress".
Reproduced with kind permission of the author Elaine Henley PG DIP CABC, Animal Behaviour Clinic, APBC, ABTC, IAABC.

More information from Elaine can be found at:

www.facebook.com/elainehenleyparrotexpert

Or her site, *Animal behaviour clinic*
www.dogbehaviour.org.uk



Parrot Care

Parrots need to have variety in their life and to be occupied. They need entertainment, attention and a regular, non-stressful routine.

Preventing boredom in parrots

- House in the biggest cage possible
- Let them out of the cage frequently, ideally allowing them free flight
- Provide a variety of toys and rotate them on a daily basis. Make sure any toy offered is parrot safe and doesn't contain any paints, varnishes or metals which may be toxic.
- Move the cage around to change their view of the room
- Provide edible fruit tree branches with differing diameters as perches. This also helps prevent pressure sores on their feet.
- Make sure they aren't alone for long periods
- Insufficient attention from owners or in some cases too much!
- In extremely social species such as the Budgerigar and Cockatiel (either house in pairs or provide with a mirror or plastic replica bird)



Photoperiod

All birds should have a period of light from 8-12 hrs. It is advised to cover the cage for at least 10 hours at night. Some birds may however find it stressful to hear their owners but not see them. Ideally the bird should have a sleeping room which is free from all artificial and natural light inside the room and from outside.

UVB light

UVB is an essential part of sunlight that helps birds convert vitamins into their active forms. Placing the cage next to a window does not work as the glass filters out the beneficial UVB from sunlight. It is important that our pet birds receive UVB from artificial sun lamps. These specially coated fluorescent tube lights and compact bird lamps provide the correct levels of UVA and UVB, which improve your parrot's health, appetite, feather condition and more.

They can be attached to the bird's cage and switched on for 10 hours a day.

Bathing

Allow your parrot to either bathe in shallow water or be sprayed daily.

Especially appreciated by African grey parrots who tend to get very dusty.

Privacy

A dark box should be provided as a 'hide' into which the bird can enter and feel secure.

Foraging and Feeding

In the wild parrots spend a large part of their day foraging for food. It is a good idea to schedule specific feeding times and to stimulate foraging activity.

Parrots love to destroy things and this desire can be utilised by making simple inexpensive foraging toys. Some ideas are hanging ropes with fruit and vegetables tied in and cardboard boxes stuffed with shredded paper and their favourite foods, you can get as creative as you want! Make sure your bird is supervised during destructive play.



Supplementary feeding for your parrot

- Mango
- Papaya
- Apple
- Pear
- Melon
- Pomegranate
- Guava
- Apricot/Peach/Nectarine
- Grapes
- Kiwi fruit
- Cooked Sweet Potatoes
- Carrots
- Pumpkin
- Butternut Squash
- Winter Squash
- Broccoli
- Fresh Kale
- Parsley
- Spinach
- Watercress
- Wild rocket
- Banana

We advise that Harrison's bird food makes up at least 90% of your bird's diet.

Additional food items can be given but these should be varied and each fed in moderation to avoid nutritional imbalances.

Ideally select dark yellow meaty vegetables or dark green leafy greens .