

Date: 25 July 2013  
Contact: Acting Coordinator Animal Management  
Location: Animal Management  
Telephone: (07) 5581 6664  
Your reference:  
Our reference: HL147/466/10(P1)

ABN 84858548460  
PO Box 5042 Gold Coast MC  
Qld 9729 Australia  
Email: [gcccmail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:gcccmail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [goldcoastcity.com.au](http://goldcoastcity.com.au)  
Administration Centres  
Ph: +61 7 5582 8211  
135 Bundall Road Surfers Paradise  
Fax: +61 7 5581 6346  
833 Southport Nerang Road Nerang  
Fax: +61 7 5596 3653

Ms C Shepherd  
Surfers Paradise Budgerigar Society  
PO Box 842  
MUDGEERABA QLD 4213

Dear Ms Shepherd

**SURFERS PARADISE BUDGERIGAR SOCIETY INC CODE OF PRACTICE**

Further to my letter dated 15 July 2013 I wish to advise that the Surfers Paradise Budgerigar Society Inc Code of Practise for Exhibition Budgerigars 2013 was considered and has been approved by Council in accordance with Section 24(2) of *Subordinate Local Law 12 (Animal Mangement) 2013*.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone (07) 5581 6664.

Yours faithfully



John Madigan  
**ACTING COORDINATOR ANIMAL MANAGEMENT**  
*For the Chief Executive Officer*

# **SURFERS PARADISE BUDGERIGAR SOCIETY INC.**

## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR EXHIBITION BUDGERIGARS**

Members of the Surfers Paradise Budgerigar Society are to adhere to this Code of Practice to protect the welfare of their budgerigars and ensure they are free from stress and disease.

The hobby of aviculture requires primary emphasis being given to the health and welfare of birds. This Code of Practice is to inform members of their obligations for the humane and considerate treatment of their birds and to advise basic management practices for the care of budgerigars. New members are encouraged to seek advice and clarification of their obligations from experienced members.

Good aviary husbandry includes birds having:

- ready access to food and water to maintain health and vigour;
- cages and aviaries that provide protection from the weather and predators to minimise harm or stress;
- prevention and treatment of disease and injury;
- space and opportunity for the birds to engage in natural behaviour; and
- careful handling to minimise stress.

### **WATER**

Clean water must be available at all times. Water containers must not be placed under perches where they may be contaminated by droppings nor should they be placed in direct sunlight.

Water should only be placed into clean containers that are rinsed of all chemical residues such as bleach. Containers used for drinking should not be capable of being used by birds for bathing.

Aviaries should include fly out sections that enable budgerigars to access direct sunlight, rain, water sprinklers or baths.

Aviary floors and seed should not be allowed to become wet from rain or water containers.

### **FOOD AND SUPPLEMENTS**

Clean seed, free from rodent contamination, must be made available at all times. Within aviaries, seed containers must be of adequate size to allow a large number of birds to feed at the same time.

Containers are to be regularly cleaned of seed husks and dust. Containers should be placed where they cannot be contaminated by droppings or water.

Storage of seed must be in rodent and insect proof containers which are protected from direct sunlight. Seed should smell sweet and not mouldy and not contain excessive dust.

A varied range of seed types should be provided. Budgerigars require access to canary seed and white millet. Grey, yellow and red millet, as well as panicum, grey striped sunflower, triticale and groats, are useful additions.

Extruded pellets specifically made for budgerigars can be used as a substitute, or supplement, for seed.

Millet sprays are useful for birds in stressful conditions, such as travelling to and from shows, weaning young birds, quarantine and birds recovering from ill health.

The provision of fresh and clean fruit, vegetables and seeding grasses should be provided on a regular basis as exhibition budgerigars will not thrive on a diet of plain seed by itself.

The use of sprouted seed is encouraged but it must be thoroughly rinsed to ensure it is free of fungus and antifungal chemicals. Sprouted seed and vegetable matter not consumed within a few hours must be removed before it has an opportunity to spoil.

Both soluble (shell grit) and hard grit (sand) must be provided as these are required for digestion of seed.

Charcoal, cuttlebone and mineral blocks and powders can be provided to vary the birds' diet. Eucalyptus branches, bark and leaves provide oils and trace minerals. Branches provide an opportunity for beaks to be strengthened by chewing.

Members should be careful when adding proprietary mineral and vitamin products to drinking water to use only the proportions recommended by the manufacturer to prevent over dosing and be aware that water containing these products, particularly those with sugar bases, can become contaminated over time and during warm temperatures.

#### CAGES AND AVIARIES (FLIGHTS)

Aviaries should be located in accordance with Gold Coast City Council planning requirements and professionally constructed. Members should be sympathetic to their neighbours' amenity, particularly in relation to noise minimisation and visual appearance; the birds must be kept without nuisance to others. In particular, boundary fences are not to be incorporated into the structure of the aviary and the aviary must be at least one metre from the member's property boundary.

Cages and aviaries must provide protection from adverse weather. Budgerigars require access to perches protected from direct sunlight, rain, wind and particularly draughts.

Cages and aviaries must provide protection from predators. Mouse wire mesh (6 mm square) attached to larger gauge bird mesh is recommended. Mesh should be

strong enough to resist the impact of large birds and dogs. All new mesh should be washed with an acidic solution (citric acid, vinegar) to remove all traces of residual galvanized material (lead and zinc) which is toxic and any solid remnants and sharp edges removed. Leaving new mesh out in wet weather whilst the aviary is being constructed is a simple method of removing these hazards.

A variety of perch sizes and shapes is recommended as these allow exercise of budgerigars' leg and toe muscles and assists in control of the growth of toenails.

It is essential that exhibition budgerigars are housed in healthy and clean environments. Cages, aviaries and nesting boxes should be cleaned regularly to prevent an accumulation of droppings, moulted feathers and feather dust, seed husks and stale food. Dirty cages provide an environment for bacteria, mould and parasites. Perches as well as floors should be cleaned and sprayed/wiped with a disinfectant such as F10SC or bleach.

To minimize disease, Budgerigars should not have direct access to dirt floors and all aviaries should have hard impenetrable floors to exclude rodents and to enable proper cleaning and disinfection when necessary. Sand and other loose material can be used over the floor but should be regularly replaced. Wet floors are to be avoided as this encourages the development of disease organisms.

Cages should have removable trays to enable frequent cleaning. Perches and nest boxes should be thoroughly cleaned and sprayed or wiped with a disinfectant before new birds are introduced to cages previously occupied by other birds.

Members are encouraged to breed their budgerigars in individual cages for each pair as colony breeding (multiple nest boxes placed in a single aviary) can result in attacks on individual nesting pairs with the consequent loss of eggs and chicks. It is recommended that pairs be housed in cages of not less than 2,000 cm<sup>2</sup> (e.g. 60 cm x 34 cm).

## HEALTH and DISEASE MANAGEMENT.

Stress is the major cause of ill health. Stress management is critical to the husbandry of budgerigars. Stress can be caused by:

- overcrowding of cages and aviaries. An average minimum of 150mm of perch is required for each bird to roost at night. There should be sufficient space for birds to move away from more dominant birds. Breeding cages should be of sufficient size to enable birds to exercise their wings without touch any objects;
- poor quality seed and contaminated food as well as the absence of seed;
- disturbances at night, particularly by rodents and predators. External lighting is useful to enable birds to resettle. Night lights enable hens to return to nest boxes if they have been disturbed;
- transport to and from shows. Birds travel better in communal cages with access to water and seed sprays. Avoid placing birds into hot vehicles or dark unventilated car boots;
- excessive handling and ineffective capture techniques;

- prolonged handling associated with artificial insemination;
- dirty cages and aviaries;
- prolonged breeding and large nests. Each pair should be restricted to raising two rounds per season and each round limited, if possible, to three or four chicks with the excess chicks fostered out to other pairs;
- inappropriate weaning. Although it is normal to remove Unbroken Caps (baby birds) from the breeding cage in the second half of the sixth week of age, this should only be done after the member has observed that the particular bird was capable of feeding independently. Sometimes large buff feathered Unbroken Caps are slow to learn to feed and care should be exercised to ensure they are not weaned too early. Stress arising from premature weaning is a catalyst for feather viruses such as " French Molt";
- parasitic infections, both internal and external, are easily eliminated with proprietary products and a regime of frequent and thorough cleaning;
- introduction of new birds. Acquired budgerigars should be quarantined away from the flock for 6 weeks and treated for common contagious diseases and parasites; and
- birds should be released into aviaries in the morning to enable them to become familiar with their new surroundings before they feed at dusk.

Healthy birds can naturally withstand a greater level of exposure to disease. Members must be observant of the flock as a whole and of each individual bird. Healthy budgerigars are vocal and constantly moving around. A sick bird tends to remain in the same position for extended periods of time.

A suspected sick bird should be removed and isolated and examined to determine the cause and extent of the disease. The condition of the bird's droppings and vent is a broad indicator of disease (size, colour, firmness, and odour). The sharpness of the breast bone indicates whether the disease is chronic. Dullness of the eyes and feather condition also indicate disease. Laboured breathing is a symptom of some diseases. Early intervention significantly increases the chances of medical intervention and successful treatment. A bird with fluffed up feathers trying to keep warm is severely ill.

If a member is not certain as to the treatment of an illness or injury, advice should be sought from a veterinarian specialising in avian diseases or from a more experienced member. There are a number of publications written by specialist avian veterinarians that detail the symptoms and treatment of diseases affecting budgerigars.

Members can intervene successfully if they have a hospital cage that allows the temperature to be regulated and become proficient with the use of crop needles to administer fluids and medications. Sick birds rarely drink medicated water.

Sometimes treatment for disease is not successful or a bird is severely injured and euthanasia is unavoidable. This should be performed by a veterinarian (lethal injection) or an experienced member skilled in euthanasia by decapitation, cervical dislocation or gassing (carbon dioxide and not motor vehicle exhausts).