

Lovebird Nesting Behavior

Find out when lovebirds start showing nest behavior

By Jessica Pineda

Courtesy Debi Sheperd, North Carolina
Lovebirds begin to show nesting behavior around 5 months of age.

Since female lovebirds are notorious for becoming viciously territorial, knowing when they start nesting can help deter behavior problems along the way. We asked Lori Martinez, of Feathered Friends in Calif., who breeds both parrotlets and lovebirds, what she's seen in her lovebirds and when to start expecting nesting behavior.

BC: At what age do lovebirds start to show breeding behavior?

LM: From viewing my own aviaries, the earliest I have known lovebirds to exhibit nesting behavior is approximately 5 months of age. Both male and female lovebirds demonstrate an interest in mating (sex). On occasion, an attraction could be tentative or perhaps "experimental." For instance, what seemingly would be a young bonded pair, could actually be one bird mocking the actions of another, shredding paper, tucking the paper in the tail or wing feathers, dominating the sleeping tent and so forth, is merely a practicing exercise. Either the hen or male will then pursue the mate of choice quite successfully, at which time they proceed to have intercourse, though they are so young.

BC: At what age is a female capable of laying eggs?

LM: A lovebird hen can lay an egg at 5 to 6 months of age. This is not an advantageous time to raise a family for such a young hen. It can place a great physical drain on the female and deplete her of the necessary calcium and nutrients an older bird would most likely have acquired.

BC: How can you deter lovebirds from breeding?

LM: To discourage a bonded male and female lovebird from going to nest would be a true task, as their natural drive is to reproduce, especially if housed together. The ultimate test of dissuasion would depend upon how strong the bond is with their human. The lovebirds would require consistent distraction with toys, and they need plenty of outside cage time and outdoor exposure to nature and sunshine.