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## About the Author

Sylvia Meldrum was given her first budgerigar by her parents.

Sylvia said, "I wanted a dog but our home had only a small yard. But, that little bird was such fun that budgies are still my favorite pet."

Now, Sylvia shares what she learned with anyone that wants a happy and healthy pet for themselves or their whole family.

Sylvia said, "They're a good choice for people that want a pet which doesn't cost a lot and is fairly easy to care for. They repay that cost and effort many times over!"

She said, "My parents used the budgie to help me learn that looking after a pet was a serious responsibility as well as a lot of fun!"

Sylvia said, "This book is based on my experience keeping budgies and the information which I've researched and got from generous friends and advisors through many years as a happy budgie owner."

"I covered many points about their care so that readers can have a great relationship with their bird or birds."

"I want people to know what's involved before they get their first budgie. And, if they already have one, I am sure they'll find some tips here which they can use to make their pet and themselves even happier than they already are!"

## Introduction

Budgerigars are native to Australia where the name was Australian grass parrot. They are also known as parakeets which is the family of birds they are part of.

Under both names, they are one of the most popular cage birds in the USA and many other countries.

Their owners may just enjoy their company or breed them to sell and exhibit them at shows.

Though they are small and usually inexpensive to buy and look after, we need to carefully consider our needs and those of the new bird thoroughly before we get one.

I share lots of good advice and some warnings which will help you avoid some risks and unnecessary expenses with your pet.

These birds will repay your efforts a hundred-fold with their bright chatter and fun ways.

The main thing to remember is they are always totally dependent on you for their health and safety. They rush about and we need to be watchful that their environment is as safe as we can provide.

Some new owners had overlooked important points like what they will do if they have to leave their pet home when they go away overnight or even longer.

Read the book through to get a general view and then review those points which most affect you. Then, you will be well prepared for a long and happy relationship with your budgerigar.

*Sylvia Meldrum*

## Before You get a Budgie

Getting a budgie is easy and they are a lot of fun to have around.

Before you get one, check that you are ready and able to commit to all that budgie ownership involves?

Getting a budgie is starting a lifetime commitment that might be from five to fifteen years!

The budgie needs a cage, accessories, vet care, time and maintenance. None of these things are cheap.

Your bird's needs are a bit different from looking after a cat or dog.

It's very small, fragile and fast moving.

The time commitment includes daily chores and plenty of companionship.

To keep your bird in the best condition, you should play with him for a reasonable period every day and also ensure that you or other people he knows are in the room with him for a large part of each day.

A lonely budgie is a sad bird which is more likely to become ill or get into trouble when it tries to find things to do. They will pick at their feathers and these areas can become infected over time.

Another important factor is that the bird needs to be checked at least daily. If you travel frequently or plan to go away for holidays, you must arrange for someone who is reliable and likes birds to check your bird at least daily.



They have to change the water and check the seed is not empty or just a lot of husks. If you have someone looking after your bird, you need to authorize them to take to your bird to the vet and arrange with the vet's staff in advance that they will

charge you for those visits instead of expecting the minder to pay when they

go there.

Many vets insist on payment at the time of consultation and you need to arrange any other agreement before there is an emergency.

Does any member of your household have any condition which might be affected by your bird's presence? There is no problem with babies or small children, you just need to ensure that the bird is not out of its cage when they are in the room and that they, in turn, never touch the bird.



## Safe Home

However safe you think your home is, it will need a safety check before you get your bird.

Set aside a few hours at least a couple of days before your bird will arrive to do the check because you may find several things which need attention.

Windows which are regularly left open for air circulation need secure screens to keep intruders out and your bird in if it should ever get out of its cage unsupervised.

Always put a curtain over the windows in the room where you let the bird fly about while you are there so that it doesn't think the window is an opening which it can get out through.

Drapes and other material items should be checked for loose threads which can trap your bird's claws, feet or neck.

Pot plants must be checked to ensure they are safe for birds to nibble.

Fish tanks must be covered with a screen which let oxygen get into the water but stops the bird from doing the same!

Ceiling fans are the cause of many bird injuries and deaths every year. Don't let your birds out when you have any fans or similar gear operating.

Coated cookware should not be used where there are birds. They give off fumes which make them sick and can cause death.

And your bird should never be in the kitchen because lingering fumes from the cookware's previous use or sprays which have been used there can harm your bird even hours later.

No bird should be allowed in a room where anything with a non-stick coating has been used or is within its reach.

Scents from a candle, air-freshener or spray deodorant could harm your bird.

The bathroom is another no-go area for birds. Apart from the hazardous chemicals in the various cleaning preparations used and stored there, the sink, bath, shower stall and the toilet all have enough water for your bird to

drown in. Then, there are the other hazards like open containers of medicines, toothpaste, cosmetics and other dangerous substances.

Don't let your bird(s) out when you are cooking, using tools or other powered equipment. It's just an unnecessary risk.

Although budgies are very small, they have been known to nibble electric and other cords with deadly results.

It's worth checking all rooms and clearing away part packets of tablets etc., which are kept elsewhere for convenience but are deadly to your bird.

Never take your bird outside unless it is securely caged and there are two layers of strong wire with the inner wire at least six inches inside the outer layer. Wild birds, rats and other creatures can easily pull a small bird right through the bars or wire of their cage!

## Cages



There are a fantastic variety of cages on offer. Remember that most of the items on offer are for the birds but the manufacturers focus their appeals on the new owners who actually have the cash! So, many of the cages are nice to look at but not so good to live in.

I recommend a cage which is as wide as possible that will fit the area you want to place it in. That will give your bird room to exercise while a tall but narrower cage will limit its exercise area - few birds like flying up and down instead of from side to side!

The bars on your cage should not be so wide that your bird can get its head or wing through and then get caught. But, they must not be so close together that they could trap its claw or a leg.

A half inch gap (one and a half centimeters) should be okay. But, be guided by the cages you see in use.

Your bird's health and happiness will be influenced by the cage you choose to get for them and how you fit it out.

Your bird's cage needs to be in good condition and made of safe materials.

Metal poisoning is one of the most common risks. Zinc and lead are the most common causes.

The early effects of the slow ingestion of the poison are not always noticeable until the bird suddenly becomes very ill.

This can happen with cages which are not checked for presence of unsafe materials by manufacturers or regulators.

Powder-coated metal is common and works well as long as the powder-coating remains intact.

If there are any welds in the cage, they need to be checked for unsafe substances. They may also be a point of weakness as the cage ages.

### ***Avoid Used Cages***

I recommend getting a brand-new cage to reduce the risks which you take on with most second-hand cages.

You need to check the materials are all safe and there are no sharp edges etc., with any cage you buy.

The previous owner may have used an unsafe paint on the cage to cover over any imperfections in its appearance.

But there are also other risks with used cages.

Throw away the seed and water containers, especially if there are any traces of dirt, food or water in them.

Even if the cage looks very clean and there is no damage to the paint or other coating, you must clean it thoroughly to prevent any infection from the previous occupant. Check with your vet about what cleaning agents are safe for your bird.

### ***Other Cages to Avoid***

Cages that are designed to attract bird owners may not be comfortable for their birds.

Cages which may be too small for the bird to get any exercise inside it.

Any cages which have fittings or decorative bits which a bird could hurt itself on.

Round cages which give your bird less actual space for toys and perches.

### ***Location***

They like to have a wall or a corner of the room behind their cage. I think this helps them feel safer as no predators can come that way.

Don't put their cage close to a window because it will get wide changes in temperature.

### *Perches*



If your bird's feet can wrap right around the perch so that the claws overlap, the bird will not have a secure grip. That could cause damage to the foot or a fall. Only use perches which are at least thick enough that the bird's foot does not wrap right around it.

Putting sandpaper sheaths on perches seems useful but they need to be promptly changed if they become fouled or wet.

Plastic perches are usually strong and easy to clean but I prefer safe wood perches and clean or replace them frequently.

I've seen many mirrors and other accessories supplied with thin plastic perches which could cause problems for budgerigars. If their feet can circle the perch completely, it will cause injury over time.

Before you use branches from real trees, check that the tree is a type which your vet approves of for budgies. Also, ensure it has not been sprayed with anything.



### *Nestbox*

Although I don't recommend people think about breeding from their pet birds because of the relative high cost and very overcrowded market, I include this information for people that decide to do so after they get some experience.

Keep to the traditional plain wooden box with a perch at

the front and a simple lift-off top.

Discard the box after breeding season to prevent cross-contamination and make sure you check the birds frequently.

## Feeding Your Budgerigar



I know many people that still feed mostly seeds to their budgies. They only buy small quantities at a time to ensure freshness and also feed fruit and vegetables to their birds to make their diets healthier.

Don't bother paying extra for colored mixtures which are sold as vitamin enhanced in some way. Most of the mixtures seem to have the vitamins in a coating which your bird pulls off without eating it when it takes the husk of the seed!

For your birds, just like humans, the best way to get their vitamins and trace elements is from the fruit and vegetables which they eat.

Most people still feed seed as a major proportion of their budgies' diet but many have switched to pelleted food with a little bit of seed.

The reason for the switch is concern over the levels of fat and carbohydrate in seed.

Never let your bird touch any fruit seeds or stones

But, whether you feed mostly seed or pellets, you should also give your bird some fresh, untainted fruit and vegetables.

Some vegetables and fruit which budgies enjoy and are good for them in small quantities are:



Corn kernels

Broccoli

Apples. Do not give them any seeds, stalk or peel. Many suppliers spray the apples with

a chemical just to make them shiny. This may not be good for your bird.

Brussels sprouts

Carrots (small pieces or strips)

### ***Seed Blocks***

Seed blocks are very popular with the birds I've had.

But there is one hazard which I've not seen mentioned anywhere. A friend showed me the almost consumed seed-block she took from her bird's cage. The end of the wire which had been inside the block was exposed and it had a sharp point! She was quite upset because the bird had been eating seeds near that point. She waved the bird away so she could remove what remained of the block before it could impale itself. I don't know if many of the blocks have this problem but I suggest that you watch your bird's progress and remove the block before they are even close to reaching the inner end of the wire.

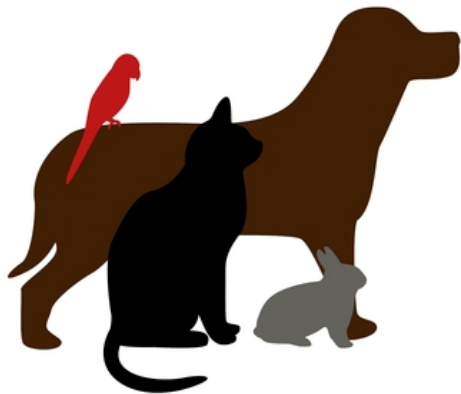
My friend stopped supplying her bird with any seed blocks until she finds a supplier of blocks which have the inner end of the wire made safe in some way.

The alternative is to remove the part-consumed block from your bird's cage before it gets near the wire inside it, then you break the remains of the block apart and check if the wire has a sharp point. If the end of the wire has been smoothed down and bent over so it is safe, I'd buy more of that brand. I still check each block when the wire starts to become exposed, just in case.

If the wire is pointed, I get a different brand of seed block.



## Your Budgie and Other Pets



Budgies have to be protected from most animals and even other birds.

The little bird is a very active and nervous creature. It naturally takes flight if it believes there is danger about.

But, I know many people who have cats and dogs as well as budgies.

Most dogs and even cats can be taught to stay clear of your little budgie. That requires you or another responsible person (not just a small child) is in the room where the bird is all the time that another pet is there or even just has access.

A good tip is to make sure that you and the rest of the family play and pay attention to your other pets a little more during the first weeks you have your new bird to reduce any jealousy or hostility about the new arrival possibly taking their place in the "pecking order" of the family.

If you have a ferret or other carnivore which are not as domesticated as dogs and cats, forget about having a budgie because the risk is too high and the bird will never be a happy member of your family.

## Choosing a Veterinarian

It's important to find a vet before you bring your bird home.

You will want to have your bird checked soon after you get it to ensure it's fit and find any problems which you weren't aware of, especially if the supplier gave you some sort of guarantee. That will probably be no more than a couple of weeks at most and tests, which can take days, may be needed if there is a possible problem.

Your biggest expense will probably be the vet. Annual checkups are essential and there will be other visits which may be urgent and unexpected.

If you don't already have a vet for other pets, take some time to check which vets in your area are most suitable for the ongoing care of your new pet.

There is an association of avian veterinarians whose members specialize in caring for birds. They have a register on their site with contact details of their members around the world. Details are in the resources section at the end of this book.

You need to have a suitable vet in your area. When you need expert assistance for a small creature like your budgerigar, you need to be able to get there or have them call (if they do house calls and you can afford that).

But, most vets would have some experience treating budgies and other popular cage birds.

Get feedback from friends who have pet birds about their experiences and suggestions.

Then, drop into the premises of a couple of the vets to see if they would be a good fit for you.

You can get a good idea of that from seeing the way the staff and clients interact.

You can also ask for information about fees, their experience with budgies, and whether there is an after-hours service.

A vet's staff might be willing to recommend some budgie breeders that you

could get your new bird from.

Most vets' offices have a wide range of pamphlets about caring for budgies and other pets. Some will have an obvious slant towards a sponsor's products but you will also usually get some good, current information.

You can also ask any breeders you contact about which vet they use for their birds.

## Budgie Health

### *Budgies are Delicate*

Budgies are lively and they sometimes push their toys around so it is easy to think they are very strong.

However, they are small, lightweight and fairly delicate. Their defense is flight and speed, not muscle.

They have delicate internal systems.

Their bones are hollow and easily damaged.

Vapors can seriously affect their breathing.

They need frequent meals because they don't have much fat in reserve. They can die if unable to drink in a period of less than two hours.

They react quickly to noise or other fright and can fly into trouble before you can react.

Although your bird will accept you and other people it knows well handling it, they should not be held with a closed hand with any pressure and never by children as they could be crushed or dropped.

### *Regular Pictures are a Good Check*



They can develop serious conditions without showing much in the way of symptoms when they are affected by the wrong food or other substances.

Many owners don't notice when changes in their appearance or actions are gradual. So, keep checking your bird's behavior and consider if a small change might need further checking.

If you have a digital camera (on your phone perhaps), you might take a picture every week which could be a simple way for you to notice any change more easily than depending on seeing

something when you are actively playing with your little friend.

### ***Molting***

Molting is when they lose some of their old feathers to allow new ones to grow.

This is a natural event which budgies usually do twice a year. They may do a partial molt if there are unseasonal changes in your local weather pattern.

The feathers just drop out and new ones appear. The new ones may show a little blood on one edge for a short while until they have matured.

If your bird shows any bare skin where there should be feathers, that's something other than their natural molt which should be checked by your vet as soon as possible.

### ***Where are my Birds Ears?***

**Do NOT try to find its ears by touching the bird –it's too risky.**

A budgie's ears are little holes under the feathers at each side of its head. The only time they might be seen is when the bird has dipped its head into its water bowl for a quick rinse.

If the area loses feathers, check with your vet as soon as possible.

### ***The "Big Budgie" Health Problem***

Budgies share one unfortunate statistic with modern man. **Obesity** is very common and a serious risk.

It's important to keep an eye on their diet, make sure they get healthy snacks and check that giving them any processed treats is minimized.

### ***Eating Poop***

Budgies that eat their own poop may have a dietary deficiency. Add more vegetables and fruit to their diet or consider trying a different, more varied mix of seeds.

Also, start cleaning their cage more regularly to ensure they cannot eat more poop because that will often cause them to get an infection which can be serious or even fatal.



## Basic Training

This is one of the great joys of budgie ownership.

You and your little friend get to know each other better and you help it feel safer and more at home with your family.

Give your bird at least a week to get used to its new home before you even think of starting to train it at all.

Spend some time each day near the cage, talk quietly to the bird, but don't push for a result until you feel it is accepting its surroundings and your presence.

Go closer to the cage each day while you talk.

At this stage, you should be the only person giving the bird its food and treats so that it gets used to you putting your hand in the cage.

Don't try to touch the bird for a couple of days but move your hand closer to it slowly and calmly.

Training has to be by regular short sessions.

If you skip a few days, you're likely to have to start well back from where you had got to because your bird will quickly forget

Long sessions put too much pressure on both of you. Start with no more than ten minutes and maybe build up a little after the bird is doing a couple of basic things like stepping up and down.

You both may feel a little nervous when you start. If you are really nervous, try a little meditation before the sessions.

About ten minutes sitting quietly while following a few deep breaths down to your lungs and back up again really can help. Or, you could sit quietly and visualize going through the routine slowly with your bird.

The patience you show at this time will mean that you can build a stronger level of trust with the bird which will make later sessions when you teach it more advanced tricks a lot easier.

## Step Up!

This is the basis of everything else you and the bird will do together.

When you can put your hand near the bird in the cage without it moving away, gently put it against the bird's stomach, just above its feet.

Say, "Up" in a quiet calm voice. Don't emphasize it at this stage – you don't want to get the bird jittery.

The gentle pressure on its chest will encourage it to step on to your finger.

Just let it sit there for a few seconds. Then, move your hand around so that the perch is just below the bird's chest.

Say, "Down". Don't worry if the bird has already stepped onto the perch.

You might have taken it to its seed bowl and told it to step down there instead if you had seen that it was sitting on there at other times.

You can also give it a small sprig of millet spray when it does this or any other trick.

Don't overdo any treats because budgies can become obese.



## **Getting Your Bird Out of the Cage**

Most birds only get out of their cage for at most a couple of hours a day. More than that can subject them to too much risk and stress.

They need to be supervised all the time they are outside the cage because even the best maintained dwelling still has many hazards for your bird.

Cover windows with at least a thin curtain before letting your bird out of its cage. Many birds have been injured by thinking the window was an opening and hitting the window. This is a big risk for budgies because they move fast and their bones are very fragile.

The bird needs to be sure you are a safe refuge at this point because it is likely to fly around the room and you'll have to coax him back into the cage.

### **Check the Whole Room First**

Before starting this stage, do a full check of the whole room and everything in it for possible risks to the bird.

Fish tanks and bowls, vases and any other items containing liquid need to be covered so the bird cannot fly or fall in.

Windows and doors must be closed. Windows also need to be draped so the bird does not see it as an escape route.

Make sure that no fabric or curtain has any loose threads which could tangle with your bird's leg or claw. Some birds have had their heads caught by trailing threads or rope strands with fatal results.

Any items with points or openings need to be covered or moved out.

Check for any items which could break or fall if the bird landed on them.

Arrange for everyone else to stay out and not open the door unless you call them.

Have a few small treats with you but out of sight.

Go near the cage and talk quietly to the bird.

Put your hand in the cage. Leave the door open – your arm will block it.

Have a treat inside your other hand where it cannot be seen, just in case.

Get the bird to step onto your finger.

Let it settle and then slowly draw the hand back to the door.

The bird will probably show some nervousness because it hasn't been out since you put in into the cage for the first time!

If it gets upset, just keep you hand in the cage and offer the treat in the other hand through the cage bars.

Talk to the bird and wait until the next session to try bringing it out.

Most birds will be okay the first time but it's no big deal if yours is not. It's more important to keep the bird okay with being carried on your finger or in your hand.

If the bird flies off your hand, don't move until you know where the bird has flown to. If you move too soon, you might strike the bird in the air with your hand or even step on it if it flutters or falls to the ground.

When you can bring it out of the cage without fuss, just rest your hand just outside the cage and give it the treat.

**Be careful of doors and other fittings.** Secure them so they cannot shut or otherwise move unexpectedly and frighten the bird.

Then, you can sit down or stand near the cage and just talk to the bird.

If it flies around, don't panic.

Hold up your finger or open hand with a treat and it will probably come to you.

You can just put a treat inside the open door of its cage and it will probably go there. Shut the door gently and lock it.

If the bird stays away from the cage, you can walk over and put up your finger. It will often just hop on and let you carry it back.



Talk to the bird so it knows you are a friend.

When they are comfortable about coming out of the cage and being put back in, you can put a feed bowl with a little bit of seed or a small piece of fruit on top of the cage and it will start to recognize that as another safe area.

Now your bird trusts you and is learning to know the room is safe when you are there.

Never let the bird out while you are not there even for a very short time.

They can get into big trouble very quickly.

## Teaching it to Talk

This is probably the one trick which budgie owners want their bird to learn.

If that's the main reason you want a budgie I must point out that there is no guarantee with any type of talking bird that it will become a good talker.

Most will do a fair job if they are given the right sort of training and lots of positive reinforcement from you, but some just don't have it in them to talk well.

But, they still are great companions and probably better at some other tricks than even the best talkers. If you have ever seen a show with trained parrots, you may notice that most of the birds do just a couple of the tricks. That's because nobody and no bird can be really good at everything.

Please don't be too disappointed if your bird is not a great talker. Give it lots of love and attention and you'll find it's a great friend for you anyway.

The budgie isn't actually talking – it's mimicking what it heard you say just like it might mimic other sounds from other pets or noises it hears frequently.

It's easier if you don't let your bird have a mirror because it will want to communicate with you more when it doesn't have a budgie buddy in its mirror to talk to.

But, a mirror can be your bird's best friend when you or other people it knows and trusts are not with it.

But, you can delay giving it a mirror until you've heard it saying something you taught it and then give it one.

### ***Start the Lessons***

Talking is easier to teach when the birds are younger but some older birds can learn a bit.

Have the lesson each morning before other people come into the room where the bird's cage is.

Talk gently to the bird for about twenty minutes while the cover is still in

place.

Use no more than two short simple phrases and repeat them without changing your tone over and over.

This can be a bit monotonous at first but you will be repaid when you hear the bird start to mimic you!

This is probably the best way you can teach your bird and there's no special equipment needed, just some patience and will-power.

You might want to try recording you just saying the phrases several times, then copy that recording or make it auto-repeat.

That can work but I'm told it is less successful.

You should at least do the first couple of phrases by repeating them to the bird even if you don't get any results for a week.

If you start with a recording, you may only get poor results and you won't be sure if it might just be because the bird knows that it's not really you.

You can use whatever sort of words you want when you are teaching your bird – it's just sounds to the bird.

But, this experience will probably also make small improvements to your speaking voice and ramp up your ability to concentrate, which will give you benefits for years to come!

### ***What to Teach it to Say***

Most people probably teach their bird a nursery rhyme or the bird's name and, "Hello", "Who's a Pretty bird?" etc.

But, many people teach the bird to say their cell phone or landline number and its name. That has actually enabled a few families to get their birds back.

It's no guarantee, but it might just work for you!

## Quick Tips

### *Make arrangements for Your Pet without You*



If we have any kind of pet dependent on us, we have a responsibility to do what we can to arrange suitable care for it if we pass away before it does.

This should be a formal arrangement with some payment to the person who agrees to look after your pet.

You can't pressure someone to do this because that's unfair and they may not follow through if they were pressured.

If you can find someone that is willing and you believe they will follow through, get them to spend a few hours with the pet to ensure they can get on.

Then, draw up a formal agreement and get it checked by a lawyer.

Some animal welfare organizations will take this responsibility in return for a donation or bequest. This must be carefully checked because it is claimed that some organizations have had the pets euthanized and kept the money.

The ASPCA.org site has some material and suggestions about this important subject.

### *Short Sessions bring More Success*

When you start your training, keep the sessions short.

You will start to get some results more quickly if you do more sessions rather than having longer sessions.

The bird is like a child in school. It will tire easily and lose concentration in a fairly short time. But, if you keep it short and stay animated yourself (without overdoing it and scaring the bird) you will soon see just how smart your budgie is!

### *Stay Interested and Interesting*

This can be hard to do when you are just repeating the same phrase you want your bird to learn many times or telling the bird to go, "Up" for the fiftieth time.

But, if you don't keep your voice warm and with a bit of life in it, you won't inspire the best results your budgie can give you.

It can help to focus on what you need to do more closely. When you are teaching it to talk, you need to say everything as clearly and in the same tone each time.

You'll soon realize that isn't as easy as you might have thought. It takes concentration. But, doing the best you can will mean you get the best result when your budgie starts saying it back to you.

## Careful!

Here are some posed photos to show you potential trouble spots.



This is a great picture of a lucky budgie with a large mirror.

But, the mirror is not secured in the cage.

If it slips, the budgie could be injured.

Budgies love mirrors. Before you put a mirror in the cage, check the fittings. So have chains or other fittings which might cause injury to your bird.

A small mirror is fine for a budgie. Also make sure it does not have any loose parts which

your bird could chew or get caught in.



This bird is on a cup filled with water. It might slip because the edge is not large enough for it to be secure. Reminder – don't give budgies any access to this much of any liquid. Also, they must never have any tea,

coffee or chocolate.



## Before You breed Your Budgies



This is a great pair of budgies. The mature male budgie always has blue around its nostrils on an area called the "cere". The mature female has a blue cere.

Some people get the idea of earning extra money from breeding budgies.

They see the prices which other people are selling budgies for and think that must be a great idea.

I don't want to discourage anybody who is really enthusiastic about doing this but it's not easy, cheap and the competition is fierce.

Please consider these points which are based on the experience of many people who have bred budgies and people who have had to deal with the consequences.

Do you have the space for several large cages, the time to look after the breeding pairs, the broody hen, the eggs, the extra feeding and care for the eggs and the naked, helpless baby birds,

Before you start any business venture, you need to do a review of the whole situation.

The basic costs of setting up for breeding even from just one pair of birds must include the cages for the breeding pair, the special food, an incubator and the extra vet fees for checking the young birds.

Who will buy the birds from you. Are you confident that you will be able to sell about eight young birds from each pair?

What do you do with the birds which you do not sell? Many are killed or dumped in the wild where they have no chance to survive.

## **Budgies as a Family Pet**

I said that I learned a lot about responsibility with my parents giving me some duties looking after our budgie.

But, they wisely never left me to do those things unsupervised for a long time after we first got it.

Very young children simply can't handle the responsibility and might easily injure the bird. That would hurt the child and you as well as the bird.

Young children can be given some chores but you should still watch so that the safety of the bird is never in question.

This is more important with budgies because they don't have the size, strength, bulk of dogs, cats, and other larger pets.

Also, they are flighty by nature. So are children, so there needs to be someone else around at all times to help them learn and prevent a tragedy which could have lasting effects on the child emotionally as well.

Some things which can upset or injure your bird are rattling the cage, speaking loudly and playing with it when it needs some rest.

If you take pictures of your bird, try to avoid using flash. That can scare it into instant flight with danger not far away!

But, budgerigars are a great family pet. I can't think of a better pet for people with limited space or budget.

And, I think you will agree after a few months of being a new budgie owner.

## Resources

### *U.S.A.*

#### **The Association of Avian Veterinarians, U.S.A.**

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

The Association of Avian Veterinarians web site.

This site has useful links for bird owners, including a searchable directory of members.

### *Australia*

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

The Association of Avian Veterinarians Australian Committee's web site.

This site has useful links for bird owners, including a searchable directory of Australian Avian veterinarians who are members.

## **Enjoy Your Budgerigar!**

Thanks for buying and reading "Your New Budgie Guide".

I hope it has made you even more enthusiastic about joining the millions of happy owners around this planet.

I have tried to encourage you, give you lots of tips and also tell you about many things which can hurt your new birds.

I think the last part is just as important as telling you about all the fun you and your family will have because outlining the risks for you and the birds will help you have a smoother and even happier life together.

*Sylvia Meldrum*

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