

Bird feeding – Parrots

Most pet birds are fed a seed-only diet, which is not nutritionally balanced and can predispose to many health problems, including obesity, lipomas, cardiovascular, reproductive and liver diseases, skin problems and behavioural problems. Seeds are high in fat and carbohydrates, and lack many vitamins, minerals and protein. Birds are foraging creatures and in the wild consume a wide variety of food items. There are about 400 species of parrots in the world, and their natural biology and nutritional requirements differ. The outline below provides a general feeding guideline.

A balanced diet should be varied and include the following items offered fresh daily:

- Pelleted/crumbled diet
 - There are many different commercially available formulations, including Harrison's and Roudybush. See "Conversion to pellets/crumbles" for more details.
 - These diets have been nutritionally formulated to be fed as a staple diet, however, a variety of other food items listed below should be fed.
- Variety of fresh vegetables and small amount of fruit
 - Peas, carrots, capsicum, bok choy, spinach, broccoli, parsley.
 - Berries, kiwi, grapes, apple. Tropical species (eg. South American and Asiatic parrots, eclectus parrots) enjoy fruit in their diet. Many Australian species (eg. cockatiels, cockatoos and budgies) are unlikely to eat fruit as it is not a part of their natural diet.
- Some seeds
 - Certain species, including cockatiels and budgies, require higher proportion of seeds in their diet than other species (~ 30%). Budgie seed mix is suitable for these small birds, including cockatiels, budgies and other small parrots.
 - Sunflower and safflower seeds should be avoided. If feeding sunflower seeds to larger species, limit to 5-10 per day, and ideally use them as treats and for training.
- Australian native vegetation (branches, leaves, blossoms, pods, pollen) and fresh grass
 - Eucalyptus, bottlebrush, grevilleas, banksia, acacia, melaleuca.
 - Fresh grass pulled out with some roots attached.
 - Ensure these are free of pesticides, other chemicals and wild bird droppings, and rinsed with water.
- Small amount of human food as a treat
 - Pasta, rice, wholegrain crackers or toast. Limit to a small piece per day.
- Fresh water must be provided daily. Adding vitamins or other additives to the water is not recommended, unless advised by your vet.
- ⊗ DO NOT feed your bird avocados, rhubarb, chocolate, onion, garlic, salty and sugary foods, seed sticks/treats.

Lorikeets are nectivores and their natural diet consists of nectar, pollen, honeydew, insects and fruit. Pet lorikeets should be offered the following food items daily:

- Liquid diet once or twice daily, ideally made fresh daily
- Dry food available at all times
- Vegetables, fruits and native vegetation as outlined above