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## TAMING AND TRAINING THE PET BIRD

Birds are very social creatures. In the wild they flock together; in a person's home they seek social contact. In fact, social contact on a regular basis is necessary. Birds eagerly anticipate contact with their owners, other birds, or even other pets!

### **BATHING:**

Is an activity that most birds enjoy? Provide a small bowl of water for this purpose and fill it with warm water. In the wild, parakeets and canaries bathe in the dew of the morning grass. Allow <animal> to roll in wet greens such as celery leaves or carrot tops. Larger birds enjoy spraying or misting. A shower stall can be excellent fun for larger birds! Bathing is necessary for cleanliness and for the social contact.

### **SHARE BREAKFAST AND DINNER.**

Twice-a-day feeding promotes nutrition. Table scraps are an excellent source of protein and vegetable nutrients. It will surprise you what <animal> will like to eat. Also, when a bird is hungry, it will associate its owner with food and understand him as a friend.

### **TRAINING:**

Is possible once you have provided a comfortable environment and established a friendly bond with <animal>. Training can begin with food as the reward. Remember, however, that birds are suspicious by instinct and that larger birds can become aggressive. If <animal> is not ready to accept food from your hand, be patient and allow it to choose its time. **NEVER** hit a bird--it will remember the aggressive act!! Gentleness and patience work more effectively.

When <animal> starts taking food from your hand, it is time to start stick training. With <animal> out of the cage (wings clipped so flight is impossible), it will have to depend on you. Remember, that its first means of protection is flight; its second is the cage. Place <animal> on an outside perch in a corner so chasing it around won't discourage you. Simply encourage <animal> to get on the stick with gentle, continuous conversation. Be **PERSISTENT** don't let <animal> train you! If you want <animal> to do something, don't stop because of its reaction.

**DO NOT** exhaust <animal>. Fifteen-minute sessions are long enough. Let <animal> rest several hours, then begin again.

Once <animal> starts to step up on the stick, set it back on the perch. Repeat this often, always accompanied by gentle conversation. Then carry <animal> around the room on the stick. If it jumps off, immediately make it get back on the stick. Jumping off the stick is not the skill it is supposed to learn!

At some point, without changing conversation or rhythm, substitute your **HAND** for the stick. If <animal> refuses your hand, capture it on a towel or cloth. Carry it, speaking gently, and allow it to stick its head out of the

At this point, repeat the stick and substitute hand method, and reward good behavior with a special treat.

Once the person is able to pick <animal> up with his hand, it then is a matter of how much time he devotes to <animal>.

Birds enjoy having their heads scratched and if a bird allows this, the owner can be sure that a strong bond has developed.