



Canary

(serinus canaria)

Adult Size: 4- 8 inches in length	Lifespan: 10-15 years
Male/Female Difference	It's typically difficult to sex canaries. One way you can tell a male from a female is that the male will have much brighter coloring on its feathers and it will be able to sing: males are known for rolling songs to attract a mate and the females are known for their gentle tweets, which would be good for those who enjoy a quiet household. Another way experienced bird owners can tell the sex apart is with the shape of the cloaca on mature birds.
Compatibility	Male canaries should not be housed together; they will constantly stress each other over territory and food. Male canaries can be housed with females in a spacious cage, but only if breeding is intended. Keeping one male canary for every two female is best so the females are not consistently harassed by the male. Keeping multiple females without any males can be harmonious.
Origin	Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands
Climate	Warm and dry
Day Cycle	Diurnal (awake during the day)
Temperature	65°F to 80°F; degrees
Lighting	No special lighting is required; however, canarys would benefit significantly from natural sunlight. Full spectrum lighting enhances emotional health and stimulates more singing. Covering their cage at night will help the canary feel less vulnerable, allowing better rest and help prevent a chill.

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Humidity	Ambient humidity is ideal. (60-70%)
Habitat/Territory	Semi-arid regions, bushes and shrubs.
Substrate/Bedding	Aspen pellet bedding may be used to line the bottom of the cage because it holds the droppings and moisture better than other substrates. Other owners prefer to utilize cage paper, to easily observe the health of fecal droppings. Corncob bedding is not recommended due to potential mold growth.
Hiding Place/Den	While canaries do not necessarily need a hiding place or den, they should be given a comforting toy that allows them to be relaxed, and a saucer shape nest to sit in with a piece of felt to make it soft. Always provide your bird with a variety of perches for good foot health. They are great climbers and hop from branch to branch.
Cage Type	When looking for a cage, the larger the better with bar spacing no greater than $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch. Canaries like wide, open spaces and need roomy cages. They are flyers, and like to fly back and forth, not up and down. Provide two or three good softwood perches about $\frac{3}{8}$" to $\frac{3}{4}$" in diameter. Tree branches of similar size will help to wear the claws down naturally. Round cages should never be used.
Diet	Specialized canary pellets should make up 60 to 70% of diet, with fresh sprouted seeds, vegetables, fruits, and small amounts of fortified seeds. 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. They do need to eat a bit more when the weather is cold and when they start to molt. Focus on items that have high vitamin A and calcium content. Another important part of their diet is providing them protein such as egg biscuit, which should be added to their diet at least once a week.
Supplements	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. Every few days you can provide your canary with song food to help strengthen their vocal cords. Furthermore, birds should be given some form of a calcium supplement, either through food additives or cuttlebones.
Diet Precautions	Canaries cannot live without food or water for more than 24hrs. They have a high metabolism. 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 *not* feed birds avocado, chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high fat treats.

Feeding

- Fresh food should always be available and given 2x a day
 - Vegetables and fruits not eaten within a few hours should be discarded.
 - Treats should not exceed 10% of total food
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Water Source

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. Additionally, a small cup of water big enough that they could bathe in should be put at the bottom of the cage. Canaries in the wild love to roll in dew- dampened grasses for a bath. You can give your pet a nice treat by occasionally putting in damp dandelion leaves or grasses in the bottom of the cage for a few hours.

Grooming

Canaries are relatively clean birds that are able to preen themselves. During times of molting, when they shed old feathers and begin growing new ones, canaries should be bathed more frequently. They should be misted with a water bottle or provided with a shallow dish. This should be done 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. Increasing fats and amino acids during molting will help your bird go through their molting a lot easier and with much prettier feathers. Canary's wings should NEVER be trimmed.

Oral and Foot Care

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 cuttlebones are recommended.

Proper Handling

Canaries have very sweet personalities and are loving and emotional birds that have a delightful and lovely song. They don't need a significant amount of handling and contact. In fact, Canaries are more bird oriented than people orientated. These birds are highly unlikely to become finger trained. Due to their high metabolism, they are constantly moving around and would not be able to sit still. Therefore, handling them would be very stressful. However, if you need to hold your bird, place your palm on its back and wrap your fingers around the bird with your thumb and forefinger on either side of its head. Canaries rarely bite, and even if they do, they do not have a harmful or dangerous bite.

Habitat Maintenance

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.

Health Concerns

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.
