



Lovebird



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Lovebird

The name “Lovebird” applies to the fact that whenever a group of birds are housed together they tend to huddle closely together on their perches. This strong physical connection with one another was anthropomorphized (attributing human characteristics to an animal) the birds must be “in love”.

Origin

Nine species of lovebirds occur through the African continent. They include the Peach Face, Masked, Fischer, Madagascar, Nyasa, Black Cheeked, Red Faced, Abyssinian and Black Collared. They range in size from a small 4 inches to 7 inches in length and have an average lifespan of 8 to 10 years. The Red Faced, Madagascar and Abyssinian Lovebirds can be visually sexed and the others cannot. Many of these birds are available in several different colour mutations.

General Personality

One of the characteristics that make these lovebirds so appealing is their small size. Lovebirds are also loaded with personality and energy. They are content riding on a shoulder, cuddled up in the palm of your hand or peeking out the top of a shirt pocket. They love to busy themselves by shredding cage bottom papers and playing with their toys. Contrary to popular belief they should not be purchased in pairs if you want your bird to be tame and friendly to you. Two lovebirds will bond to each other instead of to their human. A single handfed lovebird makes an ideal little pet.

Food

Quality parrot food in the form of crumbles is available at pet stores, and should be offered daily along with clean water, fruits, vegetables and occasionally a mix of seeds. Sunflower seeds are high in fat and should be offered only as a treat. Lovebirds also enjoy human food such as cooked rice, toast, cereals and cooked pasta. Grit or gravel is not necessary for most caged birds.

Housing

Lovebirds should be housed in spacious cages with a bar spacing that won't let their heads fit through. Natural branches that vary in thickness make good perches inside the cage. These branches relieve stress on the foot that can occur from standing on the same size of perch all the time. Toys are an important part of this lively bird's life as they provide entertainment while inside their cage. Make sure you give your bird a variety of safe toys suited for its size. Clean droppings from the cage bottom and perches daily.

Health Care

Wing trimming is essential for your bird's safety. The loss of a pet bird flying out an open door is devastating. Nail trimming is also necessary for proper grip on perches and a comfortable grip on arms and fingers. Most lovebirds love to bathe whether it is in a dish of warm water, spritzed with a pump sprayer, under a dripping faucet or in the shower with its owner. Lovebirds should have a bath or a shower at least weekly.

THE PARROT CLUB OF MANITOBA meets the 3rd Friday of each month at 7:30 pm at St. Alban's Anglican Church, basement level, 486 Rathgar (off Osborne). Check community announcements or contact the club in case of changes. Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have lovebirds as pets and would be able to tell you how these birds are in the home environment.

Winnipeg veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine are:

Dr. Heather McDonald of Centennial Animal Hospital
Dr. Nancy McQuade of Winrose Animal Hospital
Dr. Carolyn Eickhorn of Winrose Animal Hospital
Dr. Birte Klug of Winrose Animal Hospital
Dr. Andrew Davidson of Corydon Animal Hospital
Dr. C. Skavinsky of Anderson Animal Hospital
Dr. Lisa Sawka of Charleswood Veterinary Clinic