

## Best Pet Birds For Teens

### Tips on finding the right bird for the teen-aged bird owner.

*By Melissa Kauffman*

#### Bird Species For Teenagers

- 1) **Canary:** A canary can be kept singly and it entertains with its song. A canary doesn't come out of the cage, so it only needs food, water and cage cleaning, but doesn't need one-on-one play time. A canary can live up to 15 years and some colleges will allow a canary in dorm housing.
- 2) **Society finches:** The society finch would make a great pet bird. You need to keep them in pairs, they are readily available at pet stores, and they are low volume and low mess. Buy them a roomy cage so they can fly around. They need their food and water changes and their cage floor cleaned, but there is no one-on-one interaction. The society finch can live to up to seven years.
- 3) **Budgies:** The budgie makes a great pet for a teenager. The budgie's cage can fit in the teen's bedroom. It can be a great best friend if the teen takes the time to tame it and interact with it. Its volume level is low, although it can chatter quite a bit, and some even talk. It needs daily food, water and cage changing. It needs some fresh vegetables intertwined around its cage bars. Toys are a must. It will need daily one-on-one time and should have a play gym to spend out-of-cage time on. The budgie can live up to 15 years.
- 4) **Bourke's parakeet:** This is a beautiful and sweet parrot that comes from Australia. It is bigger than a budgie, but still small at around 7 ½ inches long. You need to get a hand-tame one as they can be flighty. The noise level is low. Daily feeding, water changes and cages cleaning are necessary. A wider cage so it can move around. It needs some interaction time, but probably not a lot of heavy one-on-one time. Bathe it daily and make sure to give it fresh vegetables. Life expectancy is up to 15 years.
- 5) **Peach-faced lovebird:** The peach-faced lovebird is a little more challenging small parrot. They are small at 6 ½ inches and have a life expectancy of 20 years. They come in many different color mutations. They are energetic and can get themselves in trouble. They can learn some tricks and their noise level is lower than the larger parrots. They need daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. They should have a play gym, lots of toys and perches. Can become a little territorial.
- 6) **Cockatiel:** The cockatiel makes a great pet bird. The female is typically more docile and cuddly, however it may lay eggs. The male is more vocal. They have long tails, which make a good portion of their 13 inches. They need a roomy cage, plenty of toys and perches. They need daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. They can be dusty and should get a good misting spray bath about once a week. Get a hand-tame cockatiel for your child. They startle easily and can escape the house if all doors and windows aren't shut or screened. They can live up to 30 years.
- 7) **Spectacled parrotlet:** These spunky small parrots are great for teens. They are small, only about 5 inches. They need daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. They need lots of space in their cage, a play gym and lots of toys and perches. They are a little more expensive as they are not as readily available as some of the others on this list. They can live up to 20 years. They have a fearless personality, can be aggressive and curious, and they like to eat a lot.
- 8) **Diamond dove:** The diamond dove is a smaller dove at 7 ½ inches. It can be tamed, but enjoys the company of other doves. It is pretty and easy going. It doesn't require as much one-on-one time as some of the parrots, but it needs plenty of space and probably another dove. Needs lots of perches as well as high, flat surfaces to roost on. The life expectancy is 12 to 15 years.
- 9) **Goldie's lorikeet:** This small lory is only about 7 ½ inches. It has a calm demeanor and is less high maintenance than other lories. They are curious and chatty, but have a lower noise level than bigger parrots. It does need nectar in its diet, so the kid owner should read up on its dietary requirements before bringing one home. It is a little more costly and challenging to find. Check with lory breeders advertising in BIRD TALK magazine. Its life expectancy is 7 years. It needs a spacious cage with several perches.

10) The conures: There are many species in this parrot group, and the smaller conures make great pets for teens, such as the gold cap, the dusky, the green cheek, the jenday, the sun, the maroon belly and the orange front. Read up on the best species for the teen's situation. Some conures are more loud and more active than others. They need daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. They need spacious cages, lots of toys, perches and outside-the-cage time. They can live up to 30 years.

11) White-capped Pionus: The smallest species of this genus at around 9 inches, this intelligent and somewhat gentle parrot can also be spunky. The noise level is considered low compared to other parrots, but still expect vocalization at dawn and dusk. Some white caps can talk and some can become territorial, so the white cap needs to be trained. They need daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. They need a spacious cage, toys, perches and a healthy diet as it is susceptible to obesity. Pionus need their 12 hours of sleep – but so do teenagers! It can live up to 40 years, so it is a bit more of a commitment.

12) Lilac-crowned Amazon: This is one of the smaller Amazons at 13 inches. It has the large personality of some of the bigger Amazons but it is slightly quieter. Expect some parrot noise though. It also is a little more expensive than some of other birds on this list and is more challenging to keep. It needs daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. It needs lots of toys, perches and out-of-cage time. It is prone to obesity so it needs plenty of exercise and a good healthy diet. It needs to be trained well, so the teenager needs to read up about this species. It has a life expectancy of 50 years, so this is a lifetime commitment.

13) Hahn's macaw: If your teen has always dreamed of a macaw, then the Hahn's macaw at only 12 inches might be a choice you both can live with. It has all the personality of the large macaws, but in a smaller package, which means less noise than the large macaws. Expect some parrot noise however. It likes to play and cuddle and destroy toys and perches. It needs daily feeding, water changing, cage cleaning, plus some good one-on-one time. It needs out-of-cage time on a play gym and needs plenty of toys and perches to chew on and destroy. Your teen will need to spend some money on replacing perches and toys. It can live to 40 years.