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## About the Author

Lara Chambers thinks that the canary can be an ideal pet for adults and families.

Lara said, " These little birds are very bright, active and easy to care for."

"And, they don't need a lot of companion time like most of the parrots and other birds do."

"They each have their own habits and friends who see ours sometimes decide to get one of their own."

Lara said, " I wanted to share what I have learned with people who have or are getting a bird so that they can get started right."

"The tips and stories I share will save them time and money. They will also make it easier for them to have a long and happy relationship with their canary."

"It's not complicated, mostly common-sense but it's handy to have someone explain things which experienced canary owners take for granted but are very important for everyone to know!"

"The needs of a canary are different in various respects to many other birds. Mostly, they are less demanding."

" But there are some areas where they can have trouble and my readers will need to take action."

"Your canary is waiting for you. With my book, you can have some very happy years together!"

## Introduction

The canary is a great choice as a pet.



It doesn't need as much attention as many other birds and is a very lively pet.

They also don't need as much in the way of housing or accessories (toys, etc).

You will find it easy to keep your bird amused.

It will reward you for your care and companionship with a colorful display and interesting antics.

You can keep two or more canaries together and they are also okay with some, but not all, other small cage birds.

I'll try to help you with each stage of your canary adventure and discuss the points you need to consider at every stage of canary ownership.

I will share with you what I have learned about canaries so that you can save time and know how to avoid some of the common problems.

A canary might live from eight to ten years but the owner's commitment is rewarded many times over by the antics your bird shows you.

They can be a good first pet for older children with some supervision.

But, they should not be handled unless it is necessary.

Before you choose your bird, you should choose the right veterinarian for it (and you).

You will learn what sort of cage will best suit your bird and your budget, and how to handle the situation where you have other pets as well as your new bird.

I wrote this like I was telling a good friend the best tips I have so they would get off to a good start with their new bird.

Let's get started. . . . .

## Getting to Know the Canary

Canaries were first tamed and taken to Europe more than five hundred years ago.

They were very popular and sold for high prices which encouraged many people to breed them.

Breeders have developed a wide range of breeds .

They are a hardy bird but fragile because of their light structure.

Most can be taught to comfortably sit on your hand and some can learn some simple tricks.

### Which Canary?



Do you want a canary with a particular color, shape or ability (such as a good singer)?

These traits will be hard to judge while the birds are very young, before their first molt at six months.

But, that is the best age to get a canary which you hope to interact with.

If you want a pet bird, you should try to find a breeder and ask them if they will sell you a bird of the type you want which is not show quality.

Choosing a bird is usually done by looking at those available in a group. Often, they are crowded together on a perch. That's not ideal for them, so make allowances for the conditions.

Often, a couple of the birds will stare closely at you while most of the others will move away or become agitated.

The birds which show some curiosity are probably the most likely to select as a pet.

If you want a singing canary, males are much better but it can be difficult to sex them before they are mature. The males have a bump near the vent.

Your best tactic is to ask the breeder for their expert opinion.

If singing is an important to you, delay the selection until their sex is more apparent.

You will need to accept that it will need more training to get on your hand.

Don't abandon your new bird if it is not a male. The female birds may sing but not with the variety and power of the males. They still make great pets and can be great companions when you show them some attention.



## Choosing a Veterinarian for Your Canary

This is very important for your bird's health and your peace of mind.

If you already have a preferred vet for other pets in the household, you should ask them if they have a vet at their practice who specializes in treating birds or can they recommend one?

Most will advise you to contact a vet that specializes in pet birds. Some will say they are capable of handling bird problems but any experienced bird owner will tell you to get connected to a specialist.

They have the specific knowledge, more recent, relevant experience and understanding of birds and the handling of them.

Even if there is only one avian vet in your area, go to their practice and get some basic information about them.

Then, book an appointment with the vet to learn more and see how they treat their customers.

Have your questions written out and read through them a couple of times before you go there so you can minimize the amount of their time – that's what the cost is based on.

You want to know:

- ? What vet groups are they current members of?
- ? Do they have an after hours service and what are the costs?
- ? What experience they have, particularly with canaries?

Other important considerations is the distance of the practice from your home and if they have more than one knowledgeable vet or assistant if the vet is away or sick?

*Some links are provided to groups of Avian Vets in the Resources Chapter at the end of this book.*

## Getting Your Canary on Your Hand

This is much easier with a young bird up to about six months than it would be with an older one.

Don't be disappointed if your canary does not respond as quickly as you hope to this task. It's a major task for any small bird to accept.

They are naturally wary of anything unusual like you. And your hand is probably larger than the whole bird!

Try to have the room empty except for yourself and your canary when you start your training sessions so that there are few distractions and the bird is not distracted or frightened by other noises while you want its full attention.

Move slowly and speak gently. You can quietly say anything in a soft calm voice. Keep talking even if you just say the bird's name over and over. If you are silent and then start talking, it may distract the bird and cause it to be a little nervous.

When you are training the bird, having one perch is best. This helps your bird to focus on your hand and you. It also reduces the places it can go. Most birds won't go to the floor because that would make them feel more vulnerable.

If it grabs the wire side of the cage, you are probably pushing it too hard. Ease back, and let the bird become used to your hand being in the cage.

Keep the sessions short – ten minutes is plenty. Be ready to stop a session if the bird displays any stress and doesn't settle again quickly.

Remove their food and just leave one perch for them during the session.

Put a little bribe, like a small bit of dandelion or lettuce between your thumb and first finger to tempt the bird on to your hand.

Put your hand a couple of inches in front of the bird with the top finger level with their chest.

They are likely to take the risk of moving at least one foot on to your finger so they can get the greenery. Keep steady.

Let it have its well-earned treat, then wait for it to move back to its perch.

I would let it rest while I put back any other perches and its food container.

In future sessions after the first successful one, I would try to get at least two successes to help the bird learn the maneuver and become okay with it.

Teaching the bird to stay on your hand as you take it out of the cage or move to your shoulder should wait until you are sure the bird is comfortable with you having it on your hand.

Always do your training session only after making sure the room has no open doors or windows.

## Choosing a Cage

There’s a large variety of cages for sale. Many are ornate or odd-shaped. Those are designed to appeal to the owner. But, they are less useful for the poor birds.



Canaries need as much space in their cage as possible.

The width should be at least two feet (60 cm). This will give the bird enough space to exercise its wings even if there is not enough room for it to actually fly very far.

Start with just two perches. Put one from the front to the back, about four inches from each side of the cage. Make sure that the bird’s tail will not come too close to the side wall of the cage behind the perch when it is sitting there.

It’s usually risky to buy or use a cage which someone else has kept birds in.

They may not have cleaned the cage as thoroughly as is needed and some older cages may have unsuitable materials in them which could harm your birds.

You can clean the cages but doing a n effective job on pre-owned equipment is not easy.

If you get anew bird, give it a fresh start with a modern cage and fittings. You can use the common seed containers which look like a “D” on its side or covered plastic boxes which fix to the outside of the cage and where

the bird puts its head through to get the seed. These will keep most of the seed hulls from spraying outside the cage area and prevent so droppings or other rubbish getting into the seed bowl.

But, some birds don't like them. You may have to provide alternatives after giving them a fair trial.

Whatever containers you provide, husks will gather on top of the seed. You must ensure to clear these away so the bird has access to seed all the time.

An important addition to the cage is a clip for putting a piece of cuttlebone in which the birds will nibble at. This provides some calcium and helps to keep their beaks even.

If the beak starts to appear uneven, you will need to consult your vet and get them to trim it.

Watch them do it and then ask their opinion if it is something you can safely do yourself.

## Your Bird's Body Language

Watching the bird is great fun. It's also a very important way to see what could be early signs of problems so you can get it checked or take corrective action yourself.



Your observations of the canary's everyday actions and reactions will help you to notice when their behavior or appearance changes. That can be a warning sign or just a change due to the bird learning a better way to do something.

### *Reaction to Your first Approach*

When you start to get your bird accustomed to you so you can interact with it you will probably see one of these reactions:

It might fly to the farthest point in the cage away from you.

That's a normal flight response.

It may instead start hopping from one foot to the other. That bird's probably less frightened but it's keeping it's energy level high so that it can try to escape if something worries it.

A third reaction is to become very stiff. This is a more serious type of fright and needs to be approached slowly and carefully. The bird could become ill if it is not allowed to calm down for a few minutes.

If the bird grabs the wire on the side of the cage, it can be a sign of great stress. If its breathing starts to become noisy, move back as the bird is highly stressed and must be allowed to get its breathing rate back to normal.

### *If the Bird is Quiet*

One of the canary's endearing qualities is its liveliness and ability to amuse itself.

If your bird seems listless or more quiet than usual, you need to consider a visit to the vet.

Check the bird's food and water for cleanliness and freshness.

If it is eating well and its droppings appear the same color and consistency as usual, it may have a chill.

***Don't Delay Getting a Check-up!***

Canaries are small and live life at a fast pace.

If they become ill from any condition, that can become serious very quickly.

Their constitution cannot be depended on to fight infection by itself.

If it's not behaving normally, call your vet.

You may want to check with a more experienced canary owner before getting paid help.

Just make sure that you are a caring owner who treats their birds promptly when needed.

## Canary Anatomy

### *Eyes*

Most canaries have black eyes except for the albino which have red ones.

Your bird's eyes are very powerful and its brain can process many images each second. This is an essential part of its defenses against predators.



The eyes are placed where they get a broad range of vision for seeking food and friends as well as warning of the approach of predators.

### *Ears*

Your bird's ears are under a layer of feathers about halfway back on the sides of its head.

Please **don't** disturb the layer of feathers just to try to see the ears. This can cause damage to the feathers which the bird must maintain in perfect condition so it is properly streamlined for flight and also protecting it from cold and moisture.

The head and ears are very easy to damage and almost impossible to repair.

### *Beak*

Proper maintenance of your bird's beak is essential for it to consume its food and clean and oil its feathers.

Canaries can develop beak problems.

An overgrown beak may be caused by dietary problems, mites, liver disease, infections, abscesses or when your bird was bred from birds which had such problems through the generations.

Clipping the beak is best learned from a local experienced owner or vet. Do **not** try to do it from instructions in any book.

### *Legs*

Your canary's legs are fragile and the support they give the bird is critical.



They have 4 claws, three at the front and one pointing to the back.

Their claws grow continuously and will probably need to be trimmed from time to time. You should get this done by your bird vet or a capable, experienced canary owner so you can see the way they do it with greatest safety.

Do **NOT** use sandpaper sheets in the cage or on the perches! These are sold for wearing down the claws but don't do a good job.

Some types of mites are a serious problem for canaries and can introduce other problems.

Ask your vet on your first visit about whether there are preventative treatments which you can have in place all the time to protect your birds.

### ***Feathers***

Feathers are more than decoration.

They provide protection from weather conditions and your canary will put a lot of time every day into smoothing and cleaning them.

It also applies special oil to the feathers from its own body which assists their purposes.

Canaries lose all their feathers, but not all at the same time, over the period of their annual molt (or moult). If your bird shows a bare patch, check with the vet as that is not usual

When new feathers appear, they may have a thin line of blood in one edge. That's a normal part of its growth. But blood on the feathers at any other time should be checked.

### ***Under the Tail***

This area should be clean with maybe a very occasional partial dropping sticking there. Build-up of droppings or any kind of lump other than the small bump on the male should be checked with your vet.

## Warning Signs

This section gives you some of the most common signs that your bird may be sick or becoming unwell.

Small birds like canaries can become seriously ill far quicker than larger pets like dogs and cats.

The best practice is to get help when you see signs that cannot be quickly sorted out .

Otherwise, it can soon be too late for any action to help your bird.

Canaries are very cautious and will not normally stay on the floor of their cage unless they are feeding, drinking or actively doing some other activity.

Canaries are very clean birds. If you see droppings stuck around their vent, gently wipe them away. If more are stuck there when you check later that day, or bulges other than the small one on the males, get them checked.

They are always active and interested. If not, find out why!

The best defense against problems is to look over your bird carefully and get a clear mental image (and a photo also if you want to) of the bird in its normal condition, so you can recognize changes fairly quickly.

Many owners of all kinds of pets fail to notice changes in their pet's behavior or appearance as the changes are slow over a period of time.

With canaries, the changes can be fairly rapid, so being alert can be the way to save your bird's life sometimes!

## **What Does a Canary Owner Need?**

The first thing you need is to have a share of patience and enough enthusiasm which will keep you motivated when things don't always work exactly the way you want or expect.

You need enough time to have regular sessions with your bird so that the training will progress smoothly.

If you have to have the sessions at varied times, your bird will take longer to become used to you and start to accept you.

Be organized. Sort out your budget, your goals with your bird or birds and how you will house and care for them as well as what you will need to get the results you want.

Be prepared to pay a fair price for your bird and the supplies it needs. Don't expect to get a lot of advice from the breeders or other suppliers if you don't buy from them.

I buy seed and other supplies from a specialist supplier because they know their products and use them. Most of the staff have pets of some kind themselves. They are a good source of information about breeders and clubs in your area as well.

Join a club if there is one in your area. You will get help and advice from people that know what works in your location.

If you can't find a local club, contact a state or national organization who will have details of any in your area.

## **The Advantages of Clubs**

Joining a club for canary owners is one of the best steps which you can take to increase your enjoyment and success in the hobby.

The membership fees are usually less the amount you save by having access to experienced advice and even direct help from other members.

Most clubs have connections to local and more distant suppliers of related products.

They may have deals available which can save you even more and most members can be relied on to share their experiences with those products, and also tips which are only learned by trying things with their own birds.

You may find it very helpful to join before you even buy your first bird and get opinions about the most suitable varieties to suit your needs and where the best stock is likely to be found.

Many clubs have regular exhibitions where anyone can go and see canaries which their owners have primed for the occasion.

You will find most exhibitors willing to share their opinions and knowledge as long as you don't take too much time.

Most clubs are associated with National and even International groups, so you can contact owners and product suppliers as well as experts in other countries.

Most experienced bird owners remember having the same challenges and doubts which you may have in your early years with your bird.

They will usually give you advice and I expect that you will enjoy doing the same for new owners when you have progressed a little down the track.

## How Much Will it Cost

I can just give you an idea of the essential items and some desirable extras which you could start with.

I won't quote dollar amounts because they vary, usually upward, fairly often.

I strongly believe that you get a good deal at most suppliers, but a little research and preparation will mean you can reduce the amount you spend, or increase the value you get fairly easily.

You can save money by buying plain, durable and safe cages and accessories. The ornate, flashy items are intended to attract the pet owner's money and have little attraction or benefit for your new bird.

I suggest buying from professional breeders to get quality birds. Unless you intend to show or breed your birds, you can ask for birds which they don't expect to be show standard. They are healthy birds but may have features which are not exactly in line with the show standards.

Some breeders don't sell young stock until they are mature so they can be sure whether they are male or female and what characteristics they have.

Their young birds may need more work to tame well but they will have passed through their first stressful time, their first molt, so you can expect less risk in the first few months of your ownership.

Most breeders will allow you to exchange the bird within the first few days. This gives you enough time to get it checked by your chosen avian vet. Ask the vet how long any tests they do on the bird will take to show results so that you can get them within the guaranteed period.

Some breeders don't give a guarantee but most of them have strong reputations which are almost like a guarantee.

This is another thing you can find out if you visit or join a club before looking for the right birds for you.

A good indicator of the quality of the stock you may see at market or the homes of small breeders is the condition of the birds and also their surroundings.

If the birds are not happy and active, they will probably not change when you take one home.

Be polite and walk away. If you were concerned enough about the conditions, contact your local animal protection organization.

## **Fun with Your Canary**

Canaries like diversions such as a swing or a plastic lattice ball.

**No Mirrors:** Mirrors are great for most other cage birds but they aren't as good for canaries.

Canaries are a more solitary bird for most of the year and males are likely to view the reflection as a rival rather than a possible friend!

**Swing Tips:** Select a swing with a perch that is wide enough for the bird to get a good grip.

Check there are no gaps or other parts where your bird might catch its claw or wing.

Make sure it is securely fixed in place.

Do not use a rope swing because the loose threads might trap the bird's claw and cause serious injury!

**Balls:** Some birds will roll a light solid ball about the floor of the cage but the perforated plastic balls seem more popular. You can tuck a few small pieces of green food into the holes for your bird to nibble on.

Make sure that you take the ball out and clean all the remains (leaf and poop) from the ball so there is less risk of germ build-up.

**Pole Nibbles:** A friend fixed a thin pole (about a quarter inch wide) to a square of wood and put pieces of fruit on the pole.

The bird went crazy nibbling at the fruit and the whole thing cost just a few cents. Make sure that the wood is untreated and safe for use with the bird.

## Your Bird and Other Pets

If you have other pets in your home, introducing a canary can be a risk.

But, most types of pets can become less of a threat so that all can live in the same house without harm or stress.

I think it’s almost impossible to just rely on keeping your pets in different areas of your home unless the other pets are always confined to the yard, a pen or a tank.

If you have snakes, ferrets, rats or mice or other predators which are not domesticated to the same level as dogs and cats, you should avoid the problem by not getting a bird.

If you do, you will probably never be able to fully guarantee its complete safety.

Large, aggressive cats or dogs will have to be penned or restrained and carefully supervised whenever they are in the same area as the bird.

But, even smaller, less aggressive cats and dogs may take an opportunity if it comes.

It depends on their training and your level of supervision.

I have had dogs, cats and birds co-exist. The cats and dogs were warned about staying clear of the area around the bird and that was enforced verbally and occasionally with a quick raising of a rolled magazine.

Never leave a cat or dog alone in the same area as your bird.

### *What about other types of birds?*

Canaries are usually more comfortable by themselves than other types of pet birds.

Don’t put them with budgerigars, other parrots or other breeds or they will be bullied or attacked. If you want more than one canary without breeding, get females.



2



## Thinking about Breeding?



Many of the happiest canary owners breed canaries as well.

It is a great hobby and some are very successful running it as a business.

But, it is something which needs thinking through if this is something you want to do.

The first consideration is to work out if you will run it as a business or a hobby?

Then, you need to decide if you have the funds, knowledge and other resources to make a success of it.

Bird breeding already has some big players and networks of breeders who sell some birds directly to the public and also supply retail stores.

Their overheads are probably lower than you will have because of the time they have been operating, their experience and reputation and connections established in past years.

If you are going to do it as a hobby, there are some questions which you need to resolve before you start on that path.

### *Excess young birds*

Each mated pair usually produces three to five chicks each season. How well are you prepared for the care of the mature birds and the chicks which can be quite time and energy consuming?

What will you do if you cannot sell some of your young stock?

They may be unpopular colors and your costs to produce them may be higher than the local dealers are selling similar young birds for.

You will probably need a license from local authorities and need to check if you are even allowed to operate a business or keep the number of birds you want to have in the area where you live.

You may also have to check if any neighbors object to the idea on the grounds of noise, reduction of amenity, parking or other reasons.

You will also need more vet services. Your birds may need to be

vaccinated before they can be offered for sale. You may need licenses if you want to sell any birds to people in other areas of your country.

Some states may require them to be quarantined at your cost if they cross state borders.

None of this is intended to discourage you from seeking to become a successful breeder.

I'm just pointing out some factors which you need to research and deal with before putting more time and money into the project.

## **Feed and Treats**

Canaries are fairly easy to provide with good food.

Most owners probably base their feeding on a seed mixture with some extras.

Some use fortified seeds or pellets which have added minerals and/or vitamins. I prefer to supply these additives in natural form as green feed and fresh, clean fruit and vegetable pieces.

You need to ensure that all the food you give to your birds is not contaminated or poor quality.

Fresh, clean water is essential to their health just as it is to ours.

They also like a bath which should be made available to them in the morning so they have time to get their feathers dry and oiled before they sleep that night.

Seed mixtures vary but canary seed is often a major component. High fat seeds are supplied in smaller proportions.

Lettuce. Romaine is a special favorite. Only give a small, fresh piece at a time.

### ***Extras***

Chickweed (always make sure it's clean and fresh).

A clean piece of cuttlefish in a holder attached to the inside of their cage.

Some birds may have difficulty getting scrapings of that piece so you can also put a few small shavings off it in with their seed.

No Grit. This is another recommendation which is disputed by some successful breeders. The people that advise me say that the canaries don't need it and may risk it obstructing their insides if you give them any.

### ***Do Not Supply:***

This is a brief list of substances which will harm your bird. Some, like chocolate, tea and other caffeine drinks, contain a substance which is poisonous to dogs, cats and some other creatures as well as our birds.

Don't give them:

- Alcohol
- Onions
- Mushrooms.
- Avocado.
- Cherry - This is disputed by some owners but the risk is such that I would not use any part of a cherry tree or the seeds anywhere near my birds.
- Apple seeds – Small pieces of apple flesh are usually okay. Always peel them before giving the birds small pieces. Many stores sell apples which have substances applied to the outside which make them shine. This is not good for canaries.

Check with your vet for current information about other possible dangers.

## **Hazards for Your Bird**

There are plenty of potent risks for us humans in our houses and surroundings.

The canary is very small and needs the help of every member of your household to avoid a lot of things, including some which you may never have thought would be a problem!

### ***Outside Aviaries***

Many people have birds of various types in outside aviaries. Some are simple structures with a wooden or metal frame covered by small mesh wire.

That isn't a good way to keep canaries and really isn't safe enough by itself to keep your birds safe.

The wire needs to go at least twelve inches (30 cm) into the earth and, if it doesn't have the bottom few inches covered in cement, they should be curled outward to make it more difficult for vermin, two or four legged to burrow under the wire and into the cage area.

You also need to have a second wire barrier about twelve inches inside the first. That needs to be as secure and strong as the outer wire.

This will prevent predator birds reaching through the wire to grab small birds which they are experts at dragging out through any small gaps they find!

### ***Light***

Sunlight is loved by your canary but you need to protect your bird from too much direct heat.

That heat which you may not even feel can also put pressure on your bird's delicate breathing system.

That will also spoil their fresh food pieces and that could lead to your bird becoming ill.

Make sure they have plenty of water and keep that shaded as well so it doesn't warm up.

### *Draughts*

Although a healthy bird will appreciate a light, cool breeze on a hot day, they can be seriously affected if they are in the path of any cold draughts.

If you aren't sure whether there is a draft in the area, light a plain candle and take it around there so you can see if the flame flickers due to a subtle draft.

### *Aerosols and Spays*

We use a lot of convenient and powerful sprays and powders to clean our homes and keep them smelling fresh.

But, these substances are even more dangerous for your canary than most other small creatures.

That's because the canary is built for flying quickly.

It's breathing system is a marvel and also very susceptible to even small amounts of these products.

Don't use them or take your bird into an area where they have recently been used.

Aside from canaries, sprays are particularly dangerous for fish in a tank unless you cover the tank or take it out of the room while the spray is used and keep it away until the air in that room is free of the residues.

For canaries, the only safe option is to take the bird and cage elsewhere and return after all the residues had plenty of time to disappear.

## **Molting**

Molting is an annual event in your canary's life.

Their first molt occurs about six months of age when they mature and grow their first covering of adult feathers.

Molting can cause your bird some stress and some young birds die during their first molt. There may be other factors in their health, environment etc., which add more stress at that important time than the poor bird can handle.

After the first molt, they change their feathers during the last few weeks of summer. They may also have another molt if they are housed where the owner and their family have an active social life and the warmth and light during the holidays is like late summer weather.

This, of course, puts extra pressure on the bird's health.

Get your vet's advice if you should add anything to your bird's regular diet during the molt to help them cope better.

Provide them access to a bath with a low level of water in it during the early part of the day and take it out when the bird has bathed. It can be harmful to let it bathe later in the day and then sleep with moisture in its feathers.

## Resources

### Avian Specialist Veterinarians

#### *U.S.A.*

##### **Association of Avian Veterinarians**

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

#### *Australia*

##### **Association of Avian Veterinarians (Australia Committee)**

<http://www.aavac.com.au/>

#### *Europe*

##### **European Committee of the Association of Avian Veterinarians**

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

This site is being developed. The page for listing its members and their contact details was blank when I checked before publication.

### Shows

#### *U.S.A.*

##### **National Cage Bird Show**

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

This show has a long history with the Annual Show being held in a different U.S.A. city every year. It caters for all types of cage birds. Reading the home page suggests that canaries may be a special focus. I can understand that!



## **The Best is Ahead for You!**

When you have a canary companion, or several of them, your world will change for the better!

Your canary will help you feel better when you are down and give you more opportunities to have fun at little or no cost.

You will find that other canary owners are a happy and helpful bunch, tied together by their love for and enjoyment of the small songsters.

Wherever you go, you will find canaries and their happy owners.

The cost and effort in looking after your canary is quickly repaid.

I hope you and your family have as much fun with your bird as I have with ours.

And, please help these little birds by telling people about them and how great a pet they can be.

*Lara Chambers*

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