

New Bird Housing Made Simple

Give your new pet bird everything it needs to thrive in a new bird cage.

By the Editors of Birds USA

This Jardine's parrot has a variety of toys in the cage to thrive and play with.
Courtesy Katherine Weaver, Oregon

In order for your bird to thrive, not just survive, it needs your kindness, excellent veterinarian care, nutritious food and outstanding housing. Housing encompasses all the things that make up its home environment — a cage, playgym, perches, toys, lighting, air circulation, bathing opportunities and food dishes.

The cage is the centerpiece of your bird's housing. In the past, experts recommended buying the largest possible cage that you can afford and fit into your house. Today, we're recommending that you try to find a cage that meets or goes beyond the thrive standards set by BIRD TALK magazine.

Purchase a cage for your new bird before it comes home. You'll need to prepare it with the proper accessories, including dishes, toys and perches.

To keep a bird's feet healthy, it should have three perches of different materials and dimensions. Choose perches that your bird's foot can go three-quarter's of the way around for an ideal fit. Some flatter perches or even a platform perch will give your bird a rest spot, and a smaller perch might challenge your bird's balance.

Add toys to enrich your bird's environment with daily challenges, sturdy dishes for feeding and watering, then lighting, air circulation — and love! Presto. You're ready to bring your bird home.

Thrive Standards – Bird Cage Dimensions

Nearly all cages on the market today provide enough vertical space, so we only listed the lateral space dimensions, which allows a bird to fly, hop or climb around. The exception is for the large macaw cage dimensions. They need significant height to accommodate their long tails. Bring your tape measurer to your local bird store to make sure you're getting the right size.

Small Birds: 24 inches wide by 24 inches deep
(canaries, cockatiels, lovebirds, parrotlets, budgies and other parakeets)

Smaller Medium Birds: 30 inches wide by 30 inches deep
(small conures, Poicephalus, caiques, lories and quaker parrots)

Medium to Large Birds: 34 inches wide by 34 inches deep
(large conures, African grey parrots, Pionus parrots, Eclectus, small Amazon parrots)

Large Birds: 48 inches wide by 32 inches deep by 60 inches high
(Amazon parrots, cockatoos, macaws, toucans)

Housing Accessories Checklist

Each single bird's cage should contain the following (figures go up with each additional bird)

- 3 perches of varying materials and varying dimensions (Ex. 1 rope perch, 1 pedicure perch, 1 natural wood perch)
- 5 toys of varying purpose (1 noise toy, 1 shreddable item, a swing or boing, 1 foraging toy and 1 preening or movable toy)
- Bathing opportunity (wet leaves, bathing dish or spray mist)
- 3 feeding and watering dishes/bottle (1 for water, 1 for basic diet, 1 for supplementary items such as treats, fruit or cooked items)
- Access to direct sunlight or full-spectrum lighting
- Good air quality and circulation