

Provide Care For Your Birds In An Emergency

Write down basic care information for your flock so others can take care of your birds in the event that you cannot.

By Linda S. Rubin

In an emergency or short-term illness you may have made arrangements for family members, neighbors or friends to care for your birds. Take the guess work out of caring for your flock.

Courtesy Debi Sheperd, North Carolina

Write down information on how to care for your birds in detail to make it easier for someone else to care for your birds.

All bird owners should have basic information in writing, prominently displayed, which explains how to care for your birds in an emergency. The information should be clearly written and easy to follow whether or not the caregiver is someone who is already familiar with your birds, someone who is just filling in temporarily or someone being newly trained. Always include:

1. A schedule of the birds' daily diet including the brand name, the manufacturer's or distributor's names and contact numbers to reorder. A list of all seeds, pellets, packaged treats, fruits and vegetables, fresh foods, table foods or other treats.
2. Be very specific: For instance: "Monday, give each parrot: four green grapes, 18th-slice apple, three mini carrots, one-inch wedge corn on cob or one teaspoon cooked yam." List a varied menu to serve for the week, or list all the options you can think of under each category of: fresh food, dark green leafy vegetables, soft foods, table foods or any other treats.

Provide the details: how many berries? Which foods are favored or preferred by which particular birds? Include enough detail so that birds are neither underfed nor overfed by caregivers new to your birds' eating habits.

3. Instructions for daily care. What time is bedtime? Are the birds' cages to be covered? What time are birds to be uncovered? Are there special supplements or medications that must be provided? (Write the names and amount of supplements or medications, plus the names, species and description of the bird(s) that require it.)
4. Write the name, telephone number and address of your avian veterinarian.
5. Write the name and telephone number of at least one or more alternate avian care providers in case the person you are relying upon is unavailable.
6. Write the name and telephone number of a dependable family member, neighbor or friend, as an alternate, "should all else fail," and make certain ahead of time that they have agreed to be contacted as a last resort.