

Parakeet



Melopsittacus undulatus

Named the budgerigar by the aboriginals of its native Australia, the parakeet (or budgie) was brought back to England in 1940 by John Gould and has since spread to countries around the world, becoming a very popular pet. Growing to 6 or 7 inches and living 10 – 15 years, parakeets are relatively easy to care for and may even learn to imitate sounds like whistles and some words.

Housing

Size

Parakeets are flock birds and many aspects of their life in the wild center around flock activities, so it is recommended that you get at least two birds, and be prepared for eggs if you keep a mixed gendered group. You can keep a lone parakeet as long as you provide sufficient daily interaction. For a single parakeet, the minimum cage size we recommend is 18" x 18" x 18". For a pair the cage should measure no smaller than 30" x 30" x 30". The more birds you have, the larger your cage will have to be; the bigger the better.

Bedding

There are a variety of choices including crushed corn cob, gravel paper, and recycled newspaper. Any of these choices will be acceptable to use in the bottom of your parakeet's cage. Some options, like corn cob, may be easier to spot clean thus making them last a little longer so you get more for your money.

Decor

Parakeets are active, inquisitive, playful birds that need items in their cage to provide interaction and entertainment. Parakeets are fond of chewing and shredding things, so some safe and edible toy options are excellent additions. A toy capable of making some noise, like a bell, would entertain your parakeet too. Perches are as important a cage aspect as toys. Parakeets interact with their world using their feet, so it's important to provide appropriate perches to keep their feet in good shape. You should have a few perches throughout the cage that are thick enough to allow your parakeet's feet to wrap around about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the perch. Concrete perches can help keep your parakeets nails filed down naturally, without clipping.



Some products to look for

- JW Cuttlebone Holder
- Sunseed Berry Good Mineral Treat
- ZuPreem FruitBlend Pellet Food
- JW Quad Pod Bird Toy
- Kaytee Orange Blossom Honey Treat
- Higgins Vita Seed Parakeet Seed
- JW Insight Sand Perch
- Living World Bird Bath
- Penn Plax Wooden Bird Swing



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Water

Water can be offered to your parakeet in either a bowl or a water bottle specifically designed for use by birds. Whatever your choice, be sure your parakeet gets fresh water frequently, preferably daily. Your parakeet will also require regular baths. This can be accomplished by providing a shallow dish with water so the bird can bathe itself. Another option is spraying or misting your bird. You never want to spray your bird directly, but rather spray above the bird and let the water fall onto your parakeet from above. Room temperature water should be used, not hot or cold. Finally, you can literally shower with your parakeet with specially designed shower perches. NEVER use soap or any substance other than clean water on your bird.

Diet

Seeds & Pellets

There are a variety of foods available that range from strictly seed to strictly pellets and everything in between. Seed provides variety and pellets provide consistency. Your bird may pick through a seed diet and choose to only eat its favorite parts, possibly missing nutritionally important parts of the food. Pellet diets can be more nutritionally balanced, but do not provide the variety that seed diets do. Also, if you're using colored pellets, your parakeet may only decide to eat its favorite color, wasting a portion of the food.

Fresh Food

Fresh food should be made available to your parakeet regularly to help round out a balanced diet. Fruits (apples, bananas, oranges, etc.), vegetables (spinach, broccoli, tomatoes, etc.), and protein sources (plain yogurt, hard-boiled egg whites, unseasoned chicken, etc.) will provide welcome variety and nutrition for your parakeet.

Treats

Treats come in a variety of shapes, types, and flavors. Treat bars are a convenient way to provide a lasting treat that will attach to the side of your cage. Seed treats will require a food bowl to keep it separate from your regular food. Dehydrated fruit and veggie treats can help balance your parakeet's diet when you can't make it to the supermarket to pick up fresh food. Your cage should include a mineral block and a cuttlebone for your parakeet to use as needed for supplemental nutrition and beak conditioning.



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