



Parrot Trust Scotland

Charity No. SC041254

Parrot Health and Welfare Guidelines

2021/02

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DIET/NUTRITION

1. Parrots should be fed a complete diet, comprised of fresh fruits and vegetables along with a high-quality seed mix, pelleted or other complete diet. Wash all raw fruit and vegetables before feeding.
2. Diet - foods are split into low, medium and high energy foods. A parrot's diet should be more of the low energy foods, as high energy foods can cause multiple health and behavioural issues; obesity, metabolic bone disorder, lipomas; chronic health problems e.g. liver/kidney/egg laying issues, as well as negative frustrations such as feather plucking and self-mutilation.

Low energy foods:

spinach
celery
cauliflower
cabbage
rocket
pak choy
broccoli
peppers (red especially)
cucumber
sprouts

Medium energy foods

sweet potato
squash
carrot

High energy foods:

seeds
beans
corn
peas
all fruits
human foods (pasta, rice etc.)

3. Aim to give more low energy foods and less high energy foods. More of the diet should be vegetables than fruit (so 2/3rd veg to 1/3rd fruit). Exceptions to this are lorikeets which are nectarivores (nectar), and eclectus parrots which are predominantly frugivores (fruit).

4. Seeds can be sprouted and given in small amounts (20-25% of diet). Care must be taken to do this properly (soaking and rinsing) as aspergillosis can occur as a result of mould.
5. If a seed mix is being fed alongside fresh food, vitamin supplementation must be provided (i.e. Daily Essentials, Avimix or similar). Calcium and vitamin D3 should also be provided in water at least twice weekly (i.e. Calcivet or ZolcalD), or under the advice of the avian vet, depending on the bird's requirements at that time. Vitamins and minerals are essential especially calcium, vitamin D and A to prevent metabolic bone disorders, seizures and hypovitaminosis A. African Grey parrots are more susceptible to low calcium levels (hypocalcaemia) so they should be provided with calcium in the water more frequently.
6. Variation and foraging for food is important. Foraging for food can take up 50-70% of a bird's day in the wild.
7. Clean, fresh water daily/twice daily should be given.
8. Weighing birds weekly at the same time is recommended to ensure good monitoring to prevent obesity and to highlight any sudden weight loss.
9. Do not put wet food with dry food as there could be cross contamination and wet food spoils dry food.
10. Apples should be cored as the pips contain cyanide. Never give any fruit with the stones/pips in them.
11. Plain pasta (preferably wholemeal) can be given once a week with mixed vegetables. Couscous, rice, quinoa, sweet potato, sweetcorn and red peppers can also be given, but must be unsalted.
12. Potatoes (never fried) can be given once a week. Also ensure green potatoes are never given as these are highly toxic.
13. Porridge (made with water, not milk – parrots are lactose intolerant) with banana, blueberries and some crushed nuts is another good, healthy meal choice.
14. A small piece of toast with crunchy organic peanut butter can be given as a treat.

15. Nuts: walnuts, pistachios, almonds, macadamias, cashews and pecans can be used as occasional treats too. These must all be unsalted. Monkey nuts in their shell must not be given due to the risk of aspergillosis.
16. Pineapple or papaya fruit chunks and coconut pieces can also be used as an occasional treat.
17. A little diluted Ribena once in a blue moon can be given via a syringe to train a parrot in the event you may need to give it medication.
18. These pages on Facebook are a good resource for parrot diets:
 - a. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheParrotsPantry/>
 - b. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AVIANRAW/>

AVOID THESE FOODS AT ALL COSTS

- **Chocolate**
- **Alcohol**
- **Avocado**
- **Rhubarb**
- **Onions**
- **Garlic**
- **Mushrooms**
- **Salted foods**
- **Caffeine (tea/coffee/cola)**

Please also be aware of dried fruit as it can contain sulphites which are poisonous to parrots

CHOP RECIPE

Ingredients

- Brown rice - dry
- Pasta - dry
- Giant couscous - dry
- Bulgar wheat - dry
- Green lentils - dry
- Couscous - dry
- Porridge oats if needed - dry
- Spinach - green leafy veg
- Kale - green leafy veg
- Cavolo nero - green leafy veg
- Broccoli - green leafy veg
- Red peppers (to add colour to all that green veg) - fresh veg
- Mixed chillies -fresh veg
- Scotch bonnet peppers (if available) - fresh veg
- Curly parsley (potted)
- Basil (potted)
- Coriander
- Mint
- Fresh mangetout or sugar snap peas (roughly chopped)
- Unpeeled carrots (grated)
- Sweetcorn (frozen)
- Peas (frozen)
- Okra (frozen)
- Sweet potato chunks (frozen)
- Butternut squash chunks (frozen)
- Ginger

- Rough powdered chilli
- Chia seeds

Method

1. Bring a pan of water to the boil and add all the dry ingredients (except the porridge oats). Switch off the cooker and put a lid on the pan, leave for 30 minutes until all the water is absorbed. Leave to cool.
2. Finely chop all green leafy veg in a food processor and put to the side.
3. Roughly chop fresh veg in a food processor including all the seeds and put to one side.
4. Finely chop the herbs in a food processor and put to one side.
5. Prepare the other veg (carrots and mangetout) and put to one side.
6. When the cooked carbs have cooled, combine all other ingredients together with the carbs in a huge bowl. Getting stuck in with your hands is the best way to mix everything thoroughly. You don't need to thaw out the frozen veg. If the mix is very wet then add the dry porridge oats and mix thoroughly. Add as much as you need to dry out the mixture. Bag it up into daily portions and freeze.

GENERAL WELFARE

19. Daily cleaning of the cages/aviaries, along with disinfection with F10SC disinfectant weekly, should be performed. Newspapers can be used to line the bottom of cages (not coloured press/magazines due to potential toxicity from the dye). Water/unperfumed Baby wipes can be used to clean the cage grill and bars. F10SC can be used on all your household surfaces.
20. Check the faeces – they should have a white component and a brown/green part. Check the internet for pictures of normal/abnormal.
21. Food waste should be removed daily to discourage any vermin. Appropriate equipment (steam mops, power washers, scrubbing brushes) should be used as necessary, with no detergents or disinfectants other than F10. The bird should not be in close proximity of the steam mop due to the risk of steam burns or the power hose as it could rip the feathers and flesh off the bird.

22. Food and water bowls should be cleaned and disinfected daily. Please ensure that the F10 solution is **F10SC READY TO USE DISINFECTANT (and NOT FTSCXD)**.
23. Feather condition is important. Most birds like baths and/or showers. Your bird may like a spray (use tepid water) or a shallow bath with tepid water. This should ideally be carried out 1-3 times per week. Baths/showers helps to keep their plumage in good condition. Bathing softens the dirt on their feathers and encourages the bird to preen afterwards. When showering/bathing always make sure that you never use any soaps or shampoos in the water. Never spray directly in the face - always spray from above down as a fine spray. Find out more information here: <https://theparrotuniversity.com/bathing-and-showering-pet-parrots>
24. **Bird crop.** The bird crop is a muscular pouch that is an extension of their oesophagus which is used to store excess food prior to digestion. The crop is generally hidden underneath a bird's feathers. The crop simply stores food to digest it later. The crop can look distended after a large meal - this is perfectly normal, so do not worry. For more information about bird crops, please see this article: <https://www.thespruce.com/meaning-of-crop-385210>
25. Let your bird out of its cage as much as possible. The recommended time is four or more hours per day, but it is appreciated that this may be impractical at times.

TRAINING

Teaching / training should not last more than 10-15 minutes each day. Always reward your parrot after this.

It is important that you train your bird to come to you, and to step up and down from you - either from your hand or a perch.

26. First, get your bird used to taking treats from your hand (their favourites if you know what they are). This type of treat should then only be given during training sessions and at no other point

27. Next, holding a treat in one hand, encourage the bird to come closer to your other hand which is held in front of the bird at a higher level to their perch. Start by rewarding the bird when it comes near your hand
28. When the bird then steps onto your hand, use your chosen command e.g. “step-up”. Be consistent and make sure that you and everyone else uses the same command from now on
29. When the bird steps up, praise them and give them a small reward
30. When you want to have them step down, place whatever you want them to step onto e.g. their perch, in front of them. Using the same technique as step up, place the perch in front of them and have it higher than your hand. Give the command “step down” (again, keep this consistent). Once completed, again, reward.

More information on training can be found here:

<https://birdtricksstore.com/blogs/birdtricks-blog/parrot-training>

ENVIRONMENT

31. **Cage positioning** is important for your parrot. Ideally, it should have a cage in its own separate room as **parrots require 12 hours sleep** each night in a quiet, dark room away from human contact, TV etc. Covering the cage at night may help in case of night fright, but please note that some parrots do not like this. Reinforce good behaviour with a treat at bedtime. Have the light on then put it off about ten minutes after the parrot has settled.
32. The cage should not be angled directly at a window as direct sunlight can cause parrots to overheat and die. You will recognise these symptoms by your parrot panting and lifting its wings away from its chest. If this occurs you must remove your parrot immediately from the sunlight, give it a drink of water, and mist spray it with tepid water.
33. Correct perches play a vital part in your parrot’s health with regards to their feet and nails. It also helps to exercise their feet whilst trimming their nails and eliminating foot pressure points. There are a mixture of different types that can be used, many of which can be found here:
<https://www.northernparrots.com/pet-bird-and-parrot-perches-dept252/>

34. We do not recommend the use of dowel perches for your birds. They need a variety of perches of different sizes and materials that will help stretch out and exercise their feet properly, dowel perches cannot provide this for them. Willow is a great natural wood material to use for perches.
35. **An avian-specific UV lamp is recommended** for the overall health benefits of parrots kept indoors e.g.:
<https://www.northernparrots.com/parrot-and-bird-lights-dept168/>
- This is required for a minimum of 60 minutes per day for proper calcium metabolism, and natural sunlight is also beneficial if possible. UVB activates vitamin D, this in turn helps the absorption of calcium. Lack of calcium can cause fits/seizures and even death, particularly in African greys. The bulbs should be changed regularly as per the manufacturer's instruction, and lights should always be positioned above the cage (NOT level with it) to prevent eye damage.
36. If your parrots are outside, then there needs to be good shelter from both cold and warm weather. The appropriate wire should be strong, non-galvanised and both parrot and predator proof. Swing feeders should be used as you may not be the person all the time responsible for feeding the parrots.
37. **Heating** needs to be considered in winter for both indoor and outside aviaries. Non-oil filled radiators can be used safely in parrot rooms and ceramic heaters can be used for outside aviaries. **Fan heaters can be dangerous as they easily overheat, plus the ceramic element has a non-stick coating which is toxic to birds. Fan heaters can also smoke badly if dust settles.**
38. **The area you keep your parrot in should be clean, dry and free from mould.** Moulds produce spores which can affect the bird's delicate respiratory system. An air purifier can be used (ensure no Teflon), especially if birds with a lot of feather dander e.g. cockatoos are housed near other birds. This can also cause aspergillosis which is a slow growing fungal infection that damages the tissues in their body. More information on aspergillosis can be found here:
<https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/aspergillosis-in-birds>
39. **Do not cook with olive oil or use equipment with PTFEs/Teflon (e.g. most non-stick pans) as both are toxic.** Be aware that Teflon is in hair dryers, straightening irons, ironing board covers and self-cleaning ovens.
40. **Do not use any air fresheners (including plug-ins), candles, furniture polish, perfumes, aerosols, nail polish, shoe polish, wood floor**

cleaners, Febreze etc. as all can be highly toxic. This includes the use of car air fresheners (e.g. magic trees) whilst transporting your bird.

41. **Insecticides and pesticides must not be used.**
42. **Air purifiers.** These can help remove excess dust in the air whilst also removing any aspergillus mould helping prevent aspergillosis. There are many offerings available from manufacturers such as Blueair, Honeywell and Heaven fresh. However, be aware of “ionizing” purifiers, as these are not recommended for a parrot’s respiratory system. Purifiers which have internal ionization process (such as all Blueair units), or simply pure HEPA filters such as Honeywell units are ideal.
43. **Smoking kills.** It is not acceptable to smoke around a parrot due to their delicate and complex respiratory system. This includes e-cigarettes and vaporisers. Transference and absorption of nicotine through skin contact and breathing is also a hazard due to the effects of passive smoking.
44. Homes should be fitted with carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.
45. Clean the floor regularly with a steam mop. Most steam mops have an attachment with a nozzle fitting, and you can use this to clean the cage weekly too. Bear in mind that whatever the birds stand or walk on, their feet then go in their mouth when eating and preening!
46. **Beware of open windows.** Always ensure your parrot is safely locked in its cage. If your parrot flies, please make sure all windows are shut. For large picture windows, it is recommended blinds or decals are used to prevent birds from flying into them.
47. **Be aware of boiling pots, hot run baths, open fires/smoke and steam from kettles.**
48. **Put the toilet lid down after use. If birds fly and slip into the toilet they can drown.**
49. **Keep doors shut.** Birds can fly up to perch on doors which can then bang shut with the wind, trapping and injuring the bird’s feet. Get used to closing doors where possible, and always be aware of where your bird is perching.
50. Keep surfaces clean and free from food. Never leave chocolate, avocados, or any medications lying out.
51. Surfaces can be cleaned with lemon or vinegar and water rather than any potentially toxic cleaners/disinfectants. Ovens should be cleaned with

bicarbonate of soda rather than chemical cleaners. Self-cleaning ovens are toxic and therefore deadly to parrots when put into self-cleaning mode.

52. Use **F10SC READY TO USE DISINFECTANT** to clean toys.
53. **Be aware of toxic flowers and plants.** Poinsettia, lilies and daffodils are extremely toxic.
54. Music and TV can provide additional stimulus.
55. **Always check your bird before you leave your property to ensure that it is safe in its cage and well.**
56. When introducing a parrot to your home, give your bird time and space to settle with you. On the whole parrots do not like change so the bird needs time and space. Let the bird get used to you. Keep your parrot in the cage for the first few days, then open the cage and let the bird come out if it wants. Their cage is their security so your bird may be happy to stay there initially. On average, it can take three weeks to settle into new surroundings, another three weeks to become used to routine and a further three months to develop bonds.

TOYS AND ENRICHMENT

57. Parrots are highly intelligent animals that require a lot of stimulation, so it is essential that you provide them with plenty of toys which are safe for them to use. For most parrots their normal way of playing is to chew toys to bits, so it is very important that you get the right toys - some of the cheaper plastic toys can be shredded in minutes and can potentially cause damage to your bird if ingested. You will soon become aware of what your bird likes best - shredding toys or chewable wood, for example.
58. **In the wild, it has been observed that parrots can spend up to 70% of their day foraging. With this in mind, parrot behaviour consultants are suggesting that this task is necessary for the mental health and wellbeing of our feathered friends.** Foraging activities can help to alleviate boredom in pet birds and this in turn may prevent the occurrence of undesirable behaviours such as furniture destruction and feather plucking.
59. When introducing foraging to your parrot, it is important to note that they will usually only work for things they value (such as treats) which are not

constantly readily accessible to them. For example, a bird is less likely to partake in a foraging activity for their favourite treat if there is already a bowl in their cage containing said treat. Remember to take the introduction to foraging slowly by gradually increasing the difficulty of foraging toys only when your bird has grasped the current level of difficulty. It is also important to realise that some parrots can be neophobic (scared of new things) and so the introduction of any new items or toys should be done carefully.

60. Always make sure when buying toys for your bird that you buy from a reputable company (or even make your own - much cheaper and you can adapt them to suit your bird's preferences). There are numerous YouTube ideas for good parrot safe toys. There's also a Facebook group dedicated to parrot toys, perches etc.

Here are some of our suggested links:

1. https://www.naturalbirdco.co.uk/ourshop/cat_523264-Toys.html
2. <https://www.northernparrots.com/parrot-toys-dept195/>
3. <https://www.scarlettsparrotessentials.co.uk/bird-parrot-toys>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Xe8v0pH17Q>
5. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheParrotsWorkshop/>

ESSENTIAL TOY SAFETY

- Ensure any toys provided are not zinc coated as this is toxic if ingested.
- Beware of other items which can contain toxic metals, e.g. jewellery, wires, old paint, keys.
- Beware of cheap metal rings/clips (especially keyring-style or sprung) which can be prised apart and can potentially get stuck or pierce beaks.
- Toilet/kitchen rolls are not suitable as toys due to potentially toxic glues and bacterial contamination.
- Natural wood and tree branches can make excellent natural toys, but ensure that these are sourced from bird-safe trees which are non-toxic, clean and unsprayed.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

61. **If you have other animals**, you should always supervise. Cats and dogs are predators; birds are prey animals. Too many tragic accidents and deaths happen between pets of predator and prey species who “seem to get along”. Also, dog and cat saliva is toxic to birds and cats’ scratches can cause toxoplasmosis and death.

Birds are inherently afraid of snakes; always keep them separated.

Fish tanks are also a drowning hazard for your bird. Make sure to keep them far away from your tanks at all times and to always make sure the tank lid is secure and won’t remove easily for your bird.

62. **Travelling with your bird.** Your bird should always travel in a small cage or carrier. You must never take your parrot in a car without securing it in this way. A cat carrier works well in transporting birds. Make sure to always place the bird in the back of the car, never the front. The best way to secure the carrier in the car is to have the front of the carrier facing forwards to the seat in front, thread the seatbelt through the handle and plug it in, then thread a towel through the handle. Push the towel underneath the seatbelt so that the bird cannot get hold of and bite the seatbelt. Ensure the back of the carrier is covered; the front can be slightly covered, but make sure the bird can still see out a little. When removing from the car always double check that all parts of the carrier are still secure and that any doors on the carrier are definitely locked. Hold the carrier with the front towards your chest and have one hand placed underneath to support the carrier. **Never travel with your bird loose in the vehicle, and never leave them unattended in a vehicle.** You can find more information on this here:

<https://www.petcoach.co/article/tips-for-safe-traveling-with-your-bird/>

63. Do not encourage rough play or biting as one day the parrot will severely bite you and not understand why it is being reprimanded. Biting is a very natural behaviour for birds, and it must be remembered that birds who bite are not “bad” - in fact, a lot of the time they are trying to communicate something to you. This is where you need to understand your bird’s body language so that you can see when something is going to happen and try and find out the cause of the biting. Birds should never be punished for

biting as they will not understand why they are being punished. Here is a very detailed article explaining more about being able to understand biting behaviours and how we can prevent them:

<https://www.petcoach.co/article/bird-biting-why-they-do-it-and-how-to-correct-it/>

Additionally, here is a link to a useful article on being able to understand your parrot's body language - <https://www.northernparrots.com/parrot-body-language-blog89/>

64. If your bird starts to regurgitate/"feed" you, immediately stop giving your bird attention. This will prevent over bonding and future hormonal issues.
65. When adopting a bird, the name must not be changed. This is its identity. Updates can be given to previous owners following discussion and agreement between all parties. This will be done by photos/videos. No visits from previous owners happen due to the upset that it can cause to the parrot.
66. **Falling asleep is dangerous with the bird on you.** Too many incidents like this have resulted in the suffocation and death of parrots.
67. If possible, wear old clothes and no jewellery as your parrot will chew holes and try to pinch facial jewellery in particular. The same goes with anything of value lying around (iPads, phones, laptops etc.). Cover settees and chairs too - these are all toys to parrots. You have been warned!
68. **Please do not take your parrot outside unless harness or fully recall trained.** Again, they become prey for predators. It is not unheard of for birds of prey to swoop down and take parrots from people's shoulders. If you are putting your parrot in an outside aviary, please ensure that the wire is the correct strength, that branches are away from the sides and that there is adequate cover. Birds of prey cause great stress to parrots.
69. **If your parrot escapes:** First of all, if you see which direction it went, follow it. Make sure you take a cage/carrier, food treats and a mobile phone. Please see advice on our website for full information on how to deal with this – there is a pamphlet available to download. One of the most important things is to teach your parrot to fly/come to you; make this a priority when a parrot comes into your care.
<http://parrot-trust-scotland.org.uk/escapes.php>

70. **In the event you need to get out of your home quickly** due to a fire/emergency situation, quickly secure your parrot in a pillowcase if you have no time to get a small cage or cat carrier. It is always best to keep a small fold up cage or carrier near your parrot's cage for emergency use, along with a thick towel for quick, stress-free capturing.
71. **Holiday time.** Always consider who will look after your parrot at holiday times. Please let the charity director know if you are going on holiday and who is caring for the parrot. Telephone numbers of the parrot sitter and director should be exchanged. The parrot should not come into contact with other birds who haven't been disease tested – this makes pet shops inappropriate.
72. **Metal toxicity.** Heavy metals can be found throughout our homes and toxicity is a fairly common, life-threatening ailment in our companion birds. A bird not diagnosed and treated will certainly die. Fortunately, the vast majority of birds can be saved with proper treatment. More information on common signs and the metals that are toxic to your birds can be found here:
<https://birdtricksstore.com/blogs/birdtricks-blog/heavy-metal-toxicity-in-parrots>
73. Make sure to keep a small bag of cornflour nearby, which can be used in the event of an injury which has caused bleeding. The cornflour can be used to help stem the bleeding whilst getting the parrot to your local avian vet.
74. Popular suppliers who specialise in parrot products:
Northern Parrots: <http://www.northernparrots.com>
The Natural Bird Product Company: <https://www.naturalbirdco.co.uk>
Scarlett's Parrot Essentials: <https://www.scarlettparrotessentials.co.uk/>
75. **Insurance.** Whether you own one or more, your parrots are an important part of your life. Insurance can be an important way of being prepared for any situation - should your bird become ill suddenly, vet bills can often quickly escalate. Exotic Direct Pet Insurance are a company commonly used for parrot insurance, but there are several others and you should do your research thoroughly to find an option which is suitable for you and your parrot's needs.

76. Any known details the charity has on your bird will be passed on to you. This includes the parrot's name, age, sex, species, microchip/ring numbers, date and reason for signing over to the charity, and any previous veterinary health records.
77. It is important to know if your bird has suffered from any previous illness so that you can monitor the bird. The charity will advise you of this if known. If possible, it is advisable to monitor your bird's weight weekly by use of perch scales.
78. Birds coming into contact with each other should be tested and confirmed as negative for *Chlamydophila psittaci* (Psittacosis), *Psittacine circovirus* (Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease Virus a.k.a. PBFD) and Avian Bornavirus (associated with Proventricular Dilatation Disease). If this is not carried out then the risk is severe illness, disease spread and possible death of your bird.

Your bird must not come into contact with any new additional untested birds and/or other visitors bringing their untested birds into the same air space due to the risk of disease spread.

79. Please monitor your bird's beak and nails as they may occasionally need trimmed by a vet. **Under no circumstances should you attempt this yourself as a bird can quickly bleed to death.**
80. **Never clip your bird's wings. Wing clipping can cause psychological distress, encourages feather plucking due to irritation and can result in injuries from falls. Flying provides good stimulation and exercise for your bird.**
81. **Feather destructive behaviours.** There can be many different reasons for why your parrot may have started to pluck at its feathers, this behaviour can be a sign of veterinary or environmental problems. You will usually see damage to the breast and neck first as these are easy to reach areas for them. More information on the causes of feather plucking can be found here:
<https://theparrotsocietyuk.org/site/index.php/parrot-information/veterinary-advice/feathers/feather-plucking-in-parrots/>

82. **Blood feathers.** A blood feather grows from follicles in the skin. The feathers have an artery and a vein that extend up and into the feather through the follicle to nourish the feathers. These are new feathers that are starting to grow through, and since they are growing, they will require a large blood supply and if broken at this stage they will bleed. Read this article with information of what to do if a blood feather breaks:
<https://www.petcoach.co/article/broken-blood-feathers-first-aid-and-removal-what-to-do-when/>

83. **Egg binding.** Egg binding is where the egg struggles to pass through the female's reproductive system at a normal rate. It is more common in smaller birds such as: parakeets, budgies, cockatiels, lovebirds, canaries and finches. This article provides more information on egg binding: <https://www.petcoach.co/article/egg-binding-and-dystocia-in-birds-risks-signs-treatment-and/>

AVIAN DISEASES

Psittacosis: also known as parrot fever

This disease can be fatal and can also be passed onto humans. Psittacosis can be caused by improper conditions for your birds, including not cleaning food and water bowls daily and providing fresh food and water daily whilst also not having proper ventilation. Find out more on Psittacosis here:

<https://www.thesprucepets.com/parrot-fever-psittacosis-symptoms-treatment-4148338>

Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (PBFD)

This disease can be caused by inhalation of infected feather dust or dried faeces or ingestion of infected faeces. The virus can survive in feather dust, faeces or nest materials from months to years. There is currently no cure for PBFD. find out more on the disease here:

<https://theparrotsocietyuk.org/site/index.php/parrot-information/veterinary-advice/feathers/psittacine-beak-feather-disease/>

Aspergillosis

Aspergillosis is caused by an infection by the aspergillus fungus. The fungus is found in the air everywhere but is only harmful when in large quantities in an enclosed environment. It can be caused when birds enclosures are not regularly and fully cleaned. If caught soon enough the disease can be treated. Find out more information on aspergillosis here:

<http://www.netvet.co.uk/birds/aspergillosis.htm>

If you see any signs for any of the above diseases, contact your avian vet right away.

GENERAL SIGNS OF ILLNESS

As owners of your parrots you bear the responsibility of their health and must be aware of the various diseases that can affect your bird and how you can prevent these diseases. The most common signs (which may be subtle – get to know your bird's normal behaviours well!) that can show when your bird is unwell can include any of the following:

- unusual droppings (abnormal colour/consistency)
- ruffled feathers
- sleeping more than usual
- cloudy eyes
- reduced appetite
- drinking significantly more or less than usual
- open-mouthed breathing, or abnormal sounds (e.g. clicking, wheezing) while breathing
- changes in vocalisation
- weight loss
- discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth
- injury, bleeding, enlargement or swelling of the body
- vomiting or regurgitation

Birds have very delicate systems, so early diagnosis could save your bird's life. If you notice any of the above signs consult your avian vet immediately.

IF ILLNESS OR INJURY ARE SUSPECTED

84. Should you suspect your bird to be ill or injured, you should first make an assessment as to whether you feel it is an immediate emergency or not. If you feel the bird's life is in immediate danger, the bird should be calmly and quietly captured using a large towel, and transferred to a secure, warm carrier. If your bird is in an outside aviary, it should be brought indoors into a warm, clean room with no other parrots in it (in case

infectious disease is suspected). You should then phone the designated veterinary practice.

85. Once veterinary advice has been sought and a brief description of the bird's condition has been given, the veterinary surgeon can triage and arrange to see the bird as appropriate.
86. Please notify one of the charity directors of this concern with your adopted bird at the first most opportune moment.

VETERINARY CONTACT DETAILS

The charity uses and recommends the following veterinary surgeons & practices:

1. Lawrie Veterinary Group, **Cumbernauld. 01236 727876**
Kenilworth Court, North Carbrain, Cumbernauld G67 1BP
2. Lawrie Veterinary Group, **Falkirk. 01324 624361**
Unit 2, Williamson Street, Falkirk FK1 1PR
- Lawrie Veterinary Group out of hours: 01324 623188**
3. Dr Samuel Kerr, Apex Vets, **Denny. 01234 829989**
Winchester Avenue, Denny FK6 6QE
(Includes out of hours and emergency cover)
4. The Royal (Dick) Vet Rabbit & Exotic Practice,
Edinburgh. 0131 6507650
University of Edinburgh Easter Bush Campus, Midlothian EH25 9RG
5. Dr Madonna Livingstone, Ark Vets, **Coatbridge. 01236 432448**
479-481 Main Street, Coatbridge, ML5 3RD
6. Ashgrove Veterinary Centre, **Aberdeen. 01224 486444**
10 Belmont Road, Aberdeen AB25 3SR

Aberdeen out of hours emergencies: Vets Now. 01224 379091

Please ensure you have your vet's contact information stored on your phone. We also recommend having this information on a piece of paper near your bird's cage in case of any phone issues.

FIRST AID KIT

We recommend keeping a parrot first aid kit near your bird's cage in case of any minor injuries. You should write your vet's contact information (for both regular and out of hours services) on a piece of paper and tape this to the lid of your first aid box.

Basic items recommended for a parrot first aid kit are:

- Cornflour (to stop bleeding)
- Cotton wool (pads/balls and buds)
- Micropore tape (paper surgical tape to hold gauze in place)
- PVP iodine antiseptic wipes (to sterilise wounds)
- Scissors (to cut tape/bandages)
- Sterile gauze pads and bandage
- Sterile water (for flushing wounds or eyes)
- Tweezers or small forceps (to remove splinters)
- Latex gloves (personal protection)
- Hand wipe (personal clean up)
- Bird emergency card (record info/vet phone number)

You may wish to keep a plaster or two in the kit for your own use – a stressed parrot is more likely to bite.

A towel or blanket to wrap your parrot in and a small torch/headlight can also be handy to keep nearby.

PARROT DEATH

75. If you find your parrot deceased, the body should be removed from the cage or aviary, and the place where the body lay should be scrubbed with F10SC at a 1:250 dilution with warm water.

76. If you have any other birds in your home or aviary, they should be visually assessed for signs of illness.

77. Following removal, the body should be wrapped in a towel and sealed in 2 plastic bags, before temporary storage in a secure, cold location (not a freezer)
78. Deceased birds should not be stored in any fridge which contains food.
79. Please contact the charity and notify a director of the death and circumstances.
80. Following conversation with a charity director, the deceased parrot may require to be taken to the designated veterinary practice for post-mortem investigation and further testing. The body will then be disposed of by routine cremation, with feathers/rings/footprints retained should this be desired.
81. No new birds should be added to any aviaries or homes until a full post-mortem has been undertaken and shown no potentially infectious cause.

GENERAL BIOSECURITY INFORMATION

Parrots are prone to an array of diseases which can be communicated between themselves, as well as notable zoonosis such as *Chlamydophila psittaci* (Psittacosis) which can be transmitted to and from humans. There are no vaccines available to protect parrots from these diseases, and as such strict biosecurity measures must be in place to limit risk of disease spread.

HOW DISEASE IS SPREAD

Feather dust particles, faeces and faecal particles, and water particles from the respiratory system can all potentially act as methods of disease transmission, depending on the infectious cause. In turn, these can contaminate clothing, skin, and objects known as “fomites” (contaminated objects such as toys, food and water bowls, perches, towels, brushes etc.). Whilst some diseases require direct contact, others may be airborne.

SOURCES OF INFECTION

Humans: human visitors have the ability to carry disease into and out of a home or aviary. This can be on their hands, clothes, shoes etc. as carriers, or directly from their own bodies in instances of zoonotic disease like *Chlamydophila* infection.

Other parrots: other birds both within and out with the home or aviary can again directly or indirectly spread disease through bodily secretions and fomites.

Wildlife: wild bird populations can act as reservoirs of diseases like Chlamydophila, Trichomonas, and Avian Flu. Wild mammals can act as reservoirs of other diseases like Yersinia.

Food: food can act as a fomite, as well as a breeding ground for bacterial and fungal infections, and a source of potential toxins such as heavy metals like zinc and lead.

HOW TO AVOID DISEASE SPREAD

Disease is spread via four categories: humans, other parrots, wildlife and food.

Humans

- Screening of visitors to ensure none have come into contact with a bird which has confirmed or suspected infectious disease.
- Maintaining strict hand hygiene by washing hands before and after working/playing with or caring for the parrot(s), using an antibacterial hand wash.
- Screening of visitors to ensure none may be infected with a potential zoonotic disease.
- Utilising footbaths where appropriate, or dedicated footwear to be worn only in the home or aviaries.
- Cleaning and disinfecting any equipment used with the parrots between use.

Other Parrots

- No other birds are to be “boarded” or brought into your home/aviary unless certifiably disease tested. This is due to the risk of diseases such as PBFD (Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease virus), ABV (Avian Bornavirus, associated with proventricular dilatation disease/macaw wasting syndrome) and *Chlamydophila psittaci* (Psittacosis). The only way to know if any bird is infected with these diseases is through specific disease testing by a vet – an infected bird may outwardly appear healthy.

- Regular cleaning and disinfection of aviaries, cages, toys and perches with F10 Ready To Use disinfectant, or F10SC disinfectant at rate of 1ml per 250ml of water.
- Close monitoring of bird's health by its appearance, behaviour, appetite and faeces.
- Immediate veterinary advice sought on any birds perceived to be unwell.

Wildlife

- Minimising wildlife contact wherever possible.
- Preventing over-feeding and waste food laying uneaten.
- Ensuring all food is stored in sealed containers with no access for vermin.
- Ensuring waste food is disposed of immediately.
- Preventing wild bird access to aviaries.

Food

- Ensuring all food is stored correctly in sealed seed bins or fridges.
- Ensuring waste/out of date/spoiled food is disposed of immediately.
- Only taking food from reputable sources.
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting food storage containers (including food and water bowls) with F10SC disinfectant at a rate of 1ml per 250ml of water.

CHARITY CONTACT INFORMATION

info@parrottrustscotland.org.uk

www.parrottrustscotland.org.uk

Parrot Trust Scotland
C/O McLennan Adam Davis Solicitors
13 Alloway Place
Ayr
KA7 2AA

AMENDMENTS

Year of SOP	Changes made at end of year
2019	Initial implementation of amendment section at V9
2019-2020	Addition of extras from webinar, now V10