

## No Hassle Pet Bird Travel Tips

### Tips for traveling with pet birds on short trips, long trips and airplanes.

By Elise Kaplan

Take your parrot to see the sights with a pet carrier.

Before you attempt that cross-country ride, give your pet bird experience on shorter trips. Visit a nearby friend or relative, have a snack at an outdoor café, or even pick up some toys at a pet store. Provide some fun destinations: that is, somewhere other than the avian veterinarian or groomer.

A few things to consider as you are heading out:

- 1) Never take your pet bird outside without it being inside a carrier, travel cage or attached to an avian harness.
- 2) Your bird's carrier should be firmly belted to the back seat of your car. (The front seat can be dangerous if your car has a passenger-side airbag.)
- 3) Reassure your bird by making sure it can see you during the ride and can hear you talking.
- 4) If the day is excessively cold, hot or windy, and the trip is optional, wait until the weather is more accommodating.
- 5) Covering the carrier with a sheet or towel can protect your bird from the elements. However, Dr. Jorge Mayer, DVM, of Massachusetts advised not to cover the bird completely. Birds that are in the dark can stumble off the perch when the carrier is jostled.
- 6) Make sure your destination is not only pleasant but also safe for your parrot. Avoid anywhere that is dark, smoky, overly crowded or that might otherwise overwhelm your bird. If you are visiting friends with dogs or cats you are unfamiliar with, can you find a secure room for your parrot? Do your friends know how important it is to keep windows closed and to keep your parrot away from lit stoves and other hazards? Even though your hosts are well-meaning, be vigilant; they are probably not aware of some of the commonplace dangers to parrots, such as salty foods, chocolate, air freshener sprays, and so on.
- 7) Enjoy your trip! Your bird will "read" your manner and relax, even if it's not quite ready to socialize and prefers to just observe.

### Get Ready For A Longer Trip

A few things to consider if you and your parrot will be away for a night or longer:

- 1) Pack for both you and your parrot. A supply of your pet bird's particular food brand is essential, as it might not be available at your destination. A stash of treats, toys, perches and dishes also makes life easier, depending on the duration of your trip. Also, a small carrier might be fine for a quick trip across town, but if your parrot will be spending a few days away from home it will probably need something larger. Luckily, there are collapsible travel cages available that you can assemble once you reach your destination.
- 2) If you travel to another state, confirm that there are no quarantines in effect and that your species of parrot is legal there. Quaker parakeets, for example, are illegal to own in California, New Jersey and several other states.