



APBC

ASSOCIATION OF PET  
BEHAVIOUR COUNSELLORS

Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors  
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## TOP TEN TIPS

# Parrots and Birds

1

Give your parrot the largest cage you can afford. Your bird's cage should, at a minimum, allow him to stretch his wings in both directions, to climb and to play. A happy parrot is an active tumbling, swinging, hanging upside down one!

2

Horizontal space is as important as vertical space. Give a place to hide near, or at the top of the cage. A cloth covering a corner or a suspended cardboard box provides a safe place. Even better are edible branches and leaves woven through the cage bars on top.

3

Foraging behaviour is important to your bird. He requires a good quality pellet type food, but also fruits, vegetables and treats such as nuts. Parrots adore chilli peppers. For smaller parrots, cut rounds off and string them to make an edible toy.

4

Parrots love to climb and play. They require time outside their cage to remain sufficiently active and healthy. Flying is a natural behaviour and one that your parrot can perform safely in a suitably supervised room. Suitable suspended ropes allow your bird to perform those acrobatics such as open winged twirls, which they cannot perform in their cages.

5

Before you decide to wing trim please consider these points: Wing trimmed birds will feel more vulnerable especially when they are on a low surface or on the ground. Wing trimming only one wing will cause the bird to fly badly and contribute to possible accidents. Wing trimming both wings may cause your bird to feather pluck. Birds who cannot fly, cannot perform their most natural, fundamental, behaviour.

# 6

The rooms where they can be allowed flight must be carefully assessed for dangers. Many household appliances (cookers, boiling pots, heaters), practices (cooking with Teflon coated cookware, burning incense or candles, smoking), plants, furniture (paint and varnish), and rooms (sinks with water/toilets) can provide possible fatal hazards to your bird.

# 7

Parrots love to play with toys. Parrots require different types of toys such as non-printed paper and cardboard to shred, ropes to swing off and chew, ropes/cloth to preen, mirrors to 'kill', foot toys to manipulate and keep feet and toes healthy, and challenging toys to stimulate the mind. Toys should be either chew resistant such as acrylic toys or good quality rubber such as Kongs. Wooden clothes pegs with the metal spring removed make wonderful foot and shredding toys. Chain or metal should be stainless steel. Parrots love dismantling nuts and bolts.

# 8

Your parrot's main resting perch should be just right for the circumference of your parrot's foot – not too wide so the foot is splayed, and not too narrow so that the toes meet and overlap. Ideal perches are made from natural wood and have irregular surfaces. Dowel perches should be removed from the cage and replaced by parrot friendly ones. Perches can be made from jute rope twisted from one side of the cage to the other. Fresh branches make wonderful perches. Perches to be avoided are those with sanded covers or rough cement perches as they can cause injury (and they do not reduce nail growth). Remember the more your parrot exercises his beak and nails with toys and wooden perches, the less trimming he will require.

# 9

Your bird will enjoy being showered with a plant mister aimed in the air over the bird so that the water mists on top of him. Birds like to get thoroughly wet.

# 10

Training will enhance the bond you have with your bird, allow you to control him even if fully flighted and gives you the opportunity to teach him many fun and challenging behaviours. Many books have been written on clicker training parrots. This is indeed the easiest and most successful way of training your parrot.