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## About the Author - Harry Cornwell

Harry Cornwell has shared his [life](#) with animals and birds from an early age. He said, “My parents were [animal](#) lovers. They taught me how to look after them so they were happy and healthy.”

“I especially liked birds and had different kinds over the years, but parrots are my favorites and I’ve focused on them for my first [book](#).”

“I want my book to help other bird owners and also people who may just be thinking about getting a parrot.”

“They make great companions. But, deciding to get a parrot should be considered carefully so you get the right type and can look forward to many happy years together.”

Harry covers the basics of getting the right sort of parrot for your situation and how to look after it.

Then, he shares his ideas and research of the best ways to train your [bird](#) and develop a wonderful and lasting relationship with it.

Harry concentrates on simple, easy-to-follow methods which are based mostly on the natural behavior and instincts of the birds.

“There are many ways to teach a parrot to do each trick but I’ve explained what I believe are easiest for the bird and the owner. I want my readers to be able to get good results with their birds in minimum time.”

Some birds will do better at certain tricks than others, so results will vary. But, you and your parrot will both have a great time with Harry’s “Cheep Tricks and Tips!”



## Introduction

I want this book to show you ways which you can have a great time with your parrot.

There’s information and suggestions to help with:

- ✓ Selecting a new parrot
- ✓ Getting the right [cage](#) and what to avoid
- ✓ Helping it to fit in with your household, including your other pets
- ✓ Teaching it some tricks
- ✓ Making your home safe for the parrot
- ✓ Avoiding damage to your home by the parrot as well!

This book focuses on helping you to have a great relationship with your parrot and ensuring that both of you enjoy every minute together as much as possible.

I’ve tried to include everything that you need to know and arranged it so you can find it when you need it.

I suggest that you read the whole book first, and then keep it handy on your [computer](#). You can also print a personal [copy](#) just for your reference.

The “Bird Basics” section covers caring for your parrot. Please read it even if you are an experienced parrot owner. Some of my suggestions might be new to you or help you with questions which crop up in the future.

It’s important to create a strong bond between you and your parrot. We will show many ways to do that by adding more enjoyment and interaction.

Some methods I explain may be different to how you already know to teach your parrot. Don’t change what you are doing if you are fully satisfied with the results you get already.

Your bird needs to be dealt with in a consistent way. If you keep changing things, it might get your bird confused and your relationship would suffer.



I also explain why some methods which are popular among some experts may not always give you the results you expect and hope for.

I don't promise instant results or that everything will be equally effective for every person and their parrot.

But, this book will help you to understand your parrot better and get more enjoyment from every day you share with it.

***Harry Cornwell***





## Choosing the Right Bird

Because your relationship with your new parrot could last a lifetime, it's worth putting in some time on the selection of the bird you will get.

I recommend that you get a small parrot first unless you have experience with handling large birds and keeping them healthy.

If you are fixed on getting a large parrot, for whatever reason, at least contact someone that owns one or more and arrange to spend some time with them so you have a good idea of the responsibilities you will take on before you get the bird.

Any parrot will need to have some quality time with you every day. You will also need to be available to take it to your Vet and to pay the ongoing expenses of keeping the parrot happy and in good [health](#).

Parrots can be expensive to maintain. They often need blood tests before the vet can be sure of the cause of some symptoms which would often be much easier to diagnose in [dogs](#) or cats.

You may also have to ensure that your neighbors are okay with you getting a parrot. Most parrots will screech at some time during the day.

Many breeds do it every [morning](#) and evening and it's not something you can avoid happening in most instances.

Despite all of these considerations, the parrot owners I know consider their investment in having a pet parrot one of the best decisions they ever made.

I hope that you will learn enough from my book so that your experience is just as fulfilling as theirs and mine.



## Choosing a Vet

The most important person in your bird’s [life](#) is you, closely followed by the veterinarian who you pay to look after it.

I suggest that you take some time to look at the options in your area for veterinary care before you actually get your bird. Yes, it is that important to the success of your bird’s welfare. It will also show you the costs and other considerations you need to think about before buying your bird.

I suggest that you contact people you know who have parrots for advice about which vets you should consider.

Some Vets specialize in particular types of creatures. You need to find one that is up to date with the latest problems and [treatments](#) for parrots – an avian specialist or one with considerable experience that also looks after other types of animals.

If you don’t know anyone with a parrot, check your local directory or at your library for information about clubs for bird owners in your area. Even if they aren’t parrot people, they will have some [idea](#) of the options you can consider.

Visit the best two or three possibilities. Allow some time for this. You want to see how the staff treat clients and also casual inquirers like yourself. The most important thing is the way they treat the animals.

But, you also need to check about the level of their charges, whether they will let you open an account if you become a regular client and any other factors you consider important.

Check about what services are available outside regular hours and what extra costs might be involved in using them. If the after hours service is done by another vet, ask about their experience with birds and parrots like yours.

Do they do house-calls? If not, how convenient is it for you to take your [pet](#) to them?

What is the standard of their facilities for keeping pets at the vet’s office?



Is there just one vet with bird experience?

All these questions need to be answered so that you have some peace of mind when you trust them with the care of your new parrot.



## Housing Hints

When you have decided what type of parrot you will get and confirmed that a suitable bird is available, you can start preparing for its arrival in your [home](#).

### *Location, location!*

Find a position for your bird’s new home which does not interfere with movement of people through the room, but is also somewhere that the bird will be able to be seen and to see what is going on.

We need to protect our bird from drafts. Check when any doors to the room where you locate their cage are open and also when they are shut.

Also, check that the bird and its cage will not become too warm due to being too close to a window on very sunny days. If you can still set the cage close enough to a window that the bird can see through it, that will provide entertainment for it on those [occasions](#) when you are busy with other things.

But, you must ensure that there is something on the closed window so that the bird does not try to fly through it when it is out of the cage.

### *Hygiene*

Always wash your hands thoroughly in a mild soap before and after interacting with the bird and, especially, after [cleaning](#) the cage.



## Cages



The most important decision you make is deciding on the cage you get for your new parrot.

It's where your new [pet](#) will spend the major part of its life.

Your decisions about the construction and fittings will have a major effect on your

parrot's well-being and may even influence how long it lives.

If you get the chance to buy a second-hand cage, you could save some [money](#) but think first about risks from [disease](#) carried by previous occupants or unsafe materials used to make, clean or decorate the cage.

Cages made from stainless steel [wire](#) or powder-coated wire are probably the safest available. They are likely to be a bit more expensive than other cages but you have less risk of poisoning of your bird from zinc or other materials with them.

Caged birds do not fly upward. If you want to extend the space the bird can use, get a longer or wider cage rather than a taller one. A friend removed a end panel from two identical cages and joined them together, making sure there were no gaps or anything where the bird could catch it leg or claws. This gave her bird an longer area inside the cage and it sometimes takes a short flight along the extended length.

### *Toys, etc.*

Every parrot [loves](#) to play and every parrot owner I know loves to buy new toys for their pet! But, a parrot will not bond more closely with you if you buy it more toys or more expensive ones. The bond depends on the level of interaction and the care which you provide for your pet.

I suggest that three store bought toys is plenty for any bird. If you see something else you want to get for your bird, remember that the toys are designed to appeal as much or more to the owner because they are the buyers. Your bird could be just as happy with an empty cotton reel as they might be with a \$15 plastic gewgaw!

Every parrot should have a mirror. They will chatter away to the bird they see there when you are not around, and even when you are.

I read that someone found putting a few pieces of a new type of food they were introducing to the parrot on a flat mirror always got the bird interested in trying it more quickly than if they just put it in their regular food container.

Always check any items which you hang in your bird's cage for risks. Are there holes or loops of [metal](#) which your bird might catch a claw or even a whole leg in?

Bells can be a problem if your bird is able to pry the clapper of the bell out. That's why I only use enclosed bells which the bird's beak cannot get inside.

Check the condition of all the toys frequently and discard any which are damaged or soiled with droppings, unless you can clean them thoroughly and safely.

### *Cleaning the Cage*

Change the paper on the cage [floor](#) daily. Use plain newsprint instead of newspapers so that there is no ink which could get onto your bird and poison it.

Don't put cardboard shipping boxes where your bird can get at them. The inks used to print on them may be toxic or at least cause serious internal upset for your bird.

Wear gloves when cleaning the cage and discard them after one use.

Do not use any cleaning materials which are not made specifically for bird cages.

Never use any cleaning materials, especially aerosol and fly [sprays](#) without first removing your bird and all its equipment from the room. You may be



okay to use heavy covers over the cage but some residue will probably soak into the covers and may contact the bird later on.

When perches collect droppings and you cannot remove every trace of them safely, get new perches.



## Perches

Branches from trees which are safe for your birds can be the best possible choice as perches. They are better than dowels or plastic perches which are smooth and mostly the same thickness and texture.

Make sure that the perches don't have small crevices which your bird could catch a claw in the length of the perch or in the way it attaches to the cage or stand.

Pieces which vary in thickness will help the birds to exercise their legs and keep their feet flexible.

The perches must be too thick for the bird's feet to more than two-thirds of the distance around them. If the claws meet or overlap when it is on the perch, it will not be able to get a strong grip and could fall or damage its legs.

You need to check about what the branches have been treated with in the past before putting them where your bird can use them.

What sprays and other chemicals have been used on or around them? Keep in mind that your trees will get drift from nearby properties and any sprays applied to the edges of the roads alongside your home as well.

Some chemicals will be absorbed into the [wood](#) and sap of a tree. The level of the active substances stored in the branches can increase when the trees are re-sprayed each season. You can't tell how much of any chemical is inside the [timber](#), so it's best to discard any which may have had any dangerous sprays at all used on them.

I got some branches from a neighbor's cherry tree last year. She is very cautious with sprays and they had only been sprayed with White [Oil](#) the previous season. The two birds loved pecking at the bark. Some of the branches were forked and the smallest bird would settle in a fork and [sleep](#) on any sunny afternoons.





### *Rope for Perches?*

Some parrots will like a piece of rope in their cage as an alternative to another wooden perch. The feel is different and the bird can get a bit acrobatic. But, there is a serious risk that the bird could catch a claw and be injured. Also, the bird will, over time, start to peck threads loose from the rope and it could swallow some and choke or have intestinal problems.

Plastic perches are a bad choice because they don't let the bird get a firm grip and can cause [stress](#) to the bird's feet.



## The Best Room – Your Living Room

The bird should be located in a room where people are either present or passing through most of the day. Your bird needs as much social contact with members of your [family](#) as possible. If it is left alone for periods, it will become harder to train and more likely to develop one or more behavioral problems over time.

### **The kitchen is full of dangers.**

Do not put your bird’s cage in your [kitchen](#). It would be subjected to changes in temperature when food is being cooked.

It is bad for people, too. The bird’s droppings could end up on food if it was out of its cage at any time.

Cleaning products are high risk to the bird.

Fumes from non-stick cookware are a very serious problem. Dupont (manufacturer of Teflon®) have this warning on their site:

**“Bird owners should be aware that there are potential dangers in the kitchen. Cooking fumes, smoke and odors that have little or no effect on people can seriously sicken and even kill some pet birds, often quite quickly. Also cooking fumes from any type of unattended or overheated cookware, not just nonstick, can damage a bird's lungs with alarming speed.”**

If you put the bird and its cage outside on a sunny day, **make sure that someone is with the bird and cage at all times.**

Wild birds or stray animals can very quickly attack and injure or kill cage birds, sometimes even when a human is present.

make sure that the cage has sufficient shade and check the [water](#) supply frequently. Small birds like budgerigars cannot survive lack of water or food very long.

Ensure that your bird is covered up and not disturbed each night. Most parrots need about ten hours minimum [sleep](#) every night. Interruptions and nights with less sleeping time can have serious effects on your bird’s comfort and, over time, on its [health](#).



## Training Your Bird

The results you get will largely be dependent on the bond between you and your bird.

All birds will need patience and regular repetition of the training. Don't rush and don't expect too much.

One of the most common mistakes which bird owners make is to believe parrots think like people do.

They are as different in the way they think as they are physically.

Screeching upsets us but is a natural part of normal parrot behavior.

We need to study the small signals our pet birds give us through their posture and changes to their [eyes](#).

Some people kiss their birds or let the birds kiss them. That is very unhygienic and can also increase the risk of being bitten.

Because of these and other differences between us and our birds it is important to always remain calm when you are with your bird and think before reacting to anything which it does.

Otherwise, you may damage the bond between you and that can take a long time to fix.

### *Clicker Training*

The clickers which are commonly used by professional and amateur trainers of dogs and other animals can be successfully used for [training](#) your parrot as well.

Although you might get them cheaper off the Internet, try to get one locally because it's best to try the clicker before buying it.

The different designs and brands vary in the amount of [pressure](#) you need to apply before it clicks and some don't give an instant click.

That's essential because you need to have your bird associate the click with the action it has just done.



Rewards must be tasty and not too big. Bite-sized pieces of [fruit](#) fill the bill (no pun intended!).

You can sometimes just use the clicker or some praise instead.

You must get the bird to accept the [sound](#) of your clicker as a positive experience. Start by making a click and immediately give the bird a very small treat.

Don't let your parrot get hold of the clicker - that's got to be something special which only you use. They don't even have to know how you make the sound.



## Tricks Your Parrot Can Do!

### Step up - a Great First Trick

This [trick](#) is an ideal starting point for your parrot training.

It is a natural part of their daily behavior. It should not take more than a couple of sessions for the bird to do it on cue.

You can use your finger or a stick for this lesson.

Press it gently against the bird’s chest just above its feet and about an inch in front of the bird.

The bird’s natural reaction will be to step up onto the finger or stick. As it does that, say, “Step Up” or simply, “Up!”

Reward the bird immediately with a very small piece of something it really enjoys.

Then, do it again.

Some birds will grab the stick or your finger with their beak to help them get up. Don’t react to this. You might want to move your hand closer to the bird before you try the command again, but it’s not important.

Use the same method to teach the bird to move from you to a perch.

But, instead of saying, “Step up.”, you say, “Step down.”



## Teaching Your Bird to Talk

### *Introduction*

We can't really teach parrots to talk in the way that humans do. Their physical equipment is very different from ours.

We teach them to use the vocal equipment in their bodies, which they use to signal each other, to mimic the sounds which we make.

That is great fun.

Some birds will learn to make specific sounds when certain events occur. So, your bird might learn to say, "Hello!" when you come into a room and "Night, night!" when you cover their cage each evening.

You should start talking to your bird as soon as possible, even if you are not ready to begin its training.

It's important to do this training yourself. Don't rely on the old method of playing a recording of what you want it to learn.

The bird will soon lose interest in the noise from your recorder. When you are



talking to the bird, your voice changes intensity and volume and that keeps the bird's interest.

Don't start the teaching sessions until you are sure that you have gained its [confidence](#). A frightened bird will not learn anything of value.

### *The Best Breeds*

If you want a parrot you can expect to get good results with, consider getting one of these breeds.

Among the larger parrots, the best talkers are probably the African Greys. Some of the Amazons and Quaker parrots are also worth considering.

Macaws have an impressive appearance but usually can only learn a few words and deliver them less clearly than the Greys. Your choice will depend on what is more important to you.

Among the smaller breeds, budgerigars and cockatiels are very talented and respond well to patient training.

Choose the breed of bird which is most suitable for your lifestyle. Its talking ability will be secondary to how it fits into your [life](#).

When you are selecting the bird you will take home, look for one that is bright, chatters freely and is interested in what's going on around it.

The larger parrots usually have a long life-span. If you get one, please consider making plans for the bird's future if it outlives you.

**Quakers** are also good mimics of people and will pick up incidental noises which they hear.



Probably the most popular small parrot is the quick-moving **Budgerigar**, the Australian grass parrot. They can build a good store of words and are great fun in other ways as well. But, perhaps because of their small size, the words may not be as easy for you to hear clearly as with some of the larger breeds.

Whatever bird you train, the quality of the bond which you develop with the particular bird will have some effect on the results you get.

Over its life, your parrot is likely to become particularly attached and responsive to whoever builds the strongest [relationship](#) with it.

Other people in your family may feel disappointed that they cannot expect to get the same strong bond. It is natural for this to happen and you cannot discourage it without affecting the quality of training the bird gets.

But, the bird will still interact with the other family members, especially if they also take responsibility for some of the bird's care and continue to interact with it.

Ensure that your bird gets some time with you and all of your family.

**Early talkers:** Some people say that they get the best results with birds that are not completely weaned. That should only be done by experienced bird carers who can handle the requirements and risks involved in caring for the young bird through the weaning process.



If you don't have that sort of successful experience, getting your young bird that still needs regular doses of formula to become a talker will involve a lot more care on your part and add significant risks to the proper development of the bird in various ways.

Some birds seem to stop learning after they become mature, but this varies even within the same breed. Other birds of the same breed and similar backgrounds may never be talkers.

### ***Your Bird's First Lessons***

Set aside some time twice each day, preferably at the same times each day, for your first teaching sessions.

For the comfort of both you and the bird, keep the sessions short. I suggest no more than 10 to 15 minutes per session. But, even then, be ready to stop sooner if the bird seems tired or just loses interest.

I believe that morning and evening sessions are likely to be the most effective. Don't start the evening session later than just before your evening [meal](#).

Remove all possible distractions from the room, including other people and [pets](#). Get someone else to [mind](#) your phone for the whole period.

Always talk to your bird calmly. Keep your attitude and [voice](#) bright and positive. Say the word or, at most, a two-word phrase which you want to start with. Don't rush the words.

Watch the bird closely and shorten the session if it starts to lose interest in what you are teaching or shows signs of becoming upset.



Don't try to teach your bird if it is frightened or tired. It will be a waste of time. Keep the bird enthusiastic by providing treats and other positive reinforcement.

Start your session in a quiet room with no obvious distractions. Make sure the bird is comfortable. Put it on a perch with a firm base so that it can concentrate on the lesson.

Choose a two word phrase, such as "good boy", to teach the bird first. Choose something which can be connected to a daily activity such as, "hello boy" for when you uncover its cage each morning.

Stick with teaching it the one phrase until you have some success. If you try to teach it more than one phrase at the same time, it will probably become distressed and this may have a lasting effect on its ability to learn to say anything else in the future.

What you say to the bird is probably not as important as how you say it. Be patient and keep your voice bright and positive.

Some birds will not learn as many words as others of the same breed. The smaller breeds are not able to say many words as clearly as the larger birds can.

But, with patience and persistence you can expect to get good results.

Be sure to reward your [pet](#) for its efforts even if they are not quite of gold-medal standard.

Although many people say that they bought their parrot to teach it to talk, most will admit that they find its companionship and interaction much more interesting.

After your bird has succeeded in learning a few words or phrases, you may find that it will pick up occasional words which you use when you are not actually having a training session.

Parrots will remember and repeat what you have taught them for a long time. But, they will not continue to use a phrase which you stop using yourself.





## Feeding

Many new owners feed their parrot the seed mixture which is available at the local pet store or supermarket. They read the messages on the packets about additives included in the seed and think that’s all they need to give their new bird.

They won’t know that parrots on a seed-based [diet](#) are likely to suffer because of some important requirements not being met, including Vitamin A and Calcium.

**Check Seed in Containers:** If your small bird, such as a budgerigar, eats seeds from a container, check that the empty husks are not covering all the good seed. Some birds cannot dig below the husks and can become weak or starve.

The routine I follow is to provide my bird’s meals twice a day, morning and early evening.

Some [vegetables](#) and fruit along with pellets and seeds should ensure that your bird is getting the variety of tastes and [nutrients](#) which it needs.

Please don’t overdo the sunflower seeds. Your parrot may prefer them and over-indulge while [eating](#) less of the other more nutritious fare you provide.

Do not give your parrot lettuce, but other green vegetables such as silver beet are good for them. The rule is variety with no excess of any particular item.

Check what your bird has eaten and what it has not eaten. Then, you can give it less of the foods it favors for a couple of meals to ensure that it is hungry enough to eat the other items, so that it gets the nutrients which those foods provide as well.

Don’t leave [food](#), except for seeds, in its cage between meals. They will start to spoil and your bird may continue nibbling so that it does not eat enough of what you provide at the next meal.

Carrot, corn and pumpkin are all good for your bird.



Sprouted seed is likely to be a hit also but, if there are any left-overs, remove them before they start to spoil.

**Warning:** [Bread](#) and other [bakery](#) products are highly unsuitable for your parrot. They lack the nutritional value which your pet needs and can actually contain ingredients which could be harmful to it.



## Behavior Problems

This covers the most common problems which cause problems between parrots and their owners. Sometimes, these problems result in breaking up of the relationship with serious consequences for the bird.

What all owners need to remember is that most bird/person problems result from mistakes or misunderstanding of the parrot’s needs and motivation by the person.

Many owners expect their parrots to understand the human way of doing things but give little thought to how their parrot is conditioned by its species’ history.

Sometimes, the owner is so focused on getting a parrot, they don’t think through the consequences. The result can be another parrot looking desperately for a new home.

Always consider the other people who will be affected by your decision to get a parrot as well as the long-term needs of the bird.



## Biting

Biting is one of the most serious problems for parrot owners to deal with.

It is not common for parrots in the wild to bite each other. Spreading feathers, screeching and posturing are more common actions in disputes between wild birds. A bird that is sick or tired and just wants to be left alone may also bite.

That suggests that the pet parrots are reacting to current circumstances when they bite.

I cannot give you a simple solution to this.

The first step is to investigate why your parrot is biting. The most common reasons for those attacks which I know about have been protection (of itself or its territory) or to investigate something which it is not familiar with.

Just as many [animals](#) will do if they are startled or frightened, most parrots may bite if they feel under attack and that they have no way to escape.

Imagine how you would feel if you were suddenly grabbed by a large and loud stranger?

Biting, swinging a fist or a foot - any of these actions would be quite understandable. Only one is available to your parrot.

All parrots use in their beaks like we use our [hands](#). They explore their surroundings with gentle nips. So, you can expect that your fingers might feel a nip or two early in your relationship with a young parrot.



Sometimes, the bird has learned that biting the owner gets a reward of some kind. This can happen if the owner offers their parrot a small treat to stop it from biting again.

The parrot will believe that they got the reward for biting you!

If you yell at the parrot, they will think you like

being bitten because shrieking or yelling is part of their regular communication system with other members of their flock.

Some experts suggest that you raise your [head](#) above the parrot to show dominance but this idea has not worked with any parrot I've known.

Although many groups of birds have a distinct pecking order, parrots do not establish their rank in the flock from their position on a [tree](#) when they are at rest.

Another possible reason for some parrots biting their owners is that some owners encourage their birds to “kiss” or nibble them to get a treat. That's something which could lead to an accidental but still very painful nip.

If you work on developing a strong relationship with your parrot, you will definitely reduce the chance of being bitten.

Avoid pushing the bird to do something which it doesn't want to.

Also, watch your bird closely. Parrot body language can be fairly subtle. Some common signs that it is unsettled is when it tightens its feathers, shrinks its pupils or suddenly begins to dart its head from side to side.

Don't blame the bird if it bites you. Look for and fix the factor which caused your parrot to act in a way that is not natural for it.



## Stop Feather Picking

Feather picking could be linked to a number of causes. It should be investigated without delay.

Your bird could be suffering from an allergy, poor nutrition or an [infection](#).

Or, it may just be bored and craving more time and interaction with you.

If your veterinarian cannot rule out medical problems being the cause of the bird destroying its feathers, he will make a further examination to isolate the cause.

If he rules out a medical problem, I suggest that you spend more time with your bird as a first step because it may be all that's necessary to reduce or eliminate the feather pulling.

Next, you could increase the humidity in your home if your budget allows it and it does not make you or other family members uncomfortable.

Even giving your parrot a light spray from a [water](#) bottle each day could see a significant improvement. The parrot will certainly enjoy the spray anyway and it provides a wonderful bonding experience

If the bird's wing feathers have been poorly trimmed, the bird may become stressed and start to pull at its feathers. I recommend that you get the help of your vet or an experienced bird owner where you live to show you how to safely and correctly trim your parrot's wing feathers if your vet says it should be done.

## Screeching



This is natural behavior for many types of parrots. If you have any of the larger varieties, you will probably have to accept some screeching morning and night as part of the deal.

Some owners try to stop the noise by yelling back at their parrot. This just encourages them to continue as they would if another bird in their flock screeched back at them.



Covering of their cage may reduce or eliminate the screeching for a while.  
But, the larger parrots all scream at times.

The only way to reduce the screaming is to give them more attention and not react in any way that will encourage more screaming.



## Your Bird's Body Language

The more time you spend with your parrot the better you will understand its actions, needs and state of [mind](#).

**“Eye pinning”** is the term for a parrot enlarging and reducing the size of the pupils of its eyes rapidly. You will need to study for other indications which will help you to understand what it is trying to tell you.

It may be waiting for a command from you, trying to get your help with some problem or about to say something.

If your bird simply dilates its pupils, it is concentrating on something in its line of sight.

Parrots, of course, use a variety of sounds to signal their intentions and needs. A series of small clucks is usually a sign of contentment. But, if the bird is upright, rigid and staring at you, it's probably telling you to stay clear.

**Wing waving** can mean various things. Your bird may flap its wings to attract attention or just for the [exercise](#). If it lets them sag, you should examine it in case it is feeling ill or just tired.



## Avoidable Risks

All parrots face more risks in the average home than their wild kin ever do.

There are many things which we can do to reduce the toll of injury and deaths each year. It just needs a little care and preparation.

Many owners want to train their birds to fly in the open air. This is a very risky idea.

Domestic parrots are not brought up in the local natural environment. It is just as strange to them as your living room when you first brought them home with you.

And, it's full of dangers which they don't have any knowledge of or defenses against.

The owners imagine their birds would enjoy the open air but it's completely outside their experience. A veterinarian said that most pet small parrots that escaped would probably be killed by cars, [cats](#) or other birds within 24 hours. They would have no knowledge of how to forage for food or defend themselves.

### *Parrot Safety in Your Home*

Some people let their birds roam their entire [house](#). That can be just as dangerous as letting them loose outside.

The inside of our homes also contain many traps which we must protect them against.

Our homes are insulated boxes with little natural air-flow. This can affect the parrots breathing and its general [health](#).

Many [homes](#) contain a lot of dust which can cause serious respiratory effects.

Then there are all the chemicals which we use.

We have sprays for almost everything. Many can poison our birds or the particles can affect their breathing.

Non-stick cookware coatings are poisonous.



Newspapers are used to line cage floors but, if the ink becomes wet from spilled water or the bird’s droppings, the ink will stick to the bird and poison it.

Loose threads on furnishings can catch a bird by the leg or the neck and cause injury or death.

An open door can be the bird’s way to escape and never return.

Many birds are lost in drains and open toilets.

Small birds will explore inside or under piles of clothing or other items. Some will be crushed when people step on the pile or the birds could be smothered when the pile is tossed into a cupboard.

Many [plants](#) are dangerous for parrots (see the resources section at the end of this book).

Prevention is the only effective defense against all these risks.



## Section 2: Training

At what age can you start training?

Can older Parrots be trained?

Using food as a Reward

Most trainers use small pieces of [food](#) as a reward for the bird. But, we have to make sure that the bird doesn't get too much extra this way.

Recorded Reinforcement



## Resources

### **World Parrot Trust**

<http://www.parrots.org/>

**International Contacts:** <http://www.parrots.org/index.php/contactus/>

From the site: “As a leader in parrot conservation and welfare, the World Parrot Trust works with parrot enthusiasts, researchers, local communities and government leaders to encourage effective solutions that protect parrots.

To do this, we focus on conducting and supporting field conservation projects, working to eliminate the international [trade](#) in wild caught parrots and increasing awareness of the plight of parrots, in the wild and in captivity.

### *Parrots Organizations Australia*

#### **Avicultural Society of Australia**

<http://www.birds.org.au/cgi-bin/content.pl>

Based in Doncaster, Victoria with 2,000 Members including some overseas. Supports its members in the breeding and conservation of aviary held birds.

#### **Parrot Society of Australia**

<http://www.parrotsociety.org.au/index.php>

The society is devoted exclusively to the breeding, care and conservation of all parrot species.

### *Parrots Organizations U.K.*

#### **The Parrot Society UK**

<http://www.theparrotsocietyuk.org/home>

From the site: “We encourage the preservation, conservation, keeping and breeding of parrot species some of which are endangered and in need of help.”



### *Parrots Organizations U.S.A.*

#### **North American Parrot Society (N.A.P.S.)**

<http://www.northamericanparrotsociety.com/>

A primary focus is the showing of birds, but breeders, veterinarians and private owners are all welcome to join and participate.

#### **International Conure Association**

<http://conure.org>

The International Conure Association (ICA) was formed in 1997 to support conures and their owners. They support development of a breed register to minimize in-breeding since new birds cannot be taken from the wild and it is becoming more difficult to [transport](#) them between countries under new regulations.

### *These Plants are Dangerous to Parrots etc*

I was going to prepare a [list](#) until I found this one at a commercial site,

<http://www.birdsnways.com/articles/plntstox.htm>



## **Last Word from Harry**

I hope you will have a long and enjoyable life as a parrot owner. After years, I still find new things about them and I am sure you will too.

I have always enjoyed the time I've shared with my parrots and hope that the suggestions and tips will give you similar fun times too.

*Harry Cornwell*





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