

## Find A Bird-Savvy Pet-Sitter

### Tips on finding a bird-sitter and working out sitting costs

*By Susan Chamberlain*

#### Search Tips

Ask your local bird store, your avian veterinarian's office or local bird club for references. Refer to listings in the classified section of BIRD TALK and Birds USA Magazines.

Check out a professional pet-sitting organization, such as the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters or Pet Sitters International , to locate a bird sitter in your area.

#### Breaking Down Costs

According to Cathe Delaney, member services manager of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters, the average cost of an in-home visit varies widely with an average of \$12.50 to \$25 per visit for a 30- to 45- minute stay. Cost also depends on the services offered. To get the best value and service, Delaney advises asking for references. The bird sitter should set up a meet-and-greet session, so you'll both know if there's a rapport with the bird and vice-versa.

Conure owner Roberta Fabiano of Long Island reported paying \$13 a day to board her nanday conure at an avian veterinarian's office, and \$5 per day to board the bird at a home-based boarding facility.

The popularity of birds as companion animals has resulted in a greater number of pet sitters becoming bird savvy, according to Ellen Price, Academic Manager of Pet Sitters International and editor of PSI publications. "In communications with our members, we hear about their bird clients and the amazing feelings people have for them. We regularly supply educational information about care requirements for birds in our publications."

Price recommends getting the best value for your pet-sitting dollar by asking the following questions: Is the sitter insured? Can he or she provide references? Is the sitter knowledgeable about bird care? Is there a printed list of services and fees?