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Read This **First**

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About the Author - Harry Cornwell

Harry Cornwell has shared his life with animals and birds from an early age. He said, “My parents were animal lovers. They taught me how to look after them so they were happy and healthy.”

“I especially liked birds and had different kinds over the years, but parrots are my favorites and I’ve focused on them for my first book.”

“I want my book to help other bird owners and also people who may just be thinking about getting a parrot.”

“They make great companions. But, deciding to get a parrot should be considered carefully so you get the right type and can look forward to many happy years together.”

Harry covers the basics of getting the right sort of parrot for your situation and how to look after it.

Then, he shares his ideas and research of the best ways to train your bird and develop a wonderful and lasting relationship with it.

Harry concentrates on simple, easy-to-follow methods which are based mostly on the natural behavior and instincts of the birds.

“There are many ways to teach a parrot to do each trick but I’ve explained what I believe are easiest for the bird and the owner. I want my readers to be able to get good results with their birds in minimum time.”

Some birds will do better at certain tricks than others, so results will vary. But, you and your parrot will both have a great time with Harry’s “Cheep Tricks and Tips!”

Introduction

I want this book to show you ways which you can have a great time with your parrot.

There’s information and suggestions to help with:

- ✓ Selecting a new parrot
- ✓ Getting the right cage and what to avoid
- ✓ Helping it to fit in with your household, including your other pets
- ✓ Teaching it some tricks
- ✓ Making your home safe for the parrot
- ✓ Avoiding damage to your home by the parrot as well!

This book focuses on helping you to have a great relationship with your parrot and ensuring that both of you enjoy every minute together as much as possible.

I’ve tried to include everything that you need to know and arranged it so you can find it when you need it.

I suggest that you read the whole book first, and then keep it handy on your computer. You can also print a personal copy just for your reference.

The “Bird Basics” section covers caring for your parrot. Please read it even if you are an experienced parrot owner. Some of my suggestions might be new to you or help you with questions which crop up in the future.

It’s important to create a strong bond between you and your parrot. We will show many ways to do that by adding more enjoyment and interaction.

Some methods I explain may be different to how you already know to teach your parrot. Don’t change what you are doing if you are fully satisfied with the results you get already.

Your bird needs to be dealt with in a consistent way. If you keep changing things, it might get your bird confused and your relationship would suffer.

I also explain why some methods which are popular among some experts may not always give you the results you expect and hope for.

I don't promise instant results or that everything will be equally effective for every person and their parrot.

But, this book will help you to understand your parrot better and get more enjoyment from every day you share with it.

Harry Cornwell

Choosing the Right Bird

Because your relationship with your new parrot could last a lifetime, it's worth putting in some time on the selection of the bird you will get.

I recommend that you get a small parrot first unless you have experience with handling large birds and keeping them healthy.

If you are fixed on getting a large parrot, for whatever reason, at least contact someone that owns one or more and arrange to spend some time with them so you have a good idea of the responsibilities you will take on before you get the bird.

Any parrot will need to have some quality time with you every day. You will also need to be available to take it to your Vet and to pay the ongoing expenses of keeping the parrot happy and in good health.

Parrots can be expensive to maintain. They often need blood tests before the vet can be sure of the cause of some symptoms which would often be much easier to diagnose in dogs or cats.

You may also have to ensure that your neighbors are okay with you getting a parrot. Most parrots will screech at some time during the day.

Many breeds do it every morning and evening and it's not something you can avoid happening in most instances.

Despite all of these considerations, the parrot owners I know consider their investment in having a pet parrot one of the best decisions they ever made.

I hope that you will learn enough from my book so that your experience is just as fulfilling as theirs and mine.

Choosing a Vet

The most important person in your bird’s life is you, closely followed by the veterinarian who you pay to look after it.

I suggest that you take some time to look at the options in your area for veterinary care before you actually get your bird. Yes, it is that important to the success of your bird’s welfare. It will also show you the costs and other considerations you need to think about before buying your bird.

I suggest that you contact people you know who have parrots for advice about which vets you should consider.

Some Vets specialize in particular types of creatures. You need to find one that is up to date with the latest problems and treatments for parrots – an avian specialist or one with considerable experience that also looks after other types of animals.

If you don’t know anyone with a parrot, check your local directory or at your library for information about clubs for bird owners in your area. Even if they aren’t parrot people, they will have some idea of the options you can consider.

Visit the best two or three possibilities. Allow some time for this. You want to see how the staff treat clients and also casual inquirers like yourself. The most important thing is the way they treat the animals.

But, you also need to check about the level of their charges, whether they will let you open an account if you become a regular client and any other factors you consider important.

Check about what services are available outside regular hours and what extra costs might be involved in using them. If the after hours service is done by another vet, ask about their experience with birds and parrots like yours.

Do they do house-calls? If not, how convenient is it for you to take your pet to them?

What is the standard of their facilities for keeping pets at the vet’s office?

Is there just one vet with bird experience?

All these questions need to be answered so that you have some peace of mind when you trust them with the care of your new parrot.

Housing Hints

When you have decided what type of parrot you will get and confirmed that a suitable bird is available, you can start preparing for its arrival in your home.

Location, location!

Find a position for your bird’s new home which does not interfere with movement of people through the room, but is also somewhere that the bird will be able to be seen and to see what is going on.

We need to protect our bird from drafts. Check when any doors to the room where you locate their cage are open and also when they are shut.

Also, check that the bird and its cage will not become too warm due to being too close to a window on very sunny days. If you can still set the cage close enough to a window that the bird can see through it, that will provide entertainment for it on those occasions when you are busy with other things.

But, you must ensure that there is something on the closed window so that the bird does not try to fly through it when it is out of the cage.

Hygiene

Always wash your hands thoroughly in a mild soap before and after interacting with the bird and, especially, after cleaning the cage.

Cages



The most important decision you make is deciding on the cage you get for your new parrot.

It's where your new pet will spend the major part of its life.

Your decisions about the construction and fittings will have a major effect on your

parrot's well-being and may even influence how long it lives.

If you get the chance to buy a second-hand cage, you could save some money but think first about risks from disease carried by previous occupants or unsafe materials used to make, clean or decorate the cage.

Cages made from stainless steel wire or powder-coated wire are probably the safest available. They are likely to be a bit more expensive than other cages but you have less risk of poisoning of your bird from zinc or other materials with them.

Caged birds do not fly upward. If you want to extend the space the bird can use, get a longer or wider cage rather than a taller one. A friend removed a end panel from two identical cages and joined them together, making sure there were no gaps or anything where the bird could catch it leg or claws. This gave her bird an longer area inside the cage and it sometimes takes a short flight along the extended length.

Toys, etc.

Every parrot loves to play and every parrot owner I know loves to buy new toys for their pet! But, a parrot will not bond more closely with you if you buy it more toys or more expensive ones. The bond depends on the level of interaction and the care which you provide for your pet.

I suggest that three store bought toys is plenty for any bird. If you see something else you want to get for your bird, remember that the toys are designed to appeal as much or more to the owner because they are the buyers. Your bird could be just as happy with an empty cotton reel as they might be with a \$15 plastic gewgaw!

Every parrot should have a mirror. They will chatter away to the bird they see there when you are not around, and even when you are.

I read that someone found putting a few pieces of a new type of food they were introducing to the parrot on a flat mirror always got the bird interested in trying it more quickly than if they just put it in their regular food container.

Always check any items which you hang in your bird's cage for risks. Are there holes or loops of metal which your bird might catch a claw or even a whole leg in?

Bells can be a problem if your bird is able to pry the clapper of the bell out. That's why I only use enclosed bells which the bird's beak cannot get inside.

Check the condition of all the toys frequently and discard any which are damaged or soiled with droppings, unless you can clean them thoroughly and safely.

Cleaning the Cage

Change the paper on the cage floor daily. Use plain newsprint instead of newspapers so that there is no ink which could get onto your bird and poison it.

Don't put cardboard shipping boxes where your bird can get at them. The inks used to print on them may be toxic or at least cause serious internal upset for your bird.

Wear gloves when cleaning the cage and discard them after one use.

Do not use any cleaning materials which are not made specifically for bird cages.

Never use any cleaning materials, especially aerosol and fly sprays without first removing your bird and all its equipment from the room. You may be

okay to use heavy covers over the cage but some residue will probably soak into the covers and may contact the bird later on.

When perches collect droppings and you cannot remove every trace of them safely, get new perches.

Perches

Branches from trees which are safe for your birds can be the best possible choice as perches. They are better than dowels or plastic perches which are smooth and mostly the same thickness and texture.

Make sure that the perches don't have small crevices which your bird could catch a claw in the length of the perch or in the way it attaches to the cage or stand.

Pieces which vary in thickness will help the birds to exercise their legs and keep their feet flexible.

The perches must be too thick for the bird's feet to more than two-thirds of the distance around them. If the claws meet or overlap when it is on the perch, it will not be able to get a strong grip and could fall or damage its legs.

You need to check about what the branches have been treated with in the past before putting them where your bird can use them.

What sprays and other chemicals have been used on or around them? Keep in mind that your trees will get drift from nearby properties and any sprays applied to the edges of the roads alongside your home as well.

Some chemicals will be absorbed into the wood and sap of a tree. The level of the active substances stored in the branches can increase when the trees are re-sprayed each season. You can't tell how much of any chemical is inside the timber, so it's best to discard any which may have had any dangerous sprays at all used on them.

I got some branches from a neighbor's cherry tree last year. She is very cautious with sprays and they had only been sprayed with White Oil the previous season. The two birds loved pecking at the bark. Some of the branches were forked and the smallest bird would settle in a fork and sleep on any sunny afternoons.

Rope for Perches?

Some parrots will like a piece of rope in their cage as an alternative to another wooden perch. The feel is different and the bird can get a bit acrobatic. But, there is a serious risk that the bird could catch a claw and be injured. Also, the bird will, over time, start to peck threads loose from the rope and it could swallow some and choke or have intestinal problems.

Plastic perches are a bad choice because they don't let the bird get a firm grip and can cause stress to the bird's feet.

The Best Room – Your Living Room

The bird should be located in a room where people are either present or passing through most of the day. Your bird needs as much social contact with members of your family as possible. If it is left alone for periods, it will become harder to train and more likely to develop one or more behavioral problems over time.

The kitchen is full of dangers.

Do not put your bird’s cage in your kitchen. It would be subjected to changes in temperature when food is being cooked.

It is bad for people, too. The bird’s droppings could end up on food if it was out of its cage at any time.

Cleaning products are high risk to the bird.

Fumes from non-stick cookware are a very serious problem. Dupont (manufacturer of Teflon®) have this warning on their site:

“Bird owners should be aware that there are potential dangers in the kitchen. Cooking fumes, smoke and odors that have little or no effect on people can seriously sicken and even kill some pet birds, often quite quickly. Also cooking fumes from any type of unattended or overheated cookware, not just nonstick, can damage a bird's lungs with alarming speed.”

If you put the bird and its cage outside on a sunny day, **make sure that someone is with the bird and cage at all times.**

Wild birds or stray animals can very quickly attack and injure or kill cage birds, sometimes even when a human is present.

make sure that the cage has sufficient shade and check the water supply frequently. Small birds like budgerigars cannot survive lack of water or food very long.

Ensure that your bird is covered up and not disturbed each night. Most parrots need about ten hours minimum sleep every night. Interruptions and nights with less sleeping time can have serious effects on your bird’s comfort and, over time, on its health.

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