

Dunking Food (a.k.a. “Birdie soup making”)

This behavioral term describes a bird that dunks food in water.

DEFINITION OF DUNKING FOOD

The action of a parrot when it moistens its food in water prior to eating it. It can also define the mess that many parrots make by introducing copious amounts of water-soluble food into the water bowl, thereby seriously contaminating its water source. (Can also be caused by the bird pooping in its water dish.)

DESCRIPTION OF DUNKING FOOD
Trust me, you don't want to visualize this stuff, because sometimes it can look like some sort of biological stew that is evolving a strange and alarming new life form. **WHAT TO DO**

Change the water in the bowl every time you see a bird dunking its food or pooping in it, no matter how frequently it happens. Food in the water bowl provides an ideal environment for the benign bacteria that normally inhabit most water sources, allowing for exponential overgrowth that can become a health risk. If the inside of the water bowl feels slimy to your finger, this is evidence of serious bacterial overgrowth and proof that the water is not being changed often enough. This is especially problematic with owners who are gone all day at work. Due to the potential of this bacterial overgrowth becoming a health hazard for a bird, many avian veterinarians recommend the use of water bottles instead. Parrots can easily be taught to use a water bottle, which prohibits any contamination of the water source via food or accidental droppings. Owners need to hang the bottle above the water bowl and not remove the bowl until they are certain the bird has successfully learned to drink from the bottle. Owners should also check the water bottle's nozzle to make sure the bird hasn't stuffed something in it, thus preventing the water from dispersing. Incidentally, a water bottle does not prevent a parrot from moistening its food. My macaw gets pellets in her mouth, then goes to the water bottle and gets some water. So the food is moistened immediately before she swallows it. Therefore, the food is nicely softened but there is no danger of bacterial contamination.

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