

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Your Wild Child: Introducing the Parrot</i>	5
Chapter 1: Meet the Parrots	7
Chapter 2: Expectations of a Companion Parrot	15
Chapter 3: Choosing the Right Companion	27
Chapter 4: Purchasing and Adopting a Parrot	53
<i>Part II: Bringing Home Your New Parrot</i>	67
Chapter 5: A House to Call Home: Choosing Proper Housing	69
Chapter 6: Let's Go Shopping! Avian Supplies and Accessories	77
Chapter 7: Bringing Home Birdy: Introductions and Parrot-Proofing Your Home	89
<i>Part III: Caring for Your Parrot</i>	103
Chapter 8: Eating Like a Bird: Proper Parrot Nutrition	105
Chapter 9: Pretty Bird! Grooming Your Companion	129
Chapter 10: In Sickness and in Health	147
<i>Part IV: Parrot Behavior Made Simple</i>	177
Chapter 11: Understanding Your Wild Child's Instincts	179
Chapter 12: Normal Companion Parrot Behaviors	191
Chapter 13: Multiple Parrot Households	213
Chapter 14: When Good Birds Go Bad	223
<i>Part V: Taming, Training, and Beyond</i>	247
Chapter 15: Bird Brains: Parrot Intelligence	249
Chapter 16: Taming and Training Your Parrot	259
Chapter 17: Breeding Parrots	277
Chapter 18: In the Ring: Showing Your Parrot	299
<i>Part VI: The Part of Tens</i>	311
Chapter 19: Ten Things All Parrots Should Know	313
Chapter 20: Ten Ways to Entertain Your Parrot	319
Chapter 21: Ten + Travel Tips	325
<i>Index</i>	335

Table of Contents

.....

***Introduction* 1**

About This Book	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	2
Icons Used in This Book	2
How This Book Is Organized	3
Part I: Your Wild Child: Introducing the Parrot	3
Part II: Bringing Home Your New Parrot	3
Part III: Caring for Your Parrot	4
Part IV: Parrot Behavior Made Simple	4
Part V: Taming, Training, and Beyond	4
Part VI: The Part of Tens	4
Where to Go from Here	4

***Part 1: Your Wild Child: Introducing the Parrot* 5**

Chapter 1: Meet the Parrots 7

An Introduction to Parrots	7
From pet to companion	8
A little bit of wilderness	8
Home Tweet Home	10
Making birdy comfortable	10
Parrot paraphernalia	10
Parrot Care 101	10
Health care	11
Nutrition	11
Parrot Behavior	11
Normal behaviors	11
The parrot monster	12
Parrot Pals	12
Making friends with your parrot	12
And baby makes three	12
A Caveat to the Wise	13

Chapter 2: Expectations of a Companion Parrot 15

Defining a Companion Parrot	15
Just Being Themselves	17
The Joys of Parrot Guardianship	19
Considerations before Buying	19
Who's gettin' the parrot?	19
Why a parrot?	20

The parrot's personality	20
The parrot's home	21
Going on vacation	21
Parrot lifespan	21
Allergies	22
Costs of parrot ownership	22
Responsibilities of parrot guardianship	23
Time matters	23
Mess and more mess	24
Noise (Sorry, I can't hear over my screaming parrot)	24
What a Companion Parrot Expects	25
Tolerance	25
Empathy	25
Sense of humor	25
Attentiveness	25
Decisiveness and action	26
Constant companionship	26
A loyal friend	26

Chapter 3: Choosing the Right Companion 27

Considerations for Choosing a Species	27
Parrots are individuals	27
The chemistry between you	28
Not all species are created equal	28
Noise: deafening or extremely deafening	28
Space: bigger is better	29
Lifestyles of the neat and messy	29
From easily affordable to taking out a loan	30
Talking ability	30
Child-friendliness	30
One, two, or more	31
Species Profiles	32
African grey parrots	32
Amazon parrots	33
Brotogeris	34
Budgies (parakeets)	34
Caiques	35
Cockatiels	35
Cockatoos	36
Conures	39
Eclectus	41
Hanging parrots	41
Hawkheads	42
Lories	42
Lovebirds	43
Macaws	44
Other keets	47
Parrotlets	49
Pionus	49

Poicephalus parrots50
 Quaker parakeets51
 Vasa parrots51

Chapter 4: Purchasing and Adopting a Parrot53

Your Parrot Options53
 Handfed versus parent-raised54
 Choosing an age54
 About tameness56
 Secondhand parrots and adoptions58
 The talker in the bunch58

Finding the Perfect Parrot59
 Pet shops59
 All-bird shops60
 Newspaper classifieds60
 Reputable breeders61
 Flea markets62
 Bird shows or expos62
 Gift parrots62

Looking for a Healthy Parrot63
 Bright eyes63
 Clear nose and nares63
 Beak63
 Shiny feathers64
 Feet64
 Vent64
 Attitude and stance64

Getting a Guarantee65
 What to Ask Before You Buy65

Part II: Bringing Home Your New Parrot67

Chapter 5: A House to Call Home: Choosing Proper Housing69

Matching the Housing to the Species69
 The “Right” Cage70
 Shape70
 Sturdiness and material71
 Cage bottom72
 Door types72
 Cage dangers73
 Building your own cage73

Cage Placement for Comfortable Living73
 The Bedtime Cage74
 Cleaning the Cage74
 The Aviary75
 The flight cage75
 The habitat75

Chapter 6: Let's Go Shopping! Avian Supplies and Accessories77

Perches	77
Wooden perches	78
Concrete and cement perches	78
Rope perches	78
Plastic perches	79
Coop Cups	79
Toys	80
Safety	81
Wooden toys	81
Preening toys	82
Acrylic toys	82
Puzzle toys	82
Swings and ladders	83
Setting Up the Cage	83
Playgyms and Stands	84
Litter and Cage Bedding	85
Bird Lighting	85
Nighttime Cage Covers	85
Preventing Mess	86
Mess accessories	87
Air filters	87
Cleaning solutions and supplies	87
Cleaning the cage	88

Chapter 7: Bringing Home Birdy: Introductions and Parrot-Proofing Your Home89

The First Night	89
Naming Your Bird	90
Thriving on Routine	90
Parrot as Member of the Family	91
Be unafraid; be very unafraid	91
Introducing people	92
Introducing pets	93
Introducing other birds	95
Quarantine	95
Parrots and Children	96
Houseguests	99
Parrot Proofing Your Home	100

Part III: Caring for Your Parrot103**Chapter 8: Eating Like a Bird: Proper Parrot Nutrition105**

First Things First: Water	105
A Parrot's Dietary Requirements	107
The digestive system	108
Eating in the wild	109

Nutrition-Related Disorders	110
Vitamin A deficiency	110
Calcium deficiency	111
Seeds versus Pellets: The Big Debate	111
The Cooked Base Diet	113
Purchasing and Storing	114
Vegetables	115
Fruit	116
Pesticides	117
High-pesticide fruits and vegetables	117
Low-pesticide fruits and vegetables	118
Snacks	119
Table Foods	120
Toxic Foods	121
Nutritional Supplements	121
Getting a Parrot to Eat	123
Easy Recipes	123
Parrot muffins and bread	124
Parrot mac and cheese	124
Parrot eggs	124
Parrot juice	125
Parrot flapjacks	125
Parrot grain	125
What I Feed My Birds	126

Chapter 9: Pretty Bird! Grooming Your Companion 129

Feathers	129
Wing Clipping	132
To clip or not to clip	132
Flight's effect on parrot behavior	133
Options in between	134
Tips for clipped and unclipped parrots	134
Proper Clipping Technique	135
Holding the parrot properly	135
Clipping the flight feathers	136
Special considerations	138
Toenail Clipping	138
Grooming the Beak	139
Beak breaks	140
The misaligned beak	140
Bathing Your Parrot	141
Caring for Molting Parrots	143
Blood Feathers	145

Chapter 10: In Sickness and in Health 147

Anatomy of a Parrot	147
Indications of Illness	153
Choosing an Avian Veterinarian	154
Common Health Disorders	157

Nutritional disorders	157
Parasites	158
Bacterial infections	159
Viral infections	159
Fungal infections	160
Foot disorders	160
Feather disorders	161
Reproductive disorders	161
Common Dangers to Companion Parrots	162
Predators and animal bites	162
Standing water	163
Nonstick cookware	164
Common household products	165
Poisonous houseplants	166
Ceiling fans	166
Toxic foods	166
Electrocution	167
Feet and doors	167
Lead and other heavy metals	167
Mirrors and clean glass	168
Night thrashing	168
Temperature changes	168
Frostbite	169
Overheating	169
Oil on feathers	169
Broken blood feathers and bleeding nails	170
Physical injuries and seizures	170
Flying away	170
Unsafe toys	172
Humans	172
Emergency Tips	173
Medicating Your Parrot	173
Creating a Hospital Cage	174
Creating a Parrot First-Aid Kit	174

***Part IV: Parrot Behavior Made Simple* 177**

Chapter 11: Understanding Your Wild Child's Instincts 179

Daily Life of Parrots in the Wild	179
The Plight of Wild-Caught Parrots	182
The Shyne Foundation	183
Differences between wild caught and captive bred	184
Conservation organizations	185
Understanding Your Parrot's Instincts	186
Prey versus predator	186
Finding a high spot	187
Flocking	187

Sleeping	188
Vocalizing	189
Mess	189
Camouflage	189
Eye contact	190
Chapter 12: Normal Companion Parrot Behaviors	191
Flying	192
Climbing	192
Ground Foraging	193
Chewing	193
Freezing	194
Vocalization	195
Contact calling	195
Screaming	195
Hissing	196
Growling	196
Begging	196
Beak Clicking versus Clucking	197
Preening	197
Yawning	198
Beak Grinding	198
Regurgitation	198
Beak Wiping	199
Tail Behaviors	199
Breeding Behavior	200
Eating Habits	201
Bathing	202
Sleeping	202
Scratching	202
Sneezing	202
Nipping	203
Body Language	203
When Your Parrot Is Training You	208
Training method 1: Noise	209
Training method 2: Display	210
Training method 3: Biting	211
Training method 4: Plucking	212
Chapter 13: Multiple Parrot Households	213
More Than One	214
The pros	214
The cons	214
Parrots Interacting	215
Parrot pals	215
Parrot enemies	217
Romeo and . . . Romeo	217
One-sided love	218

Keeping the peace	218
Falling in love	219
Introducing a New Parrot	219
Factors in Getting Along	220
Changing Your Relationship	221
Chapter 14: When Good Birds Go Bad	223
The First Steps	223
Dominance	224
Height dominance	225
Aggression	226
One-Person Parrots	226
Preventing possessiveness	227
Reversing one person-ness	229
Screaming	230
Bad Words and Sounds	232
Biting	232
Fears and Phobias	235
Hormonal Issues	236
Feather Plucking	237
What's Bugging Your Bird?	240
Maturity	240
Other birds	240
Environmental changes	241
Cage placement	242
Temperature	242
Noise	242
Sleep	242
How Your Actions Can Help or Hurt	243
Hiring a Behavior Consultant	244
The Last Resort: Rescue and Adoption	245
 <i>Part V: Taming, Training, and Beyond</i>	<i>247</i>
Chapter 15: Bird Brains: Parrot Intelligence	249
Smarty Pants . . . er, Feathers	249
What Parrots Really Understand	250
Alex the Amazing Grey	251
Making Your Bird Understand	252
Teaching Your Parrot to Converse	253
Why Parrots Talk	254
Hey, shut up!	256
If your bird won't talk	257

Chapter 16: Taming and Training Your Parrot	259
Beginning Early	259
Socialization	260
Bonding	263
Praising	266
Simple Training Strategies	267
Teaching Step-Up	268
Stick training	269
The whittle-down method	270
Taming a Bronco Parrot	270
Disciplining a Parrot	271
Simple Tricks Everyone Can Teach	272
Potty Training	274
Teaching Your Parrot to Talk	274
Chapter 17: Breeding Parrots	277
Before You Begin	278
Expectations	279
Time and expense	279
Risks	280
Homes for the babies	282
Paired Parrots	282
Breeding Equipment	283
Nutritional Requirements for Parents	284
The Breeding Process: A Timeline	285
Incubation	288
Hatching	288
Making your own brooder	288
Leg Bands	289
Handfeeding Baby Parrots	290
Equipment	290
Formula	290
Weaning Baby Parrots	295
Very Basic Parrot Genetics	297
Chapter 18: In the Ring: Showing Your Parrot	299
Words of Warning	300
Parrot Clubs and Societies	301
How a Bird Show Works	301
The Show Standard	302
Show Equipment	306
Conditioning Your Bird for a Show	307
Show Training	308
Helping Out at the Show	309

Part VI: The Part of Tens*311*Chapter 19: Ten Things All Parrots Should Know313**

Step-Up	313
Stick Training	314
The Carrier	314
Windows and Mirrors	314
Name and Phone Number	315
Cage as Safety Zone	315
Eyedropper or Syringe	316
Trust	316
Eating Well	316
The Word “No!”	317

Chapter 20: Ten Ways to Entertain Your Parrot319

Food	320
You as Entertainment	320
Parrot Toys	321
Music and Television	322
The Great Outdoors	322
Flying	323
Dancing	323
Singing	324
Parrot Pets	324
Trick Training	324

Chapter 21: Ten + Travel Tips325

Your Parrot’s Suitcase	325
The Carrying Cage	326
Making the Cage Safe for Travel	328
Air Travel	328
Road Travel	329
Water, Water Everywhere, but Not a Drop to Drink	330
Hospitable Hotels	330
Feeding Travel Tips	331
Finding an Avian Veterinarian on the Road	331
Hiring a Parrot Sitter	332
Vacation Care Sheet for My Bird	332

***Index*335**