

## Should You Trim Your Pet Bird's Wing Feathers?

**To trim or not to trim — that is the question! Look at the pros and cons, then decide.**

*By Diane Grindol*

### The Pros of Wing-Feather Trimming

1. It is easier to train a pet bird with trimmed wing feathers. A bird with trimmed wing feathers is easier for you to catch and depends on you more to get around. Developing trust happens faster as does response to your training. When you trim a bird's wing feathers, the bird's long flight feathers are cut short. These feathers grow long again at the next molt. So your decision is one you will live with for six months to a year at a time.
2. Wing feather trimming slows a bird down, making flying safer for a bird inside the house, where windows, mirrors and bodies of water, such as the kitchen sink, are dangerous. You don't want your pet bird flying full speed into a window, for safety's sake. If a wing feather-trimmed bird does get out a door or window, chances are good that it cannot go far, so you can follow and retrieve your bird.

If you want to give your bird some flight but slow her down, trim only a couple of the flight feathers. You can trim several feathers, leaving them longer than normal to allow gliding and limited but slowed flight.

### The Cons of Wing-Feather Trimming

1. One of the dangers in a household situation are the bird predators we keep as pets: dogs and cats. A companion bird might need the ability of flight to escape a household dog or cat.
2. Our companion birds are natural athletes and built to fly long distances daily. Restricting flight is a difficult decision. If you leave your pet bird flighted, she'll be getting good exercise. You'll be offering your bird a more "natural" experience, doing what comes naturally to her. With this comes risk, as a flighted bird can fly out a window or door and become lost easily.