

## Let's Take A Trip

### Have bird, will travel

*By Susan Chamberlain*

**Create A Home Away From Home For Your Bird** Bring along a good supply of your pet's usual food and several favorite toys. Purchase pre-cut cage tray liners or a roll of waxed paper or paper towels. Store travel supplies in a plastic crate or box so you can move everything in and out of the car in one trip. A cooler for fresh food is essential.

Replenish ice at hotels or restaurants along the way. Keep the ice in zipper-style plastic bags to reduce leakage inside the cooler or, purchase a small cooler that operates on your car's power system.

There are so many great carriers available that it's difficult to choose just one. If you're traveling by air, you'll need an airline-approved carrier. Will your bird ride in the aircraft cabin with you? The carrier must fit beneath the seat. Clear acrylic carriers are easy to clean and provide a full view of your bird. These are great for automobile travel, but most are not intended to be used as vacation homes for birds, so you'll need to have a cage available at your destination. Never place acrylic carriers in direct sunlight, as the temperature inside can quickly escalate. Soft-sided, backpack-style carriers are very popular now, and these are designed for people who want hands-free freedom while taking their birds out with them. These offer close proximity to the bird inside, and are great for trips to the vet, groomer or on visits to friends.

A small cage can also make a great travel home for your bird. Be sure the cage is sturdy enough for the bird inside. Bring along a folding tray table to use as a stand at your destination, and attach a screw-on playgym or perch to the cage so your bird can enjoy some "out" time. Contain cage or carrier fallout in the car or hotel by placing the cage or carrier inside a mess catcher, usually a lightweight, translucent PVC tray with angled sides that keep most debris inside.

When I made a long-distance move some years ago, I was convinced that my Amazon parrots would be traumatized into silence for at least two weeks. I was sure that the budgies wouldn't survive the car trip down US 95, and I just knew that my pair of Senegal parrots would go into a panic from which they'd likely never recover!

Amazingly to me, the birds all survived the trip just fine. The Amazons maintained their silence until the first toll booth along the road, at which point they sent up a cacophony of sound that provoked the interest of the toll collector. The budgies kept up a constant chortling throughout the two-day trip, and the Senegal parrots contentedly munched on their food along the way.

I was amazed at my flock's ability to adapt to this new adventure, but I had planned it with the precision of a military operation! Several months before, I acquired the small cages and carriers the birds would be traveling in. I set them up at home and let the birds spend time inside them each day so that they would become accustomed to their temporary quarters. I gave them small treats and toys to make the time inside the small cages more pleasant. This was so successful that the Amazons soon began to insist on spending their afternoons inside their travel cages. I took the birds for short rides around town several times before the trip so that they'd get used to the car. There were no problems here; no one panicked and, thankfully, none of the birds became carsick. (Note: If your bird is prone to motion sickness, consult your avian veterinarian for specific advice.)