

Pet Cockatiel Readers' Stories

Bird owners share their cockatiel stories.

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Edy
Courtesy Laura Dittmeier, Kentucky

Two years ago, I adopted Edy from a friend of my grandma. I hadn't planned on getting a cockatiel, but after reading so much about them in BIRD TALK, I knew enough to know I wouldn't mind getting one. She was a little intimidating at first, with her habit of always pecking at my hand when she's annoyed or doesn't want to step up, but, as I soon learned, she never actually bites. She eventually gained shoulder privileges, and we've grown very close. Edy has never been much of a cuddler, but that's OK. We like to hang out together at the computer or in the living room watching TV. When she hears the front door opening, she'll often greet us with a high-pitched chirp that sounds different from her usual chirp. Not only is Edy a real joy to have around, she's one of my best friends ever and I hope to spend many years with her.

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Malachi
Courtesy Stephanie Ditusa, Rhode Island

Malachi is a white-faced male cockatiel that we purchased from a local pet store in Rhode Island. He will be 2 years old in May 07. We enjoy and love him very much. He was finger-tame when we bought him at 8 months old. Since then, he has learned to "slap me five" and we will be working on the "turn around" next. He is thrilled to see us in the morning and while he doesn't speak, he whistles a perfect imitation of our "Good morning" and "Hello." He also whistles the "Mayberry" theme song and a couple of other tunes when he is happy and in the mood!

He wants to see everything and has to know about everything that is going on. Although he is very curious, funny enough, he is very suspicious of new toys and will avoid them for about a week! He does enjoy his wood chew toys and his plastic link chain, which he picks up by a link and then drops, picks up, drops, repeat, repeat! He understands a few words like, "Bath" (he gives me the evil eye whenever that is mentioned!), "Come on", "cookie", and "Want one?" He is very attentive, listening intently for the car when my husband comes home. When we arrive home, we can hear him whistling "Hello" as we come up the walkway! He loves to try what we are eating, though he very seldom eats any of it afterwards. He usually shakes his head after his nibble, as if to ask why we would bother eating that. Malachi -- aka "Beak" -- is a great companion, and we are very lucky to have him with our family!

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Kisses
Courtesy Pam Powell

This is the first bird I have ever owned, her name is Kisses. I bought her for myself as a birthday present for my 44th birthday. Kisses was not hand-raised and it took me a while to gain her trust. I didn't think I would ever get her to stop biting me. That was five years ago, now Kisses has a hunny and has mothered many babies. Kisses and her mate, Huggs, are a great team with parenting and have taught me how to love birds. This picture is her with one of her babies. Huggs and Kisses take turns feeding their babies, and I feed them, too. The babies end up having three parents. It is really funny and cute -- they are great. This little girl was the first of my journey into bird land and I wouldn't have it any other way.

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Webster
Courtesy Jody Fraser, Florida

Webster and I have been together since 1996. He is my first bird. Webster is a pearl mutation cockatiel. I got his name from Webster's dictionary, because he's indescribable! He loves to be petted, kissed, scratched and loves to shred paper! I have since added to the flock three more cockatiel buddies: Jasper, his best buddy, Sampson (also known as Mr. "We Bad" because he goes around saying that) and Romeo, who loves to give kisses. Romeo and Sampson are rescues. I also have a cinnamon quaker and one red-headed Mexican Amazon. Webster remains my favorite of the bunch because he is my first.

Webster has a thing for feet/socks/shoes. If you get any of these near him, his little wings go out and he puffs up and starts whistling and chattering and making noises. Webster is a very patriotic bird, too. His whistles the first line of the Marine Corps Hymn! Given, I served in the Marine Corps so that, of course, makes me very proud! He proceeds to teach it to everyone else everyday as well.

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Toby
Courtesy Jennifer Macmillan, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

My name is Toby. I am a 6-year-old male cockatiel from Ontario. I hatched in April 2000 and was adopted by my mother Jennifer on August 10, 2000. Jennifer wanted me for her high school graduation present, and much to her delight, her wish was granted. I don't live with any other birds, but that's OK with me, because then I get all the attention that I deserve. Along with Jen I also live with her mom and dad, (I adore her mom, I follow her everywhere and give her kisses) and her pesky younger brother who loves to bug me. My favorite song to sing is the Andy Griffith theme. Every time someone walks into the room, I greet them with " Hello sweetie" or "Hello big bird." Jen's aunt adores what I have done with my orange blush.

One of my favorite snacks is toast and waffle. In the evenings I enjoy popcorn while watching TV. I also like to steal corn off everyone's plate and get it stuck all over my face. I have many toys. One of my favorites is my vanity mirror with disco ball. I sit in front of it all day, look my self up and down in the mirror and tell myself how pretty I am. I ride on people's shoulders all day long. For fun, I enjoy rock climbing! I climb up the bricks on the fireplace, and I am really good.

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Eddie, Lucille & Linus
Courtesy Veronica Atlantis, Massachusetts

I got a call from my vet's assistant who fosters rescue birds. She told me she had a little gray female who needed a home. I fell in love with her immediately and took her home. Within a week another friend called looking for a home for a young male 'tiel. I took him home as well. I brought both birds to the vet for check-ups and everything tested OK.

At first, they could not stand each other. Lucille would scream at Linus and try to peck him. He was relentless in trying to charm Lucille. Six months later, they were a mated pair. Their second clutch of eggs produced four babies. Two of them were healthy and perfect. One of the babies was severely deformed and sadly, had to be put down. The last baby had a 50/50 chance of survival. I was determined to help this little baby survive.

I fed Eddie round the clock. I kept her extra warm, which made me worry about dehydration. I would warm up a few CC's of Pedialite as a snack to keep her hydrated. My efforts paid off. Eddie turned out to be a beautiful, healthy bird. She is the love of my life. I hate to leave the house because I miss her too much!

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Burgin & Hippie Boy, In Memory of Meeka
Courtesy Amy Joyce, Massachusetts

My story is about my 23-year-old male fallow cockatiel, Burgin, my late 5-year-old white-faced cockatiel, Meeka, and my 1-year-old normal gray cockatiel, Hippie Boy. Burgin was given to me in 2005 by a friend in North Carolina. She had him by himself because none of her other cockatiels got along with him. The reason he is so special is because he is blind.

When I met Burgin, I had a white-face cockatiel named Meeka who was as sweet as can be. Meeka was a rescue I had gotten two years before. I suggested that we try to put Meeka in with Burgin to keep him company. Well, it worked out beautiful! Meeka sang to Burgin, preened him and taught Burgin how to eat fresh foods. In July of 2006 Meeka went to the Rainbow Bridge. I was so upset not only because I lost Meeka but because I thought for sure I would lose Burgin, too. I thought Burgin would be heart broken over the loss of his buddy.

I went to the pet store the very next day and got a young male cockatiel, who we named Hippie boy. I introduced him to Burgin and he picked up right where Meeka left off.

Burgin still eats fresh foods each day, knows right where his food and water bowls are and sings off and on with Hippie Boy. Burgin responds to my voice and to Hippie Boy's voice. He is not crazy about being handled because he cannot see you but he will allow me to scratch his head.

Hippie Boy is a very sweet boy and loves to step up and give kisses.

Burgin does not play with toys but Hippie likes toys with rawhide or strands of material. He also likes his swing and to hang out on top of the cage when I let him out in the afternoon.

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In Memory of Star
Courtesy Yvonne Ely, North Carolina

Star (11/05 - 11/06)

Star was a white-face pearl cockatiel. I noticed after pulling for hand-feeding that she had trouble controlling her neck and head. Her head also rested all the way back onto her back. I found out she had Stargazers Disease. No one knows for sure what causes it, but they don't live more than a year or two. I was told to put her down, but by then she was 8 weeks old, cuddly and sweet, and I couldn't bear to do it. She had her own cage, with her food and toys at floor level -- she couldn't perch because she didn't have any balance.

Her favorite toy was a ball with a bell in it, which she would push around the floor of her cage or pick up and throw. Her favorite thing to do was cuddle in my hand against my chest and receive numerous scratches while cooing and telling me how much she loved me. She didn't live a normal 'tiel life, but she was loved and lived the life she knew. Star passed away three days after her first birthday and is now finally flying and perching as a bird should do, waiting for me at the Rainbow Bridge.

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Twinkie
Courtesy Becky Hoffman, California

My name is Twinkie. I live in California. I am 5 years old. My caretakers found me outside flying around scared and hungry. They took me in where it was nice and warm. There was another bird living there, too, so I knew I was in a good place. I was given seed at fist because that was all I knew, but after watching the other bird enjoy corn, beans, cherries, etc., I knew I had to expand my horizons. I love my veggies now!

After I was brought inside and given a new house, I was taken to the "Spa" where I had a complete checkup, which I passed with flying colors, and had my wings and nails trimmed. This all happened four years ago. I have never looked backed. My house has become my home and I now have a heated perch for the chilly evenings. I love having my head

rubbed, and whenever someone walks by me I put my head down so I can get more rubs. I don't talk a lot but I can say my name. I really like to whistle. I love my caretakers. They took me in and have given me all a bird could ever want!

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Goliath, In Memory of Toby
Courtesy Nichole Brown, California

My name is Nichole. When I was 10 years old, for my birthday, my mom got me a cockatiel that I named Toby after the famous country singer Toby Keith. My parents were divorced so I only got to see him every two weeks. Over Thanksgiving, he passed away. When I heard the news, I was heart broken. He was only 6 months old. To cope with the pain I wrote a poem called "Loss." His death happened four years ago, and to this day, I keep a feather to remind me of him. My cockatiel today is named Goliath and, if it was possible, I would say that Toby lives in him. To me, a cockatiel is not a pet, but a life changer and a life saver. If you have or are going to get a cockatiel, please love them with all your heart.

And so you know how much I loved Toby, here is my poem:

A loss is hard
I know that much
I lost a pet
I loved so much
His name was Toby
He really showed me
He was a star
That worked so hard
While I was gone
He passed along
He's now with God
That's what I love
I send him my soul
That he will control
Now as I send
A note to him
I tell you all...
Love while you still can

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Dito & Raptor
Courtesy Dawn Holt, Langley, BC, Canada

I have had 'tiels for a year now. They have added more life to my life then I would have ever imagined. I thought my budgie had quite the personality. He has some competition now.

My first 'tiel was hand-raised and bought from a pet store. He loves to snuggle and have head scratches. He can never get enough. He eats anything he can. Plants are his favorite, as he knows he is not allowed. It is his way of getting attention when you are busy. He plays hide and seek. He hides and when you walk by he pounces on you. Showering is always a riot as he squawks and screeches the entire time.

My female, who is not quite a year old, is the opposite. She bites and snarfs. She is also very sweet and shy. She has become best friends with her mirror. Do not interfere when she is hanging with her birdie friend. She is a very one-on-one bird. She's still learning new things. She's not the most daring at trying different foods etc.. We made a new discovery when my grandma came to visit. The two bonded instantly. Grandma became a playground and a new instant best friend. They shared breakfast, she even had a nap with grandma.

All my birds are very unique in their own ways. They all have different personalities and needs. When they say it's like having children, they weren't kidding. Everyday they make new discoveries. Some of the crazy things they do to get your attention, or even while they are playing around, make you laugh. I wouldn't trade them in for the world. All they ask is that you hang out and let them see what you're doing. They'll help if interested -- whether you like it or not. The more they know there are annoying you, the more they'll do it. If you react (which they love) they will continue. I would take them everywhere with me if I could.

Dito is the pearl aka lace mutation cockatiel. She will be one year in June. Raptor is the gray cockatiel and just turned one this year.

Peanut, In Memory of Patty
Courtesy Debra Reinhardt, Michigan

When my husband and I started dating, he had a cockatiel named Patty. Patty would chase me around the house and usually corner me in the shower. She would peck the floor if I tried to step out. I would stand dripping wet in the shower and yell, "David, come get this bird!" Patty was given to his sister before we were married. I knew nothing about birds and I did not want to learn. I did not like birds!

Now, I have Peanut who came from a flea market in Florida. His dad purchased Peanut for his sister when Peanut was about a year old. She became tired of Peanut and my son convinced her to give him to us. He spent 10 years in a cage with no toys, never had a bath and ate nothing but seeds.

The first thing that I had to do when Peanut arrived was to give him a bath because his feathers were sticking together from cigarette smoke. Of course, he panicked and broke a blood feather. So then we had to make a trip to the vet to have it pulled. She pronounced Peanut healthy and said that he would come around. We laughed because our free bird now costs us \$100!

Peanut used to pace back and forth when he was left in his cage. Now, he is very seldom caged and his plucked feathers are re-growing. He will step up and down. I can touch his tail a little and he is starting to let me touch his wing feathers. He still gives a warning bite, but I have cockatoos, so a cockatiel bite is nothing! He likes his bath in the kitchen sink. He is starting to splash and dip his wings and drink the water. Occasionally, he eats table foods and pellets, but he still prefers striped sunflower seeds. I keep giving him his saucer of food everyday and telling him, "lunchtime" just as I do for my other birds. He has a cage full of toys but he very seldom plays with them.

Yesterday, I was eating pretzels with cheese while Peanut and I watched TV. I looked down and saw little yellow footprints all over my shirt because Peanut was stepping in the cheese sauce while he was eating a pretzel. He had cheese on his chest and his face so I had to get a damp towel and wipe him off. He loves to sit on a shoulder and ride around the house. He will climb onto the floor and come looking for me. It is about 30 feet from his cage to the kitchen table. He squawks as loud as the cockatoos when I am cooking dinner. He really is an adorable little guy! I call him, "my mini cockatoo"!

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