**Parrot – Care Sheet**

**Parrot:** *Psittaciformes*

Famous for being chatty and highly trainable, parrots can make loving, interesting companions for people wanting to own an exotic bird. While building a strong bond with your parrot can be a fulfilling experience, parrots require a lot of attention and stimulation to help them get there.

**Basic Info**

There are almost 375 species of parrots in tropical and subtropical regions throughout the world.

Age: Dependent on species with smaller birds living 10-20 years and larger species 40-60 years or much longer

Weight: 12 oz.-1.3 lbs.

Sexual maturity: around 1 year old for smaller species, around 4-6 years for larger species

**Behavior**

Parrots can provide endless entertainment and companionship. They take to training quickly and can develop a fairly large vocabulary. However, because they are so curious, intelligent, and talkative, it is important that they receive plenty of stimulation. This means they need a lot of interaction, toys, and exercises. Without these things, your parrot could develop behavioral problems. This can include prolonged “screaming” or even feather damaging behaviors. If you need help with a behavioral problem, let us know so we can troubleshoot the different causes and find solutions for you and your bird. We recommend providing various toys that are rotated every few weeks and providing plenty of foraging opportunities, especially for larger birds. In the wild birds spend a lot of time looking for food, so they need something to occupy this time in captivity. This gives them something to do to keep them stimulated and provides exercise. There are various types of foraging toys available for purchase, but you can make toys as well. Some good information on foraging can be found at www.parrotenrichment.com.

**Diet**

While wild parrots feed on a variety of seeds, fruits, vegetables, and nuts, it can be hard to provide your parrot with the nutrients it needs with a home-made diet. Seed diets are high in fat, low in certain vitamins and minerals, and parrots tend to pick out the foods they like. As such, we tend to see nutritional deficiencies, obesity, and various medical problems with an all-seed diet. We recommend using a pellet- or crumble-based diet that is nutritionally balanced. Brands of pellets we recommend are Harrisons, Roudybush, Lafebers, and Zupreem. You can then supplement your bird’s feed with leafy greens, fruits and vegetables, along with small amounts of treats (seeds, nuts, or healthy human food). Avoid foods high in fat, salt, or sugar.

Always remember to provide fresh, clean water. We can help

you better understand your parrot’s nutritional needs and help with

tips on conversion to pellets from seeds if needed.

**Environment & Caging**

Since your bird will need plenty of room to spread and flap its wings, it is important to provide it with the largest possible cage. Make sure the cage has plenty of light, and try to avoid drafty areas. The cage should have plenty of perches of different sizes and textures. Artificial UVB lighting can be provided over one side of the cage from above to simulate sunlight.

Since parrots are so curious, it is important that they stay in their cage when you are out of the room. If they fly around your house without supervision, they could injure themselves, be attacked by another pet, or chew on something dangerous like an electrical cord. Most parrots enjoy being out with their families, and will enjoy being out on a play stand with various perches, toys, and their food and water bowls.

**Veterinary Care**

We recommend a physical examination every 6-12 months, where we can perform a fecal examination and take blood samples if necessary. We can also help you understand how often your bird will need to have its wings and nails clipped or need beak trimming. By seeking preventive care for your parrot, it will make it easier for us to catch problems before they become serious, helping your parrot live a long, happy life!