

Top 10 Pet Budgie/Parakeet Questions Answered

Have a question about your pet budgie/parakeet? Check our FAQ for answers!

By the BirdChannel.com Editors

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #1

Is a pet budgie a parrot?

Yes, budgies are parrots. Budgerigars, also known as budgies, (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) have the characteristic features of a parrot: a curved hookbill and zygodactyl feet (two toes pointing forward and two pointing backward). These small parrots are native to Australia.

Courtesy Sherry & Phil Thompsen, Pennsylvania

Courtesy Vera Jordan, Ontario, Canada

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #2

What do I feed my pet budgie?

A good pet budgie diet includes a teaspoon of bird seed along with a formulated pet budgie diet (pellets) and sprouted seed, supplemented by healthy vegetables and healthy table foods, such as whole-wheat bread, pasta, plain mashed sweet potato, green leafy vegetables and small bits of fruit. Budgies especially love a millet-spray treat.

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #3

Can a pet budgie talk?

A pet budgie can learn a vast vocabulary of words and phrases. A male budgerigar is more inclined to speak than a female budgie. Some pet budgie owners might not even realize that their budgie is repeating words or phrases because a pet parakeet tends to have a very low, quick voice that might be mistaken for chatter. When teaching your pet budgie a word or phrase, speak slowly and clearly and keep an ear out for these words and phrases when you hear your parakeet chattering away.

Courtesy Laurie Moroz, Illinois

Courtesy Dennia & Chris Rentzis, New Jersey

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #4

What type of bird cage should I get for my pet budgie?

Pet budgies are quite active, so your budgie needs a spacious bird cage. Opt for a bird cage that is at least 24 inches wide by 24 inches tall with ½- to 1-inch bar spacing. Look for pet bird cages that are easy to clean and maintain, (e.g. the cage has a pull-out tray, food and water dishes that are accessible from outside the pet bird cage). Your pet budgie needs more than just a bird cage though. Your pet parakeet needs a variety of perching options (wooden perches, rope perches, etc) that are appropriately sized for your budgie's feet, as well as plenty of pet bird toys, a pet bird playgym and more!

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #5

Is my pet budgie male or female?

In normal (i.e. color most found in the wild) green budgerigars, male budgies have a blue cere (the area right above the nostrils), and females have ceres that range from white, tan to brown. Color mutations in budgies can affect the male's typical blue cere color, such as the albino, lutino or fallow budgerigars. Some juvenile (young) parakeets might also have a light-colored cere. Bird aviculturists point out behavioral differences between male budgies and female budgies. Male pet budgies are more inclined to talk, and female budgies have a reputation for being a bit more "bossy."

Courtesy Dennia Matina, New Jersey

Courtesy Candy Peterson, Illinois

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #6

Which makes the better pet bird: a male budgie or female budgie?

Both male budgies and female budgies can make great pet birds. Typically, male budgies are better talkers than female budgies. With a female budgie, be aware of potential parrot health issues, such as chronic egg laying and egg binding.

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #7

Should I get one budgie or two?

If you are considering a pet budgie, experts recommend getting one budgie so it bonds only with you; however, many owners get two budgies so the birds have each other when the rest of the flock (aka you) is out. Either way, work with your budgies individually to establish a bond.

Courtesy Abby Cooper, New Jersey

Courtesy Berk Guilfooy, California

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #8

What is the difference between a parakeet and a budgie?

A "parakeet" is a very general term for a parrot with a slender body and a long tail. That said, while a budgie is a parakeet, a parakeet isn't necessarily a budgie. While labeled as "parakeets" in most pet stores, "budgie" is short for budgerigar, which is the species' true name.

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #9

Should I trim my budgie's wing feathers?

Pet budgies seem to do everything fast, from the way they talk, to the way they flitter about. If you are trying to hand-tame your pet parakeet (e.g. getting it to perch on your finger), a proper pet bird wing-feather trim can make your pet bird training sessions much easier. You won't have to chase after a flying pet budgie, and you won't have to worry about your parakeet crashing into a window or wall and injuring itself. Have a professional bird groomer or your avian (bird) veterinarian demonstrate the proper technique for a pet bird wing-feather trim, including how to gently and safely hold your pet budgie for grooming, before attempting it yourself. Performing a wing-feather trim will be more manageable if you have someone to assist you; for example, one person holds your pet parakeet, while the other trims your pet budgie's wing feathers. A proper wing-feather trim should allow the budgerigar to glide safely to the ground, as opposed to landing hard. You can allow your pet budgie's wing feathers to grow back to full length once your parakeet is hand-tamed, but be aware that a fully flighted pet budgie can be lost through an open door or window. A fully flighted budgie can drown if it falls into a water source, such as an open toilet or pot of water. Take extra precautions to keep your pet budgie safe from indoor hazards.

Courtesy Terri Zakraysek, Ohio

Courtesy Erin Orchard, Iowa

Top 10 Pet Budgie Question #10

Isn't there a really big budgie?

Correct! There is a larger type of budgie, known as the English budgie, which is larger than a standard budgie, or American parakeet (those typically available in pet stores and similar in size to wild budgies). English budgies are also referred to as show-type budgies because they are often bred to be shown and judged on their appearance at bird shows and exhibitions. English budgies have puffy head feathers, which gives them a more intense look. Both the English budgie and the American parakeet are the same bird; one is just bred to be larger. They are both budgies and parakeets, or specifically, budgerigars.

Conure FAQ

Cockatiel FAQ

African Grey FAQ

Cockatoo FAQ

Macaw FAQ