

Cockatoos Cycling

Getting cockatoos to cycle together is important and steps should be taken to protect the hen.

Q: I have a pair of umbrella cockatoos that are 7 years old. The female has laid eggs twice, but they have been infertile. It is now springtime here, and the male is very aggressive. It seems as though the female does not want to go into the nest. The male enters the nest. Is something wrong?

Kashmir Csaky explains:

Yes, your hen might not be healthy or they are not cycling together, and the bond between them might not be strong. You have had two clutches of infertile eggs and the female is reluctant to go into the nest. This is an indication that the pair might not have successfully copulated in the past. When one bird is cycling faster than the other, the best way to get the birds in sync is to encourage them to work their nest. You can accomplish this by making the wooden opening to the nest box small so that the birds will have to chew at the opening to gain entrance. Thus slowing down the eager bird and stimulating the bird that is not ready to nest.

Getting cockatoos to cycle together is very important. When pairs are not cycling together, the males are more likely to kill their mates. The deaths normally take place inside the nest box, so the design of the box should allow the female an avenue of escape. A T-shaped nest box with two entrances on the front is not very effective. The male can stand between the entrances and prevent the female from exiting, trapping her at the bottom of the nest. A nest box with openings in the front of the box and on the side increases the odds that the hen can escape. Once they are able to go inside the nest, make certain that both entrances are large enough to allow for a quick escape. Place a divider in the middle of the box to help prevent trapping of the hen by an aggressive male.