

Parrotlet Nesting Behavior

Learn about parrotlets and their nesting behaviors.

By Jessica Pineda

Courtesy Lori Welbourn, Ontario, Canada

Parrotlets can begin to exhibit nesting behavior as young as 2 to 3 months old.

When summer approaches and birds hormones are still in full swing, it's important to recognize signs of breeding behaviors in birds, even in the littlest of birds, the parrotlet. It's also important not only to recognize the signs of breeding behavior, but at what age those behaviors can occur. We asked Lori Martinez, of Feathered Friends in California, who breeds both parrotlets and lovebirds what she's seen in her parrotlets.

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

LM: Incredibly, these, the tiniest of all the parrot species, can and do exhibit nesting behavior as young as 2 to 3 months old. I have observed fully weaned parrotlets in their flight cage "playing house" (copulating), as one vet had explained to me.

Though, in my experience, this behavior has only occurred when multiple clutches (two or more) are raised together. To be certain a parrotlet is nesting, they will also exhibit certain behaviors, such as chewing and digging under newspaper and hiding in a happy hut or under/in any object that offers the hen privacy.

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

LM: A female parrotlet can lay eggs at 3 months of age, though it may be disastrous to the health and longevity of the life of the bird due to her anatomical immaturity. Tragically, lack of the necessary calcium can cause egg binding or other physical ailments. Premature egg laying can even be fatal.

BC: How can you deter parrotlets from breeding?

LM: It can be quite difficult to deter a male-female from breeding. A great amount of human interaction, frequent out of the cage activities and playtime can prevent breeding. A diet not abundant in protein that a breeder pair would expect to be fed, and no nesting types of toys (tents, boxes, etc.) can also help deter breeding.