



Cockatoos, Galahs and Corellas

The cockatoo family includes a number of the more commonly seen bird species in Australia including Galahs, Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, Corellas, Black Cockatoos as well as Major Mitchell's Cockatoos. Weiros (otherwise known as Cockatiels) are also from the Cockatoo family – they will not be covered here so for more information please see our Weiro care sheet.

Many cockatoos can be taught to talk well and can be very vocal. They are long lived and can make fantastic pets in the right environment.

Diet – It is important to avoid diets high in seed as cockatoo species are prone to obesity and can develop fat deposits and other lumps around their body.

Every cockatoo species and individual animal is different in their dietary requirements and preference - for your own tailored diet plan please get in contact with us.

Our general dietary recommendations for most of cockatoo species listed above are as follows:

- 40-70% premium commercial parrot pelleted diet.
- 20-50% vegetables (recommended vegetables include: capsicum, broccoli, chili, corn, carrot, zucchini, squash, spinach, pumpkin, sweet potato, beans and peas), sprouted seed and native vegetation (most Australian blossoms, gum nuts and plants are okay to feed – ensure these are free of wild bird droppings contact).
- 7-15% fruits (i.e. melons, strawberries, banana, blue berries, grapes, peaches, pear, apple) Please ensure that all stone fruits and apples are free of their seeds.
- 10-15% quality commercial seed mix.
- 1-5% snacks for training and as treats (unsalted nuts (i.e. macadamia, cashew and walnut), pasta, eggs and brown rice.)

Housing: We advise a good quality powder coated or stainless steel cage of an appropriate size. Some painted cages can contain lead elements which can be toxic to your bird so please take care when selecting your cage. Cages that have been galvanized with a zinc coating can also cause problems so please select carefully.





Stainless steel or ceramic bowls are generally recommended as these materials are not porous making cleaning easier and more effective. Plastic bowls can become porous after a while and can cause problems if bacteria build up in these areas.

Perches of various sizes are important for exercise of the toes and feet health. They also help to promote the natural wear of their toe nails. Natural perches from native trees are ideal as they generally vary in size anyway.

Please do not provide string or rope toys as they often will fray over time and can cause a gastrointestinal obstruction if swallowed.

If you are feeding a balanced diet, then cuttlefish and other supplements are not needed.

Environmental enrichment is highly recommended and encouraged. Simple things like utilizing cardboard toilet rolls to hide food can provide hours of entertainment for many birds.



It is important that your bird gets enough sleep as long-day light exposure can stimulate excessive moulting and increased reproductive activity. We recommend you keep to the natural day length. If your bird is kept inside in a well-lit area, then you can cover the cage when the sun goes down and place them in a dark room to ensure that their day length is not too long.

Any new bird should be introduced very slowly and gradually as many cockatoos (particularly hand raised birds) do not like the idea of a new bird taking up residence in their cage.

Common diseases: One of the most common diseases that we see in cockatoos is an upset gastrointestinal tract. They will often present for regurgitation, vomiting or diarrhoea. If you see any of these signs we recommend a consultation as there are many different causes and if left untreated you may be putting your bird's life at risk.

Obesity is very common in cockatoo species. In many cases this is related to diets high in seed. Fatty lumps can develop and interfere with your bird's movement. In many cases the size of the lump can be reduced by placing them on a more appropriate diet. Sometimes these lumps can be more sinister and it is best to bring your bird in if you notice any lumps or swellings present.





In some cases surgery is required to remove the abnormal growths.

Upper respiratory tract infection is characterized by sneezing or ocular discharge and is common in young birds. Once again it is highly advised to bring them in for an appointment as there are a range of different causes of upper respiratory tract disease. Chlamydia infection is common in young birds, this is a serious disease that can be transferred to other birds AND humans.

Cockatoos are generally very curious and sometimes get themselves into trouble with foreign objects. It is quite common for them to eat or chew on items that they shouldn't (jewelry, plastic toys, rope toys, electrical cords etc.). If you are concerned that your bird may have eaten or chewed on something that they shouldn't have, then please get in touch with us.

If you decide to clip your bird's wings it is highly advisable that it is performed by someone with



experience. Incorrect wing clips can lead to serious problems. It is common for birds with incorrect wing clips to hurt themselves when they fall. See our wing clip handout for more information.

Reproductive diseases and behavioural problems are also quite common.

If you are at all concerned about your bird please get in touch with us.

Veterinary care: Regular check-ups every 6-12 months are important, as birds are very good at hiding any illnesses that they have. These check-ups allow problems to be detected early before they worsen.

Microchipping is also highly recommended as we see many birds that escape each year. Microchipping allows your contact details to be easily found if your bird is handed in to any veterinary clinic or good rescue facility. We use a specialized small microchip that is inserted into your bird's pectoral muscle; this is a quick, simple procedure that can be performed in a consultation time slot.

If you have any further questions about your cockatoo please don't hesitate to contact us.

