



Medical Center for Birds

www.medicalcenterforbirds.com

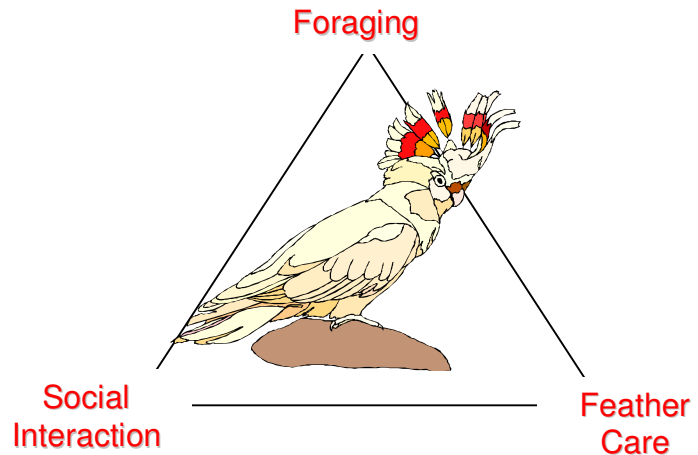
3805 Main St
Oakley, CA 94561
Brian Speer, DVM, ABVP/ECZM (Avian)
Brenna Fitzgerald, DVM

Ph: 925-625-1878
Fax: 925-625-8511
Geoff Olsen, DVM, ABVP (Avian)

Behavior Homework For Your Bird

Most parrot species spend their time during the day performing daily maintenance behaviors including foraging, social interaction, and feather care. These behaviors are essential for survival for most parrots in the wild, and are also likely essential behaviors for behavioral and mental well-being for parrots in a companion setting. Ideally, a healthy balance of these three categories of maintenance behaviors should be maintained for companion parrots. This balance should be

designed in a complimentary manner with the natural biology of the species and should be in a fitting manner with the designated lifestyle of the bird in your home. Feather care and, to a great extent, foraging behavior are instinctual behaviors that are already built-in and require little modification in normal circumstances. It is important, however, to work to enhance these behaviors in order to help balance the overall daily maintenance activity schedule of most companion parrots. Just like people, however, parrots are not born with all the social skills that they need. To compound this built-in need for learning and development, the companion parrot is raised and kept amongst a “flock” of humans – something far from the flock setting and environment in which it naturally lives. In this light, “homework” will be very helpful in guiding your bird towards a healthier and happier interactive lifestyle with you in your home. A three-way balance between foraging activities, social interaction and feather care is very important for behavioral and mental well-being for most birds. The well-trained and adjusted pet bird in the home is less stressed, better nourished, and less likely to develop illness. As an added plus, we also gain enjoyment from our pet birds if they are well adjusted, trained and behave well in our homes.



In general, the “balance” of a normal parrot’s lifestyle is viewed as a healthy mixture of foraging, social interaction and feather care. The details of these behaviors and the amount of time needed daily for them vary depending on the species, the season and the housing situation that the bird(s) are in. In an imbalanced situation with specific abnormal behaviors in one of these areas, behavioral guidance is oriented in general towards re-establishing a true balance between these categories again. Should there be abnormal feather care (excessive grooming, picking), generally, we would work to enhance the other two points of the above triangle, social interaction and foraging. Should there be abnormal social interactive skills or behaviors, work would be more focused on enhancement of feather care and foraging behavior activities.