

How and Why to Give Your Pet Bird a Bath / Shower

Bathing and/or Showering is an essential part of your Parrot's life. It is important for their health, the quality of their feathers, and their overall happiness and comfort.

Bath and Shower Time Benefits for Your Parrot:

- Keeps their feathers in good condition
- Encourages preening
- Controls the dander/powder in the environment
- Keeps them happy and healthy

Bathing Tips: Ways to Give Your Parrot a Shower or Bath

There are a few ways you can shower your parrot. Just know that every bird is different in the way they seem to enjoy getting a shower. One of the biggest questions people ask is what is the best way and there is no best way, your bird will let you know which way they prefer by their actions and the way they respond.

Listed below are some tips and ways you can help your bird can enjoy bath time.

- Make sure that you use room-temperature water (bottled Spring water, or filtered tap is best), do not use warm or hot water as you will strip the feathers of their oils, which can dry out their skin so they itch and bring on feather plucking/picking. The object of giving a shower is to get them clean, comfortable, and encourage them to preen their feathers.
- Some parrots like to be lightly sprayed with a handheld spray bottle. To do this, mist your bird, letting it fall on them as the rain would. Do not spray directly at them or get it in their eyes or nares.
- Others feel more comfortable bathing in a shallow bowl or dish of water, while other parrots like to wade around in the sink playing under the faucet. Some birds love to sit on a perch in the shower and let the water rain down on them.
- For birds that have an outside aviary, it's not unusual for them to enjoy a sprinkler system overhead or getting lightly sprayed with a water hose.

Parrots are famous for jumping in and using their water dish, and just start bathing themselves. This is a definite sign your bird would like a bath, and they're trying to get themselves clean. Take advantage of this and let them bathe in the way they are most comfortable with—whether it be by spray bottle, in the shower, a bowl or shallow dish—whatever is preferred. You'll enjoy watching them spread and flap their wings, run in and out of the water, squawk, play, and thoroughly enjoy themselves! Laugh and play with them, act silly, or just sit back and enjoy watching your bird play. Don't forget to grab your camera and get pictures or videos to share with family and friends!

Birds will typically fluff up their feathers during bath and shower time to allow the water to penetrate through the feathers and to their skin. Their feathers can be a bit water-resistant, especially if they have

a build-up of dander, which you can see the water bead up and roll down their feathers rather than soaking in; so you might find it takes time for your bird to become wet.

After getting clean, your parrot will start preening and getting their feathers back in their normal position. Give them this time to preen as your bird is getting pretty and is happy.

How Often Should Your Bird Get a Bath/Shower?

Birds in their natural habitat take showers daily. If time permits, make it a part of the day as your bird would prefer to get misted or showered just like they would in the wild. Otherwise, a good bath or shower once or twice a week is sufficient. Your bird should be bathed during daytime hours rather than night and given time to dry completely. During the drying time, keep your bird away from air conditioning vents, and if you can put them outside in a cage to catch some rays that's even better!

It is important to realize that during molting periods, your bird will become very itchy due to the new feathers coming in. If at all possible increase the weekly bath times as this will help keep the itchiness down, and also make the feather sheaths soft, making it easier for your bird to remove them and the new feathers to enter.

For birds such as African Greys, that have a stronger tendency to be feather pluckers, plan to keep them cleaned and bathed daily. That doesn't mean you have to give them a full-out bath, just mist your parrot lightly with a spray bottle on those in-between bath days. Be aware that keeping them showered will help to alleviate the urge they have to pluck or pick at their feathers, and encourages them to preen—a normal behavior—instead.

How to Dry Your Parrot Off After a Shower/Bath?

Your bird's feathers will dry off naturally after their bath. Make sure they're kept away from a draft or breeze; instead ensure they're placed in dappled sunlight or a warm area of the house. Some birds enjoy being wrapped up in a towel for a bit after their bath, which can help to get some of the wetness off and keep the chill away.

Do not use a blow dryer as you can strip the feathers and skin of their moistness and essential oils, which defeats the purpose of bathing. There is also the danger of possibly burning their skin and unbeknownst to many, some blow dryers contain Teflon or other toxic chemicals, so let your bird dry off naturally or with the help of a towel. Then let them have the chance to preen and get their feathers back in place.

What If Your Parrot Doesn't Want a Bath/Shower?

Some parrots are scared or reluctant to get wet. Do not force them to bathe. A good tip is to remember that birds in the wild will get wet in the rain, so if you have a bird that doesn't like to bathe, wait till it rains, pull out the spray bottle, and lightly mist them with it. The sound of the rain can sometimes help. Pet birds are very much wanting to imitate and be part of the flock, so go ahead and get yourself wet. Let them see you splash in the water and enjoy it!

Some birds take to bathing right away, while others don't. Be persistent and take steps toward getting them familiar with bathing a little at a time. Most mistakes and mistrust issues come from trying to push your bird too fast.

Time, patience, and trust are imperative for anything you do with your bird, so don't push the issue, just sit back and enjoy the moments spent with your bird.