



# Cockatiel

*(nymphicus hollandicus)*

Cockatiels are small, crested members of the parrot family. They are known for their mellow nature.

<b>Adult Size:</b> 11 to 14 inches from head to end of tail	<b>Life Span:</b> Up to 25 years with proper care
<b>Male/Female Difference</b>	All cockatiels appear female until the age of 6 months when the males lose the stripes and barring on the underside of their wings and tail. The grey crest turns yellow and orange cheek patches usually become much brighter in males.
<b>Compatibility</b>	These birds make excellent first time birds due to their cuddly, outgoing and comical personality. Cockatiels can be kept alone to bond with the owner or in pairs to bond with each other. Different species of birds should <i>not</i> be housed together. Care should always be taken when introducing new cockatiels to avoid fighting.
<b>Origin</b>	Semi-arid regions of Australia
<b>Climate</b>	Warm and dry
<b>Day Cycle</b>	Diurnal (awake during the day)
<b>Temperature</b>	65°F to 80°F; degrees
<b>Lighting</b>	No special lighting is required; however, cockatiel's would benefit significantly from natural sunlight. Covering their cage at night will help with normal day and night cycle.
<b>Humidity</b>	Ambient humidity is ideal. (60-70%)
<b>Habitat/Territory</b>	Semi-arid regions, bushes and shrubs.
<b>Substrate/Bedding</b>	Aspen pellet bedding may be used to line the bottom of the cage due to the fact it is able to hold the droppings and moisture better than other substrates. Other owners prefer to utilize cage paper. Corncob bedding is not recommended due to mold content.

<b>Hiding Place/Den</b>	Birds are highly intelligent pets that need a maximized amount of stimulation; therefore, it is essential to provide these cockatiels with various high quality toys. These toys should offer the bird a range of textures to be destroyed like pieces of paper, cardboard or soft wood. Additionally, cockatiels do not necessarily need a hiding place or den, they should be given a comforting toy that allows them to be relaxed. Bird huts are available, however can induce excessive egg laying. Always provide your bird with a variety of perches.
<b>Cage Type</b>	The rule of thumb for most birds is to have a cage at least half again the length of their wing span in all directions. A habitat with metal bars spaced no greater than 1/2" apart, makes a good home for one cockatiel. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible. Perches should be at least 5" long and 1/2" in diameter.
<b>Diet</b>	Specialized pellets should make up 60 to 70% of diet, plus fresh vegetables and fruits and small amounts of fortified seeds. Focus on items that have high vitamin A and calcium content. Finely chopped dark leafy greens and fruit should be offered in a separate cup and removed in a couple hours to prevent feeding spoiled food.
<b>Supplements</b>	If a bird remains on a seed based diet, it is inadvertently lacking proper nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that may be found in a high quality pellet diet. A multi-vitamin supplement is a great way to ensure your bird is getting proper nutrition. If the bird is on a pellet based diet, no additional supplements should be added. Furthermore, birds should be given some form of a calcium supplement, either through food additives or cuttlebones.
<b>Diet Precautions</b>	Avoid high seed diets, as your bird may pick through them and only eats those. Lack of calcium supplements will lead to fragile bone structure and possible egg impaction in females. Do <i>not</i> feed birds avocado, chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high fat treats.
<b>Feeding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fresh food should always be available and given 2x a day</li> <li>● Vegetables and fruits not eaten within a few hours should be discarded.</li> <li>● Treats should not exceed 10% of total food</li> </ul>
<b>Water Source</b>	Fresh water in a cup mounted to the side of the cage should be readily available. This cup should be changed daily and be free of debris.
<b>Grooming</b>	Cockatiel's are relatively clean birds that are able to preen themselves. during times times of molting, which is when they shed old feathers and begin growing new ones. cockatiel's should be bathed more frequently and on a regular basis should be misted with water bottle regularly 2 x a week. First molt occurs between 6-12 months. After the first molt, they have healthy molts 2-3 times a year.

<b>Oral and Foot Care</b>	Nails should be trimmed monthly, either by your vet or by us at Wilmette Pet. Special 'manicure' perches help to keep nails trim. A variety of perches should be placed in the cage to avoid foot atrophy. Hard lava blocks or beak conditioners as well as cuttle bones should be put in the cage to wear down the beak. If it becomes overgrown it will need to be filed down by your vet.
<b>Proper Handling</b>	Here at Wilmette Pet we like hand raising our cocktails. Handfeeding accustoms baby birds to human contact. The handfeeder takes on the parent's role of feeding the baby. In this way, humans come to be perceived as part of the flock and the baby becomes accustomed to being touched and to the sound of the human voice. This makes them a lot easier to handle. Cockatiel's are highly sociable, loving, and emotional birds that need a significant amount of handling and contact. Because of this need for constant affection, it is highly recommended to have the wings regularly trimmed to keep them from flying away and potentially hurting themselves. These birds are highly intelligent and are able to learn tricks given the proper amount of attention and repetition. Moreover, they are able to be held in the hand due to their small size.
<b>Habitat Maintenance</b>	Clean and disinfect the habitat and perches regularly with a 3% bleach solution; remember to rinse well before placing them back in the cage. Replace substrate or habitat liner daily. Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly. Do not use harsh cleaning agents around your bird as the fumes can be harmful. It is recommended to use a natural cleaning product like Nature's Miracle.
<b>Health Concerns</b>	All birds have a highly sensitive respiratory system, they should be kept away from drafty areas and areas that may suffer from drastic temperature changes. Additionally, highly aromatic things, such as incense and household cleaners, and some non stick pan fumes should be kept away from these birds as it can become a highly toxic environment for them. Dirty cages and poor diets are other areas that may be of health concern. A main health concern for female cockatiels is chronic egg-laying, which can deplete her body of vital minerals and calcium, as well as egg binding, in which the hen is unable to pass an egg. (A hen does not need a male cockatiel present in order to produce an egg; it will just be an infertile egg.) Female cockatiels, therefore, often need extra-calcium in their diet, such as a calcium-fortified base diet or a supplement like cuttlebone.