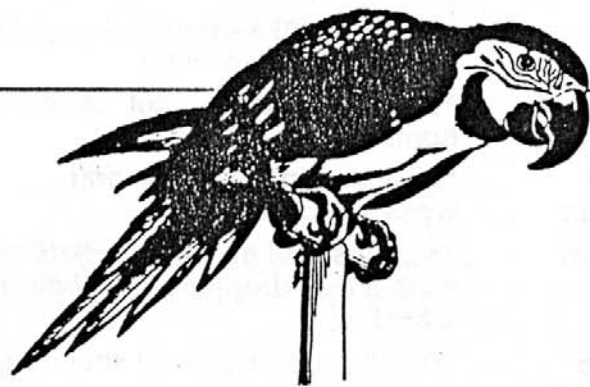


# Picking a pet bird

Match your lifestyle, preferences  
and cost considerations with the right bird



**W**hen selecting a pet bird, choose one that is right for your situation. Impulse-buying of pet birds can lead to problems.

Important considerations include:

- Space requirements,
- Amount of care required,
- Life span,
- Cost,
- Whether or not it was hand fed,
- Noisiness,
- Age and
- Sex.

Most captive bred birds are now hand-fed. This practice results in much tamer and better adjusted pets. Hand-fed youngsters are often 2-5 times more expensive than wild-caught imported birds of the same species. Not all hand-fed birds are equal. Young birds which are simply fed and then left isolated until the next feeding are not as human-friendly as birds which get lavished with extra attention between and at meal times.

Younger birds are easier to tame and train. They may also come with a health agreement or guarantee which the mature bird usually does not. For most common breeds of cage birds (budgies, cockatiels), it is best to get a bird which is 2-3 months old.

In many species there is a marked difference between the temperaments of male and females. Male budgies are usually better talkers and less aggressive than females of this species. If you are interested in a singing canary, you will want to purchase a male. Female cockatiels are thought to be less aggressive than their male counterparts.

## Pre-selection checklist

Your answers to the following questions, together with information your veterinarian can provide, will help you choose the right bird for you.

1. Can you have a bird in your apartment/condominium? (circle) yes no
2. Any allergies to feathers or down? (circle) yes no
3. Where will the bird reside? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much space will you devote to your bird? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Will squawking or screeching bother your family or neighbors? (circle) yes no
6. Will the extra housecleaning associated with a bird be a problem? (circle) yes no
7. How much time can you devote to your bird (time/day)? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who will take care of your bird while you are out of town? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Amount you're willing to spend: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are you looking for a hand-fed bird? (circle) yes no
11. Do you want a male or a female? (circle) male female either
12. Do you want a young bird? (circle) yes no
13. Do you want more than one bird? (circle) yes no
14. Do you want pet, exhibition or breeder quality? \_\_\_\_\_

## Preparation

Are you prepared? Consider:

- Have you read about the requirements and temperament of your anticipated purchase?
- Do you have the appropriate diet for your new bird?
- Do you have an appropriate cage? Is it set-up with food and water, out of drafts and direct sunlight?

# Pet bird selection guide

Type	Space requirement	Noise level	Cost	Time requirement	Life span/Comment
Parakeets (Budgies)	low	low	low	low	7-15 yrs. Hardy, males talk well, are less aggressive
Cockatiels	low	low	medium	low	15-25 yrs. Available, hardy, females are more gentle
Finches	low	low	low to medium	low	7 yrs. Zebra & Society are prolific, Gouldians the "most beautiful cage bird"
Lovebirds	low	low	medium	low	10-15 yrs. Peach-faced readily available, masked may be less aggressive
African Grey Parrots	medium	medium to high	high	medium to high	40-100 yrs. Most popular large parrot, good talker, long lived
Amazons	high to very high	high	very high	high	40-100 yrs. Blue-fronted is popular--not as loud or gnawing
Macaws	very high	high	very high	high to very high	75-100 yrs. Large, not suited for most homes
Canaries	low to medium	low to medium	medium	low to medium	Males sing, many colors and types available
Mynahs	medium	high	high	medium	15-25 yrs. Hill mynah excellent talker, softbill diet/dropping problems, no whistling
Cockatoos	very high	very high	very high	high to very high	30-100 yrs. Noisy, need attention, destructive
Conures	medium	high	high	medium	10-35 yrs. Noise varies with type