

The Elderly Parrot:

The Aging Pet Parrot:

Generally, parrots have a long lifespan if properly cared for. Some larger parrot species have been known to live as long as 80 years and smaller species live up to an average of 15 years. Either way, we know that these companion pets are long lived and bring many years of enjoyment to our lives. However, due to the longevity of these pets, it is important to realize they do grow older with the years and nature takes its course. As your feathered friend ages, special attention is needed in order to keep your companion physically and mentally healthy.

Taking a senior parrot to an avian veterinarian for yearly well checks is imperative for your beloved pet bird. These annual checkups allow the vet to assess the health and well-being of your parrot and may prevent unnecessary problems from developing. Conditions often develop and progress quickly in an elderly parrot.

As a parrot owner, you have become aware of your bird's body language and behavior. Changes in behavior and appearance are signs of illness and issues that should be brought to the attention of an avian professional immediately. Take the time to examine your older parrot on a daily basis. Arthritis and cataracts can sometimes affect these elderly ones. If eyes appear cloudy this may be a sign of cataracts. Cataracts can cause your bird to startle easier than normal and can even lead to blindness. If you notice your parrot is having trouble holding on, standing, climbing or moving around on perches this can be a sign of arthritis. While changing the lining in the cage you should also examine the droppings of your bird. Changes in frequency, color and/or consistency of the dropping should be brought to your veterinarian's attention as well.

Making Your Elderly Parrot More Comfortable:

There are ways to help your parrot ease into the golden years and provide it with comfort. Growing old is not a bad thing, it just may require some extra TLC. Here are a few suggestions to help your parrot remain happy, healthy and comfortable

Provide a Proper Sleep Schedule: Naps and rest periods are needed throughout the day for your aging parrot. In addition, they need 12 or more hours of sleep at night. Providing a quiet, relaxed atmosphere for your feathered friend to retreat to is an important part of its daily routine.

Playtime and Stimulation: Playing with your parrot daily is also a crucial part of your elderly parrot's daily life. Encouragement and interaction helps maintain the physical

and mental health of your bird. A happy, healthy bird lives longer. Providing toys is crucial to your parrot's health no matter how old they are.

Supply a Variety of Perches: Different sized perches at different heights allow your parrot to climb and exercise thus warding off arthritic conditions. However, if arthritis has developed within your bird, lower perches in order for your parrot to move around with ease. You will also need to place water and food where your bird can reach without difficulty.

Provide a Proper Diet: You may have to make changes to your elderly parrot's diet. Make sure your bird is provided with a nutritious one. Obesity and malnutrition can quickly lead to death in an aging parrot. High quality base diets supplemented with fresh fruits and vegetables need to be supplied daily. And as always, fresh clean water needs to be supplied at all times for your feathered friend.