



# YOUR PET BIRD AND YOU!

## Choosing, Caring For, and Enjoying Your New Pet Bird!

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# Chapter 1 -- Choosing the Right Bird For You

If you are thinking about purchasing a new pet bird, you have already made an excellent decision! This is a special kind of pet that can be a wonderful addition to your life! In order to make owning a pet bird a positive experience for both yourself and your new pet, the next step is to choose the bird that is right for you.

Whether you already have a particular type of bird in mind, or are thinking about all of the possibilities, there are some important points which you should consider before making the final decision. As there are many different kinds of birds available, there are some points which can be helpful in making a good choice.

One point to consider is your lifestyle. In today's busy world, most people do not have the unlimited amount of free time to devote to a pet as people usually had in the past. While a bird is a good choice for a busy lifestyle because it does not require a significant amount of time and attention for its upkeep, it is a good idea to keep in mind that your new pet does need your time and attention.

In addition to his basic care, you can think about factors such as whether you want a bird who will need extra time to exercise outside of his cage, and whether you plan to teach him to talk, sing, or do little tricks. When you know which of these factors apply to the bird you would like to own, it can help you in selecting the right kind of bird.

Another factor to consider is the amount of space you have in your home. If you have a small apartment, for example, it would be better to select one of the smaller types of bird who will do well in a small, compact-sized cage. Birds which require larger cages, or need more space to move about, are usually best-suited to homes where they will have more room.

Although many people do not put much thought into this in advance, the personalities associated with various types of birds is also an important factor. Some kinds of birds are known for their cheery personalities, while others are more calm and docile. When you take this into consideration, you will be much more likely to select the specific type of bird whose personality is the perfect match for your own. You will soon see that living with your new pet bird can be a delightful experience! He will bring you many, many hours of pleasant interacting, enjoyment, and fun!

Owning a pet bird can be a positive experience for your entire family when you choose the bird that is the most appropriate for everyone. Some possibilities for helping you to select a "family-friendly" bird include elderly family members who might prefer a quiet, less active type of bird, or, if you have small children in your home, choosing a bird that is hardy and playful.

The best way to ensure that every member of your family gains the most enjoyment from their new pet is to select a bird which fits well with everyone's needs. Not only will you and your family appreciate your bird even more, your new little pet will be happier and healthier when he is the ideal fit to your family.

Choosing the right bird for you also means knowing the goals you have for owning a bird. If you put a little thought into this in advance, having a new pet bird in your life will be an even more pleasurable experience.

You may be thinking about your pet as a companion, either for yourself or for another member of your family. You may want a bird who can provide hours of beautiful melodies. While older people especially appreciate this, it is something which most people love regardless of age. You may prefer a bird who can talk, interacting with you every day, and thrilling the youngsters in your home. You may also be thinking about how beautiful birds are, and how your new pet will make your home more attractive and lively. As everyone has his or her own goals for pet ownership, knowing in advance what you want and expect will help you to choose the bird that is right for you.

Selecting the right bird is not difficult. All it takes is putting some careful thought into it in advance. Instead of simply going into a pet shop and purchasing the first nice bird you see, a bit of careful planning will ensure that you are investing in a delightful new friend who will be a wonderful experience for your entire family.

## Chapter 2 - What You Should Know About Your Bird

One mistake which many people make when they decide to purchase a new pet is to make a quick purchase without knowing much about the kind of pet they are adding to their home. This can lead to a number of unnecessary problems and unnecessary disappointment. They may find that they do not know how to properly take care of the pet, that it is much more time-consuming than they had expected, or that the pet they believed would be lots of fun was troublesome and annoying. They may even decide that they really do not want the pet at all.

Fortunately, this does not need to happen to you. If you are willing to spend just a little time learning about the pet you have chosen before you purchase it and take it home, you can easily avoid any unnecessary problems and disappointment. Your new pet-- and living with him-- will be a great experience!

Although the details will be addressed in an upcoming chapter, one of the most important things you need to know in advance is the upkeep which your new bird will need. This includes such factors as when, what, and how often he will need to be fed and watered, special products he will need in order to stay in excellent health, and the amount of exercise he will require. If this is to be your first pet bird, knowing all of this in advance can prevent worry and stress, and help your bird to lead a long, healthy life.

The more you know about the specific type of bird you have selected, this also will go a long way toward the happiest life for him and the most enjoyment for you. A good start would be to consult with the owner of your pet shop, or check into resources at your local library. You can learn about the bird's personality style and traits, what he is capable of learning and doing, and any particular needs that he might have.

While you might be tempted to think that all birds are basically the same, this is not necessarily the case. Learning as much as you can about the specific breed you want to buy is not only informative, but will also show you how very special your new pet really is. You will surely appreciate his uniqueness!

When you have all of this information in hand, you will be better equipped to know what to expect from your new pet, how to deal with him effectively, and how to provide the type of care to keep him in the best condition and the brightest mood.. It is likely that you will also find learning all about your particular breed of bird is a fun experience in itself!

It is also a good idea for you to know what kinds of health issues you may need to deal with in your new pet bird, as well as his expected lifespan. Although pet birds are usually quite healthy and resilient, and require very little maintenance to stay in excellent condition, knowing these facts can help you to recognize health problems if they do occur. You will know if he needs to be treated by your veterinarian, or if there is a minor problem which you can easily take care of yourself.

There are two very important benefits to having this information. First, you will be prepared for any sudden emergencies which require immediate attention; and second, owning and caring for your new bird will be free of unnecessary worry.

One way to look at it is that if you were preparing to bring your first child home with you, you would want to learn everything there is to know before taking that important step. You can think

of your new pet bird in a similar fashion. The more you know, the more prepared you will be to fully enjoy every minute of your life with the brand-new addition to your family. When you are better-equipped for his everyday care as well as any unforeseen emergencies, this will in turn give you more time to have fun with him! When it comes down to it, getting the most out of owning your new pet is the whole idea. You can relax, play, and love him!

## Chapter 3 - Care and Feeding Basics

Although every breed of bird comes with its own individual needs, there are some basics which you can apply to your new bird regardless of his particular breed.

First, feeding your new bird does not have to be complicated if you know what is available and adjust it to your own bird's preferences. Similar to any other kind of pet, he may express different tastes, likes, and dislikes. It is not harmful to indulge a picky eater, as long as the food he is given supplies the balanced nutrition he needs for good health.

There are three general types of diets for pet birds. The most basic form of diet is a diet which consists of only seeds. While your new bird can manage quite well on a seed diet, for his optimum health it is a good idea to also give him vitamin supplements. A seed-based diet can be enriched by providing him with a nice variety of healthy fruits and vegetables. Many birds love berries, grapes, and carrots; and they are as healthy for him as he loves to eat them.

Bird feed mixes are an easy way to ensure that your bird has a healthy diet. Each type of mix that you can purchase has been specially made for particular breeds of birds. When you buy a bird feed mix, you will know that he is getting the food that is right for him.

Although it lacks variety, a formulated diet can provide your bird with everything he needs. These diets are specifically tailored to fulfill your bird's nutritional requirements. If you decide to use a formulated diet, it is the easiest way for your bird to get everything his body needs to stay in prime condition.

Selecting the diet that is best for your bird and easiest for you is one of the most important parts of the care and feeding of your bird. However, there are other factors in keeping him healthy and in the best spirits. All birds should have a supply of fresh water available to them at all times. When you accommodate your bird's need for consistent, fresh drinking water, it will aid in his digestion and promote overall good health.

Some breeds of birds also require a consistent supply of grit for proper digestion. The reason for this is some birds do not shell their seeds while they are eating, and consume the shells also. The grit is necessary for helping the shells to disintegrate. While grit can be a healthy addition to most birds' diets, it is essential for those who are in this category.

Your bird's care and feeding basics include much more than his daily diet. The good news is that taking care of your bird is not difficult, and the time you put into it is as much fun for you as it is for him.

Your new bird is no different from any other living being in that he requires proper exercise in order to stay healthy. It will also serve to keep him in good spirits. If he is your very first bird, you may be surprised at the variations and effects exercise can have for him.

Similar to any other kind of pet, you will surely be amazed to see that he has his own individual preferences. One bird may prefer to exercise by flying around the room every day, taking in the sights, and making a show of his wing span, while another may delight in performing little gymnastic-like routines in his own cage.

Some birds love the freedom of being outside their cages, while others do not like it at all. His own unique personality is the key. After you have had him for only a short while, it should be easy for you to see what kind of exercise he likes the most. When you cater to his personal preferences, the result will be a healthier, happier bird.

When you have a new bird in your home, you will be pleased to see that it is not all about work and little play. In fact, playtime can be one of the highlights of owning a bird. It is during playtime that you begin to see him as your delightful little friend and your favorite companion.

If you have never owned a bird before, you might not know what to do or what to expect from playtime. Having a few ideas in hand, and taking the cue from your bird himself, is a great way to start.

One playtime activity which most birds love is the bath. It is suitable for all birds of bird, and they all tend to love it equally well. Depending upon such factors as the size of your bird and the space which you have available in your home, you have a number of options from which you can choose. He can bathe and play in your regular bathtub, in your sink, or in a special indoor bird bath made especially for him. Regardless of the specific method you choose, your bird is sure to choose it as one of his best-loved activities.

Playtime for your new bird should also include some toys. The best way to go about this is to purchase toys solely for his use. Ladders, swings, bells, and balls, are amongst the kinds of toys which are favored by most birds. In addition, when you supply him with toys of his own, you will find it much easier to train him to not grab or chew on objects which he should not be playing with, such as household items and items that belong to you.

Caring for your pet bird includes protecting him from harm and danger. While birds are generally quite strong and resilient, this is still an important factor in keeping him safe and healthy. For example, if you have small children in your home, they must be taught to not annoy or provoke him. Poking him through his cage, making unnecessary loud noises, or taking him out of his cage without an adult's permission and supervision, should be clearly avoided.

If you have other pets in your home, your bird must be protected from them as well. While in some cases cats and dogs can be trained to coexist nicely with a bird, it is unwise to allow any unsupervised interaction, or to have the bird cage in a place that is easily accessible to them.

There are many common household plants which are deadly to birds. In order to ensure the safety of your pet, it is best to not have them near your bird's cage or in a room where you allow him to fly freely.

Basic common sense goes a long way in helping your bird to be safe. For example, making sure all of your windows and doors are closed, and that there are no fans operating in the room, can prevent unnecessary disaster when your pet is let out of his cage. A room that has been checked for its safety features prior to allowing your bird's freedom makes his exercise and play a fun, beneficial experience.

Your new pet bird can be the delight of your life! A little attention to the basics of his everyday care will make owning your new bird an enriching, positive experience.



## **Chapter 4 - Making Your New Pet Bird a Member of Your Family!**

One of the nicest aspects of owning any pet is that in the best of circumstances he soon becomes like a member of your own family. No matter what your family's composition may be, there are some ways to make this transition easier and quicker for both your pet and your family alike. In no time at all, you will all wonder how you ever managed without him!

A great start in making your new pet bird a member of your family is to prepare your entire family for his arrival. Whether you have youngsters or teenagers at home, or elderly family members, letting each person participate in welcoming your new little friend can be an exciting experience for everyone.

Your children and teens will love to learn all about the new addition. You can begin to spark their interest by helping them to learn all of the fascinating facts about birds. Everything from looking through pictures in books and magazines to visiting all of the different kinds of birds at the zoo can peak their interest in this wonderful species.

Depending upon the ages and personalities of your children, you can further their anticipation about your new pet bird by including them in your plans. When they know that their help is valued, they will look forward to your bird even more. Perhaps your child can offer his opinion on the perfect name for your bird, or help you to select special toys for him at the pet shop.

Even the youngest children will be thrilled to participate in caring for your new bird. Whether you assign a simple task to a small child, such as checking every day to be sure the bird has a fresh supply of water, or have an older child who would like hands-on play with your bird, there is a dual-benefit to this. First, your youngster will quickly learn to love your pet even more when he is able to take an active role in his care. Second, you will be teaching him good habits for responsible pet care that will stay with him throughout his life.

Elderly persons are often especially fond of birds. Not only are birds beautiful, melodious, and fun, but they are delightful company. You may be surprised at how quickly Grandma or Grandpa falls in love with your new arrival. There is simply some kind of magic in these lovely little pets that brightens the mood of nearly every elderly person. Even the senior citizen who does not take well to overly-active or noisy pets will surely love your new bird.

Making your new pet bird a member of your family means making your family feel at ease with him, and him feeling at home. No matter what the size of your home may be, both your new pet and your family will benefit if you allot a specific space just for him.

Although it is usually not best to keep a bird in a room by himself, as he thrives on interaction with his owners, it is important to make sure there is plenty of room for his cage and plenty of allowances made for bird seed which will spill underneath his cage. When you keep these points in mind, it will go a long way toward ensuring your bird's comfort, as well as your family being comfortable with him.

Making your bird comfortable in his new surroundings only takes a little basic effort on your part. It is a good idea to check the area where you plan to keep his cage before you bring him home. If the room is free from drafts, cold air, and strong heat, he will not only be much more

comfortable, but also healthier. If it is possible to keep the room at a relatively consistent temperature, this is better for both his health and his mood.

A room which is free from unnecessary noise is a good choice for your new pet bird. Sudden noises can startle him, and may even cause him to become nervous and ill-tempered. As your bird needs restful sleep as much as you do, making sure that the room is reasonably quiet for his sleep time will also lead to good health and a pleasant disposition.

In addition to all of these factors, encouraging everyone in your family to spend time with your bird will increase their love of your new pet and your bird's love for them. While you may not have thought of this in terms of bonding, you will when you see the results. Everyone in your home will grow attached to your bird, and appreciate him as a unique member of your family. Your bird, in turn, will very quickly see that he belongs to you!

## **Chapter 5-- Helpful Tips For Your Bird's Health and Longevity**

There is nothing more disappointing than becoming attached to a new pet only to see his health deteriorate, or to find that he may not live as long as you had initially expected. If you keep some helpful tips in mind, and apply them in a practical, consistent manner, you will have the peace-of-mind of having a healthy bird who will be there to live with you and love you for a long, long time.

The very best way to ensure your new bird's health and longevity is to make a few basic preparations before you purchase your pet. One part of this is to have as much knowledge as possible about your bird. Another is to be ready to put your knowledge into practical application. Even though your bird is a small animal, his care must be taken seriously in order to help him to stay in top-notch condition.

The most important point to keep in mind is that your new little friend is completely dependent upon you, his owner, to meet his needs for both everyday and emergency care, and to make sure he is safe, comfortable, healthy, and happy.

If this sounds like a lot of responsibility, it is! When you have a little pet depending on you, it truly is a big responsibility. However, meeting your bird's needs does not have to be difficult, time-consuming, or worrisome. When you are ready for the responsibility, it will show in how well you care for your new bird. You will see that it is a wonderful experience.

One of the first and most important keys in your bird's health and longevity is to be sure that you purchase a healthy pet. Too many people make the mistake of selecting a bird on the spur of the moment, basing their decision on factors such as how cute he looks or his sweet personality, without giving enough thought and attention to the condition of the bird they buy.

How can you be sure that your bird is in good health? The best way is to address this issue before you make your final decision. First, if you want a healthy bird it is essential for you to purchase one from a reputable dealer. If you have friends or relatives who have purchased and are happy with their own pet, this kind of recommendation is a good cue. However, it is still important for you to check into the dealer's qualifications on your own.

As the more you know, the better chance you will have of finding a healthy bird, some time spent on this aspect of bird-shopping will have much value to you in the long-run.

You can begin by asking the dealer or pet shop owner as many questions as you can think of. If the dealer is willing to patiently address your concerns and answer your questions, this is a positive sign. It shows that he is actually interested in his customers and his birds, and that he is not only concerned about making sales.

Equally important is for him to be knowledgeable about the birds he sells. If he demonstrates a significant amount of knowledge about the birds, this will show you that he knows what is necessary for their care and their upkeep. In addition, the dealer who interacts in a pleasant manner with his birds, showing how much he cares for them and treats them well, is one whose birds are most likely to be in good health and a happy disposition of their own.

When you are visiting the pet shop, checking to see that it is well-maintained is also important. The store should be very clean, and reasonably tidy, yet free of any harmful aromas of disinfectants or cleaning solutions. The reason for this is that while disinfectants can actually be dangerous to the birds in general, they can also be a sign that odors are masked rather than the store being kept clean on a consistent basis.

A well-maintained shop and a dealer who is both knowledgeable about his birds and is pleasant with their company, are two essential factors in deciding that this is the place where you should purchase your new pet. It is also a significant factor in helping you to be confident that the bird you purchase from this dealer is very likely to be in excellent health.

When people decide to buy a bird, one important point which they often overlook is the need to get a clean bill-of-health for their new pet before they take him home. Some simply do not think about this, while others dismiss it as unnecessary. If you want to be sure that the bird you have chosen is in perfect condition, and is most likely to remain healthy for a long time, this is something which you should take into consideration.

It is not difficult, nor time-consuming, or expensive, to have your new pet checked by a qualified veterinarian. You will see that it is well worth the effort. One important reason is to ensure that your bird is healthy before you take him home. Your veterinarian can evaluate him for numerous conditions, such as mites and other problems. If he finds any health issue with your bird, you would then have the option of purchasing a different bird, or having the one you have chosen treated for the problem. Knowing whether any issues exist before he goes home with you is the easiest way to start his new life with you.

The second reason why you should visit your veterinarian is to request his recommendations regarding your new bird's further health care. While he may also have recommendations about the general everyday care of your bird, which can prove to be very useful to you, he can also advise you about how frequently your bird should have routine check-ups, when he will need vaccinations, and what you should do in the event of an emergency.

Although healthy birds do not require much professional attention, having a veterinarian whom you trust and know well, and listening carefully to his advice, is one of the most positive steps you can take in the interest of your new pet's health and longevity. It will also be a great assistance in helping you to feel more confident and prepared for taking care of your new friend.

Your veterinarian can provide you with information that will be quite valuable to you. He can inform you of any potential health risks which may be associated with your particular breed of bird, as well as any common illnesses. When you are aware of these possibilities, you will be much more prepared to deal with them if they do occur. You will know whether your bird needs medical attention, or whether it is something which you can deal with on your own.

As you have already learned in this book, taking good care of your bird is important for both his general well-being and his relationship with you. It is also an essential factor in his health and longevity. The better your bird is cared for, on a consistent and loving basis, the healthier he will be and the longer he will live.

First, providing a safe environment for your bird has numerous benefits. An environment which is free from any potential dangers will go a long way in preventing unnecessary accidents. A safe environment is one where the risk of harm is as minimal as possible. This means that your bird's living area should not contain poisonous plants, the use of any kind of toxic chemicals, devices which give off too much heat or cold air, and that your bird is not left unsupervised with

other pets or small children. When you assess your bird's environment to be sure of its safety, you will not only be improving his living space, you will also be helping him to live longer and healthier.

Second, taking your bird's general everyday care seriously will also help to keep him in the best of health, the happiest mood, and increase his longevity. Although birds are very low-maintenance pets, you cannot afford to approach his care in a haphazard manner. While taking good care of him promotes good health, being consistent about it is equally important. For example, you already know that your bird needs a healthy diet. While giving him the diet he requires for good health is necessary, it is just as necessary to be sure that you feed him the correct amount, making sure that he does not run out of food and fresh water, and do this on a regular basis.

Your pet bird's need for exercise and play is a wonderful factor in his disposition and his relationship with you, but it is also necessary for his health and longevity. He needs to be able to stretch his wings, fly freely, and gain the benefits of clean air outside his cage on a regular basis. When you are consistent in providing him with these opportunities to exercise and play, you will be increasing his overall health and promoting his longevity.

You may not have thought about it this way, but the care and concern you show to your pet is beneficial to his health. Just like any other pet, or even humans, knowing that he is truly loved and cared about is as important for his physical health as it is to his relationship with you.

A bird who is neglected, even if it is only because you are very busy and cannot find enough free time to spend with him, will lose his sense of overall well-being. He will not be as vibrantly healthy, strong, and carefree, as the bird who has learned that you value him and your time with him.

No matter how hectic your everyday life may be, giving time to your bird each day will do wonders to keep him in good health and help him to live longer.

If you think about it, you are putting an emotional investment into your new pet. You will grow to love him very quickly once he has been made a part of your home and family. When you make your new pet a part of your life, you want to do whatever it takes to keep him in the best of health, the happiest of spirits, and provide him with the chance to have a long life.

Fortunately, it is not difficult to do this for your new little friend. All it really takes is being dedicated to taking good care of him, knowing what you can expect, being prepared for a rare emergency, and, above all, thoroughly enjoying every minute of the time you spend with him. When you keep these few points in mind, you will have a pet whom you will treasure for a long, long time.

## Chapter 6-- Enjoying Your New Pet Bird!

Now that you have all of the facts you need in order to take the guesswork out of choosing and caring for your bird, you may be wondering if there is anything else that you should know.

The answer to this is yes!

You have already read this far. This means you have taken a true interest in learning everything about your new pet. You have learned how to select the particular breed of bird which is the best-suited to your home environment, your family, your lifestyle and your personal preferences.

You have acquired a wealth of valuable information about how to take proper care of your bird so that he stays healthy and happy, and is a wonderful part of your life. You have gained peace of mind and confidence about owning a bird, because you have learned what he needs from you. In reading this far, you are probably amazed and relieved to find that caring for your pet bird is not time-consuming, expensive, nor does it require much work.

Now that you have all of the necessary knowledge to make owning a bird worry-free, you may be tempted to think that there could not possibly be anything else you need to know.

This is not surprising, but there is one more point which may not be obvious. If you have put your time in learning all there is to know about your bird, it may not yet have occurred to you that one of the most important points in bird ownership is to have fun!

Although your bird's care and upkeep do not require much effort on your part, the effort you put into your new pet will pay off grandly for both him and for yourself. You have acquired a brand-new little friend, and all of the benefits of this new friendship will soon be clear to you.

Enjoying your new pet bird can take many forms. You may focus on specific aspects of your friendship, or they may overlap, making this the ideal relationship between a bird and his owner.

One aspect of your relationship with your bird is you will soon see that he is not just a bird, but that you have a special new companion. While most people appreciate the companionship of their pets, there is something very special about a bird. Your bird may delight in sitting on your shoulder, dancing for you, or chirping or talking in a way that is real communication. You are sure to find his antics and sounds to be delightful to you, also.

Another aspect of your relationship with your bird is the bonding you will both experience. This natural bonding takes place when you tend to his daily needs, as well as the wonderful times you will both have during his exercise routines and his playtimes. The extra-special bond which forms between a bird and his owner is like something magical. Soon after you bring your new pet home with you, this bonding will let you both know that you truly do belong to each other.

Having a pet bird in your home is an experience in itself. His beauty and natural grace will soon have you in the frame of mind that your home was not complete before he arrived. If this is your pet bird, it will not take long for you to see what a wondrous experience it is to have him in your home. His delightful little sounds will be like a melody to your ears every day, whether he is a song bird or he engages in cute chirping throughout the day.

You might even decide that you don't need to play music at home, because your new bird will provide many hours of listening pleasure from music that is all his own.

If you or other members of your family have had a bird in the past, you will not be surprised at how quickly you become attached to him, and as he becomes attached to you. The relationship between a bird and his owner is something very special indeed. The friendship he develops with each member of your family is a one-of-a-kind relationship which simply has no comparison to anything else.

As you have learned, it does not take much to keep your bird healthy, strong, and vibrant. When you know how little time you will need to put into is basic care and upkeep, you will be very happy to see how much free time this leaves you to enjoy your new pet bird. His playtime, bath time, exercises and more, will give you both plenty of opportunities for quality time together. After you begin to see how much of an enriching experience enjoying your pet bird can be, you will know for sure that bringing your new friend home with you was one of the best decisions you have ever made!

## Chapter 7-- Interesting Bonuses of Owning a Pet Bird

When you provide a comfortable home and a loving owner or family to a new pet bird, you are doing something very wonderful for him. Not only are you ensuring that all of his basic needs will be met, you are also giving him the stability, care, and love that he truly deserves. This means that he can look forward to a longer lifespan, as well as a healthier and happier one.

While you are providing all of these good things to your new pet bird, you probably already know that he is returning the favor by providing for you, also. He is giving you the kind of unconditional love which only a cherished pet can give, along with many hours each day of entertainment and fun. He is giving you a lovely relationship that you will appreciate in the present and remember for the rest of your life.

Although you may already realize all of this, there are interesting bonuses of owning a bird which you may not have considered.

One bonus of owning a bird is the wide range of benefits it will bring to the children in your family. No matter what your children's ages may be, they will all gain a very positive experience from having a pet bird in their home.

First, children are naturally curious. If you think about it, there is no better way to peak their interest in learning and appreciating the wonders of a small animal than by having a bird in their everyday life. Your youngsters can learn everything about pet birds, from their habits and unique personalities to what the bird is capable of doing to the beautiful colors of its feathers. No science class at school or even a book can give your child the experience of learning about birds firsthand from living with one in their own home.

Second, participating in the daily hands-on care of the new bird is one of the most excellent ways to teach your children about responsibility. When a child sees how essential it is to take proper care of the bird, and to help look after the bird's everyday needs, this will help him to understand the meaning of true responsibility in a very positive context.

Third, having a small animal in your home will help your child to understand compassion. While this can occur with virtually any type of pet, a small bird tends to bring out the child's most loving, caring nature. Your bird will help your child to learn to be gentle, caring, and kind.

Fourth, whether you or your child is the "official" owner of the new bird, your youngster will have found a new friend. The special loving bond that develops between the two will be amazing and heartwarming. You may find the child who has always been shy around everyone to be especially enhanced by this new relationship, and the child who often seems too boisterous has become calmer and more focused when he is with his new bird.

Birds are not only for the youngsters in your home. They hold a special place in the hearts of older people as well.

If you have an elderly family member whose health is no longer up to par, or who has been suffering from loneliness or depression, or has simply slowed down considerably due to aging, your new pet bird will be a wonderful addition to his or her life.



You may have heard about pets being helpful to elderly people. In fact, many nursing homes and even some hospitals these days have various pets available to the elderly, either in the residence or on a visiting basis. This is because they have long recognized the health benefits which pets can provide so easily and so naturally.

While spending time with a pet boosts the person's mood and spirits, this interacting and bonding has also been proven to have a positive effect on physical health. For an elderly person whose life is not as full as it used to be, bringing a new pet bird into his or her life can cause a very positive transformation. The little bird may well be seen as a little miracle.

The magical healing effect of a pet bird can also extend to members of your family when they are ill. While a pet cannot literally cure a disease, the presence of a beloved pet can indeed have a positive effect.

For example, if your spouse or one of your children has to stay home with a cold or some other minor illness, or is recovering from an injury, the way your pet bird will boost his mood will actually help strengthen him and aid in his recovery.

There is just something about the presence of a sweet, chirping bird which naturally makes a person feel better. Whether you are ill, or have simply had a long and difficult day at work, all you need to do is spend some quiet time with your new bird and be amazed at the difference it makes.

## **Chapter 8-- Products For Your New Pet Bird**

You would not consider taking a new baby home from the hospital without first making sure that your home is well-equipped with all of the supplies he needs. You would want to be certain that everything he may need is prepared and handy before you take him home.

It is just as important for you to have all of the necessary supplies for your pet bird before you take him out of the pet shop and introduce him to his new home and family. It is much easier and more convenient for you if you are prepared in advance for his arrival.

Similar to taking a new baby home, preparing for your new pet bird's arrival includes having a good supply of everything necessary to meet his nutritional needs, any items which will make his transition to your home more comfortable and easier, supplies for fun, and just-in-case supplies for emergencies.

The best way to go about purchasing products for your new pet bird is to begin with a list. It is a good idea to not be in too much of a hurry to compile the list and immediately go out to buy the items, as you may later decide that you actually wanted something different.

The best way to start is by making a list of the basics, add special products which can enhance your bird's early days in your home even if they are not essential products, and then put a little time into thinking about specific brands or styles whenever this is applicable.

In addition to making sure that you end up with the correct products, this method of making a list can also help you to save money. You will be less inclined to splurge on products which are not necessary when you have your written list in hand. You will then be ready to venture out to the mall or the pet store to buy the products.

Although different breeds of birds have different needs, and the person from whom you purchase your bird should tell you the details before you buy him, there are some basics which every kind of bird needs. You can start with this basic list, add other items that your dealer recommends, and have the checklist handy when you go to the store.

### **Products for your bird's nutrition.**

As you have already read about in an earlier chapter of this book, there are a number of different options from which you can choose your bird's everyday diet. An important point to keep in mind is that even if you would like to offer your bird an occasional treat, it is best to not do this too frequently. Choosing one dietary plan for your bird, and providing it to him regularly, is best for his health.

You can select from mixed seeds, a formulated diet, or seeds alone. If you decide to give him a seeds-only diet, his nutritional needs also include vitamin supplements. The packages are clearly labeled, so you will find it easy to purchase exactly what is right for your bird.

If your bird requires grit in his everyday diet, you should purchase a supply of this, also. There are a number of different types from which you can choose, some of which contain nutritional value of their own.

### **Products for your bird's health and safety.**

As you have learned, it does not take much to keep your bird in top-notch condition. Making good choices of these products will help your new pet to stay healthier, safer, and happier.

When you are selecting a cage for your bird, there are a couple of very important points to keep in mind. While you probably already know that your bird needs a cage which is large enough to accommodate him throughout his everyday activities, there are two other factors which you cannot afford to forget. First, the cage you choose should not contain any lead-based paints. Although some bird cages can be found with cute painted designs, or in bright colors, lead-based paints must be avoided. Your bird's natural habit of chewing on anything within his range could lead to disaster if he were to accidentally consume lead-based paint. A metal cage is much safer for him.

Your bird's cage should not have bars or spaces where his beak or wings could become caught or tangled. The closer together the bars of the cage, the safer it is for your pet.

Your bird will also need dishes or other containers for his food and water. The style which attaches directly to the bars of the cage are usually much more convenient for you to fill and for him to use than the style which is meant to sit on the floor of the cage. Those which attach to the bars are also neater, as they are more resistant to spills.

Most bird owners agree that a nice covering for the bird cage is an asset both for the bird and for themselves. Your pet will find it much easier to sleep when he is not disturbed by light outside his cage. These covers are also helpful because they remind the bird when it is time for him to sleep.

Bird cage covers can be as plain or as fancy as you like. Choosing a bird cage cover that is the right size for the cage makes it more effective. Regardless of the particular style of bird cage cover you prefer, it is important to not choose one that has tassels, pompons, hanging threads, or any similar features which could pose a threat of choking if the bird chews on it.

You might also like to consider a bird bath for your bird. As birds love to flap and play in the water, selecting a bird bath that is large enough to accommodate his desire to play will go a long way in keeping the room and floor neat and dry.

While birds do love their baths, you should not be tempted to purchase scented shampoos or other bath products that are not specially-made for birds. If your bird needs special products, your veterinarian can recommend one designed for his particular needs.

### **Products to keep your bird's cage and area clean.**

Living with a bird can be messy and unsanitary only if you allow it to become so. All it takes to keep your bird's area clean is the same general cleaning you do on a regular basis, and a bit of spot-cleaning for his cage and the area around it. The key to having a sanitary environment which is safe for your bird is to exercise caution in the products you choose.

When you are shopping for products to clean your bird's cage and the surrounding areas in the room, it is essential for you to choose products which are non-toxic. In addition to making sure that your bird does not accidentally swallow any toxic residue which could be left on his cage and in the room, it is also unsafe for him to breathe the aromas of many of these products.

You can choose between cleaning products that are specially-made for use in pet areas, or the non-toxic “green” products currently available in many home-supply stores. These products will do the job as well or even better than products with toxic chemicals, and you will have the peace of mind of knowing they pose no danger to your bird.

The area under and around your bird’s cage can be kept spotlessly clean by basic vacuuming. While some bird owners prefer to have a special “skirt” underneath the cage to catch seeds and other spills, this is solely a matter of personal preference. If you quietly and carefully vacuum underneath his cage each day, both you and your bird will appreciate an immaculately-clean floor.

### **Products for your bird’s playtime.**

There are so many wonderful playtime products available that you may feel like you are on a spree in a toy store. You can give your bird plenty of opportunities for fun without putting a strain on your budget.

When you are thinking about toys for your new pet bird, considering the playtime activities you have in mind for him is a great way to start. If you are thinking of playtime as an activity that you and your new bird can share together, he will surely love a ball that is unbreakable and does not contain lead-based materials.

His playtime can extend to time he spends inside his cage as well. Most birds enjoy perching and playing on ladders, making noise with little bells, and safe toys he can chew. You should select only toys that do not pose a choking hazard to your pet. Avoiding toys that are too small, or have pieces that can come off, or are breakable, will give your bird endless hours of fun while being safe for him to play with even when he is alone in his cage.

When you have purchased these basic products for your new pet bird, his new home will be set up and ready for his arrival. All you will have to do is bring him home and begin enjoying life with your new little friend.

## Chapter 9-- Fun Facts and Trivia About Pet Birds

If you are like most new bird owners, you find everything about this special little being to be quite fascinating. Whether you have owned a bird at some time in the past, or whether this is your very first bird, it probably seems as if you simply cannot get enough of this subject.

In addition to your own newfound interest in birds, children and the other members of your family are likely as entranced with the subject as you are. Sharing some fun facts and trivia about pet birds can enrich everyone's knowledge about birds while making owning your own bird even more fun.

One fun bit of trivia about pet birds is that at least eight American presidents had pet birds while they were in office. Although most of us have heard about various presidents and their dogs and cats, less has been said about presidents and their fondness for birds.

In the olden days, Andrew Jackson, John Tyler, Theodore Roosevelt, James Madison, William McKinley, and Franklin Pierce, all loved the company of their birds when they were presidents of the United States. In a more recent era, John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were the nation's bird-loving presidents.

The pet birds owned by United States presidents ranged from parrots and macaws to canaries, lovebirds, and parakeets. While these birds may not have received as much publicity as presidential dogs and cats, they were surely beloved by their owners and their families.

Enjoying birds as pets dates long before the United States presidents, however. Although the precise period of time in which birds started to become members of human households is not known, it is presumed that choosing birds as pets dates as far back as the time of the ancient Egyptians.

The ancient Greeks also loved pet birds. Parakeets were the pet bird-of-choice during this era.

History books often forget one important note about Christopher Columbus. During his journey to the Americas, he also discovered a breed of Amazon parrots, and took two of these birds with him on his trip back to Spain to give to Queen Isabella.

In past eras, pet birds were only available to royalty and people who were very wealthy. Like many things which we today take for granted as readily available to anyone who desires them, average people could not have pet birds. This shows how lucky we are today when nearly anyone who wants a pet bird can easily purchase and keep one.

While some people prefer to have only one bird, and some people like numerous cages of bird in their homes, there are quite a few different kinds of birds to choose from. Although it is a matter of personal preference, along with the possible factor of space limitations, some breeds of pet bird have long ranked very high in popularity.

It should not come as a surprise that the parakeet holds the rank of number-one in popularity amongst Americans. These birds, which some refer to as Budgies, are reminiscent of carefree childhoods and fun-filled homes. One reason for the parakeet's popularity is its small, compact size. It is suitable for any home, even a space-limited apartment.

Parakeets are available in a number of different colors, which is often to the delight of little children. They are as colorful as they are playful and fun.

The lovely cockatiel is second-ranking as a pet. Many bird owners prefer cockatiels because they can be taught to talk, and often have the ability to mimic. Cockatiels are beautiful, delightful birds whose life expectancy can reach twenty years.

Everyone loves canaries. Bird-lovers, especially, find them to be the ideal pet. Canaries, while generally not being as social as other breeds of bird, are vibrantly-beautiful song birds. Their size, which is tiny in comparison to most breeds of bird, makes the canary the perfect bird for even the smallest apartment.

Most people do not know that lovebirds are a form of parrot. Unlike the more well-known types of parrots, lovebirds tend to be quieter, not nearly as aggressive, and much smaller. Lovebirds are a truly beautiful, good-natured bird, making it an asset to any family's home.

If you are thinking about a super-intelligent bird with a huge vocabulary and an enchanting personality to match, you are thinking about the African Grey parrot. The African Grey has such a high degree of intelligence and the desire for interaction that you may even forget that he is a bird rather than a person. These features account for the African Grey parrot's widespread popularity in America. With a lifespan of up to seventy years, the African Grey parrot is a bird you can have with you for the rest of your life.

From ancient civilizations to royalty to average citizens today, pet birds have been well-loved by all. When you greet your new pet bird in your home, you will quickly begin to know why!

## Chapter 10-- Resources For You!

When it comes to owning a pet bird, knowing all that there is to know may not seem like enough. This does not mean that you are not as well-informed as you should be, or that you have not learned important facts and advice in this book. All it does mean is as the happy owner of a new pet bird, your interest in these fascinating little animals has increased. You want to know more in order to be fully tuned in to your new friend.

You can have resources for gaining more knowledge, or resources to connect you with other bird lovers, or both. If you can spare even an hour or two on an occasional basis, you can increase your knowledge of birds and enjoy the company of others who have the same interest as you.

One ideal resource for the new bird owner is a bird club. While some of these bird clubs are very casual and others are more formal, a bird club will give you an excellent opportunity to interact with other bird owners. Everyone has their favorite subject: their pet birds!

Clubs specially-formed for owners of pet birds can be found in regions throughout the United States. A quick check in your telephone directory or an online directory will help you to find the bird club that is closest to your home. It is likely that you will find one in your area; but if none are currently available where you live, you can start up a bird club of your own and advertise for new members. It is a great way to meet new people who all share the same interest.

You can also find classes related to caring for pet birds at many community colleges and adult classes at local high schools. If your focus is mainly on learning even more about pet birds, taking a class is a wonderful way to start. As most community colleges and adult classes are always open to new ideas for new courses, you can feel free to recommend classes for bird owners if the school does not currently offer them.

The best resource for learning about pet birds is the library. Depending upon the size of the town or city where you live, you may be pleasantly surprised to find that your local library has a well-stocked section of books and magazines all devoted to the subject of domestic birds.

You can also request permission to view bird-oriented books in your local school's or college's library. While some schools and colleges have policies regarding non-students checking out books and periodicals, you can devote free time to reading in the library if the one near you has this policy.

The internet is another excellent resource for learning more about birds. If you put a couple of hours into web searching, you will find everything from trivia to bird care, histories of birds, facts about breeding pet birds, to ideas for bird names, and many, many more topics of interest to the bird owner.

While you are on the internet, you can also find online groups of bird lovers and bird owners. As more and more people are deciding that birds are the ideal pet for their busy lifestyles, bird ownership is becoming more popular than ever. There are two main benefits to taking part in one or more online bird owners' groups. First, you can gain much more practical knowledge about pet birds when you are interacting with other bird owners. In addition, it is a wonderful way to meet new friends from amongst groups who share the same interest as you.

Resources for bird owners would not be complete without including two of the most important people in your bird's life. From the basic everyday care of birds to the unique personality and history of your own pet, the dealer from whom you purchased your bird will have all of the answers. He or she is very likely to appreciate your interest, as well as enjoying every minute of time put into talking about his or her special little friends.

Your veterinarian is another essential resource for learning more about your pet bird. From important information that you need to ensure your pet's health to advice about how to interact with your bird the most effectively, your veterinarian is an expert. He will be glad to impart all of his expertise to you, so that you can get the most out of your lifetime with your new bird.

Now that you know everything you should know about choosing, caring for, and enjoying your brand-new bird, it's time for you to select the one special bird who will be your friend and companion. The love you give to him will be demonstrated back to you in many ways!