



WORLD PARROT TRUST

Basic Home Exam and First Aid

FOR COMPANION PARROTS



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Keeping track of your companion bird's health is relatively easy, especially once you've gotten to know its habits and behaviours.

It's important to observe these on a daily basis, as illness can appear without warning.

Always ensure your bird is healthy by having him examined annually by an avian vet. This will help establish a baseline of normal parameters against which any deviations can be addressed and trouble ruled out.

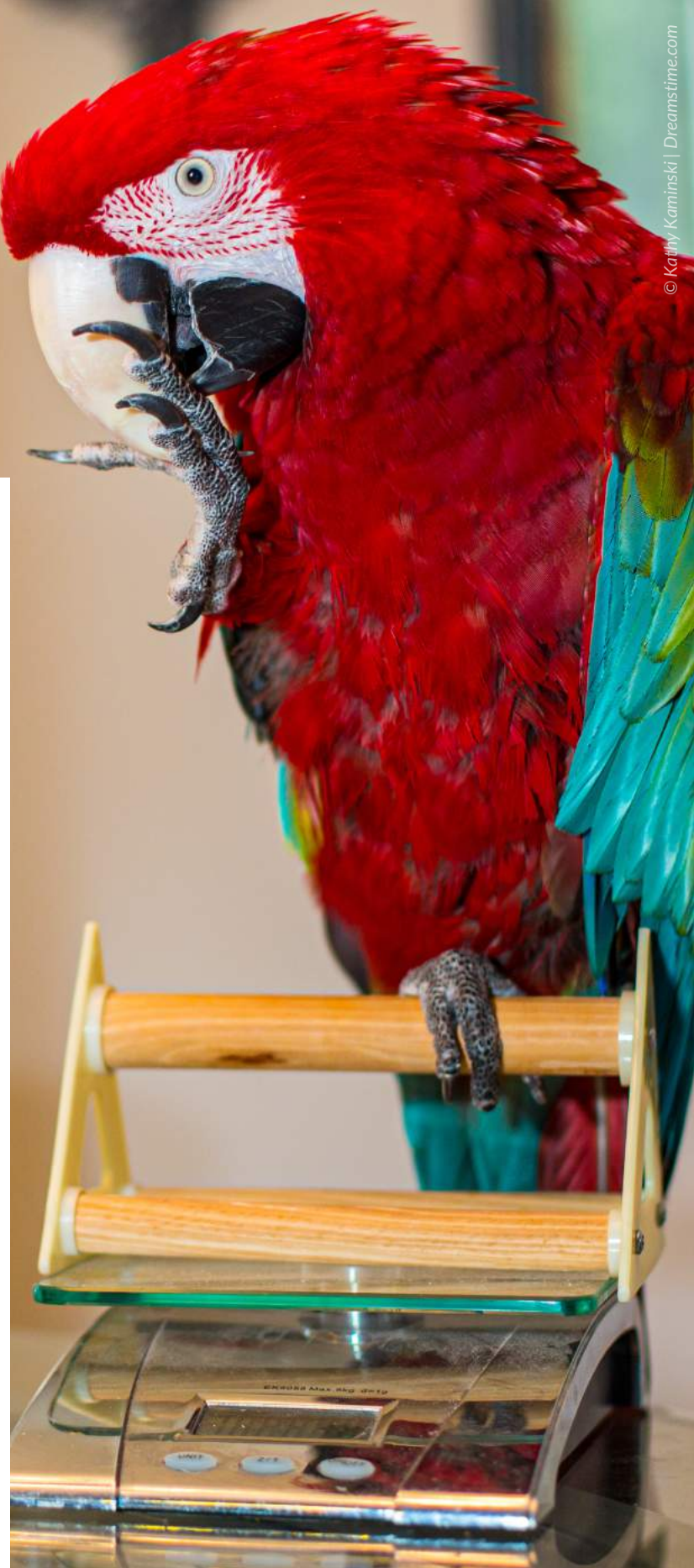
Parrots—being prey animals—tend to want to hide their conditions, so close observation is very important. Following are some warning signs to watch for and what to do when emergencies arise.

Sudden weight changes can be the first indicator of illness - get in the habit of doing weekly weigh-ins



WARNING SIGNS CHECKLIST:

- **Changes in weight (rapid weight loss or gain +/- 10%)**
Sudden weight changes can be the first indicator of illness, so checks should be done weekly using an electronic gram scale with a stand for your bird to perch on.
- **Body condition (i.e. breast muscle well-developed, no signs of lumps or injuries)**
- **Changes in behaviour, such as:**
 - Changes in normal behaviour (*playing, preening, socializing*)
 - Changes in appetite
 - Change in drinking habits
 - Excessive sleepiness
 - Lack of interest in surroundings
 - Fluffed up, hunched appearance
 - Changes in body or head posture
- **Changes in droppings (watery /lack of urates, change in colour or consistency)**





The best rule of thumb is: If in doubt, GO. When it comes to birds, it is always preferable to err on the side of caution.



SIGNS YOUR PARROT MAY NEED URGENT CARE

Signs of serious illness can be an emergency. If you see these signs, get your parrot to a vet immediately:

- Dramatic changes in feces, urates and urine (colour, output, consistency, odour) or the presence of blood (bright red or black), straining to pass
- Coughing, sneezing, diarrhea, vomiting or regurgitation (*bringing up semi-digested food*)
- Discharge from or redness around nares, eyes, mouth or cloaca; stained feathers in these areas
- Breathing difficulties (laboured or noisy)
- Sitting on floor rather than perch
- Sleeping more than normal
- Drastic increase or decrease of food or water consumption
- Loss of balance, seizures or other neurological signs
- Bleeding or injury
- Rapid weight loss (-10%)

Parrots are adept at hiding illness. Don't wait and see how your bird is doing tomorrow as it may be too late — take it to the vet as soon as possible.



STEPS TO TAKE

If you think your bird could be seriously ill there are some things you can do until you can reach your vet:

- **Keep your bird warm in a quiet place** (ideally 80-85F or 27-29C via a heat lamp set up at a safe distance, or in a warm room)
- **Continue with eating and drinking** (offer favourite foods by hand if necessary and use an eyedropper to give water a drop at a time); do not attempt to feed if the bird cannot swallow or is vomiting
- **Don't give medications** unless they were prescribed for your bird and don't try unproven remedies - they could make the situation worse.

VETERINARY RESOURCES

AAV (Association of Avian Veterinarians)

Includes International Listings

<https://www.aav.org/>

Building a First Aid Kit

FOR COMPANION PARROTS

Items to have on hand for when you have a convalescing bird or an emergency arises. Store your kit in a cool dry area.



ITEMS TO INCLUDE:

- Electronic gram scale (to monitor changes in weight)
- One of the following (*always check temperature to ensure it's not too hot*):
 - Heating pad (*on the lowest setting; do not place bird directly on the mat - put a towel on first and ensure bird has no access to power cord*)
 - Heat lamp placed at least 3 feet away from the bird's cage
 - Hot water bottle (*wrapped in a towel - no direct contact*)
- Carrier for transport plus a large towel or blanket to cover it to reduce stress
- Blunt-ended scissors
- toenail clipper
- vet wrap (tertiary bandage)
- gauze pads and bandage wrap
- clean containers to collect fecal or other samples
- Styptic stick or powder to stop a bleeding toenail or broken blood feathers (*do not apply directly to skin*). Cornstarch will also work in a pinch.
- Medicine dropper or syringe (*for administering medicine or fluids under the guidance of your vet*)

**Guidelines only —
should not replace
the advice of your
avian veterinarian.**



Remember: if you think your bird is seriously ill, get to the vet immediately!