

New Life Parrot Rescue & Helpline Service

Charity Reg No: 1056409

11 Things You Can Do to Make Your Bird Happy

1. Provide a healthy and varied diet — not just seeds, but grains, beans, berries, vegetables (cooked and raw) formulated pellets, and some fruit. (Harmful foods include chocolate, avocado, highly processed or overly salted foods, human junk food, and caffeine.)
2. Give your bird the largest enclosure possible — no space is too big for a creature adapted to flying through jungles and across savannas.
3. Provide daily exercise and ample out-of-cage time, preferably to include free flying in a safe, supervised environment. (Bird-proofing a room for out-of-cage time includes keeping birds away from items containing lead and zinc, and from paint chips, ceiling fans, electrical cords, cats and dogs, and open windows.)
4. Offer a variety of toys and enrichment activities.
5. Provide plenty of socialization with other birds and/or human caretakers.
6. Give access to unfiltered sunlight and/or full-spectrum lighting. Birds need exposure to UVA and UVB rays from direct sunlight (windows block necessary UV rays) or full-spectrum lighting to synthesize vitamin D necessary for bone health.
7. Offer daily or weekly misting with a clean spray bottle of water to promote feather and skin health and for fun! Some birds prefer to bathe in a small container (like their water dish); others enjoy being misted with water. It is important to allow the birds to air-dry in a warm room or in the sunshine.
8. Develop games and teach your bird skills ("jobs") like foraging or treasure hunts (this can be done in the house or with creative toys in the cage), tidying up toys by putting them in a basket.
9. Provide a secure enclosure so your bird can enjoy the outdoors with you.
10. Be kind to your bird's feet and provide natural branches from uncontaminated fruit or willow trees.
11. Place multiple perches/stands throughout the house so that your bird can benefit from ambient "flock time" while being included in family activities like watching TV or movies, preparing meals, playing cards or games. Hang a piece of hemp rope, swing and toys from the ceiling.



A Senegal parrot enjoying free-flight in the home. A Senegal's full wing-span is 43cm (approx. 17-inches). Photo: Pam Andrews



A Blue & Yellow macaw leading a miserable existence behind his cage bars— life imprisonment! Photo: Sally Brooks



An African grey parrot enjoying occupational therapy with stimulating toys and freedom from the cage. Photo: John Hamilton