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CONURES

Vital Statistics

- Body length: 9-12 inches
- Body weight (most): 80-200 grams
- Age of sexual maturity: 1-3 years
- Maximum life span: 35 years

What to Expect from Your Conure

Conures are usually gregarious, playful, animated birds that enjoy and seek attention. Some conures may be considered short-tempered, and their noise level can be irritating. The less common dusky and green-cheeked conures are somewhat quieter than the more familiar jenday, sun, mitred or half-moon conures. Conures generally have a cavalier attitude about investigating anything new in their environment; thus, they often suffer from injuries. These birds are generally poor talkers, but they can be very vocal in the early morning and late afternoon.

Is Your Conure a Male or a Female?

It is difficult to reliably distinguish a male from a female conure based on physical characteristics; therefore, endoscopy or laboratory methods must be used for sex determination in breeding facilities. Conures are prolific breeders and the offspring are easy to hand-raise.

What Do Conures Do All Day?

Conures are playful and easily amused with simple toys. They often lay on their backs and chew at their toes or may play hide-and-seek with a towel or brown bag in their enclosure. Because they love to chew, any toys must be free of toxic metals, hooks, sharp objects or small, easily consumed components. Providing chew toys or fresh-cut branches from nontoxic, pesticide-free trees is recommended for conures. Check with your veterinarian for recommendations on

locally available safe trees.

Are Conures Tame?

Young, hand-raised conures adapt readily to new surroundings and handling procedures. They should be exposed early in life to novel situations (car travel, hospital visits, multiple visitors in the household, other household pets) so that they are well adjusted to these events. Discipline, leadership, patience, hooding (covering the head), a sense of ritual and the offering of rewards are necessary to modify the behavior of conures. Even then, they are not completely trustworthy and may bite when they are angry or don't get their way.

How to Identify Your Bird

The method used to permanently mark companion birds for identification purposes is the use of a microchip (which is injected under the skin). Individually numbered leg bands are not reliable for identification. Additionally, they are uncomfortable and may be the cause of leg injuries.

Why the Wings Should be Clipped

Conures that are allowed unrestricted freedom in the home can encounter numerous physical dangers or toxins; therefore, wing clipping is recommended. The goal of clipping the wings is NOT to make the bird incapable of flight, but to prevent it from developing rapid and sustained flight and to prevent escape. Maintenance trimming is required eight to twelve weeks after the start of a molt cycle.

How to Keep Your Conure Healthy, Happy and Safe!

- Give lots of attention (with leadership).
- Feed a fresh, high quality, toxin-free formulated diet with daily supplementation of chopped vegetables and fruit according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Grit is probably not necessary with modern captive diets.
- Provide clean, fresh, uncontaminated water (try using water bottles).
- Remove and replace food and water containers twice daily to maximize activity in a healthy bird.
- Provide occasional opportunity for bath, shower, or misting (at least weekly).
- Avoid spraying house with insecticides.

Housing for your conure should:

- be as large as possible.
- be clean, secure, safe and easy to service.
- be constructed of durable, nontoxic materials.
- contain variable-sized perches made of clean, nontoxic, pesticide-free tree branches.
- have food and water containers placed at opposite ends of the enclosure.
- avoid having perches located directly over food containers.
- offer occasional opportunity for protected outdoor exposure to fresh air, sunlight and exercise.

Conures are very curious and will investigate anything new in their environment.

That is why it is important to avoid:

- ceiling fans
- hot cooking oil
- Teflon®-coated items (overheated)
- leg chains
- sandpaper-covered perches
- tobacco and cigarette smoke
- chocolate, avocado, salt, alcohol
- toxic houseplants
- pesticides
- toxic fumes
- easily dismantled toys
- dogs, cats and young children
- cedar, redwood and pressure-treated wood shavings
- sources of lead or zinc.

What Your Veterinarian Looks for in a Healthy Conure

- Dry, open nares
- Smooth beak
- Body free of lumps and bumps
- Even, reptilian pattern on the feet, and nails of appropriate length
- Clear, bright eyes (no discharge)
- Alert, erect posture
- Smooth, bright feathers without color breaks, transparency or ragged edges

The group of birds known as conures consists of several separate genera. They are small to medium-sized parrots with long tails and proportionately broad, heavy beaks. They have a body shape similar to macaws.

Free-ranging conures are found from Mexico to Central and South America. Most conure species are very sociable and live together in small groups, spending time grooming each other. Some species are considered nomadic. Most have a loud, raucous call that can be heard for some distance in the forest.

Conures are generally hardy and popular aviculture and pet birds, bringing to captivity their sociable nature and loud voice. The most commonly seen species are primarily of the Aratinga genus. Larger conure species, such as Patagonian and golden (Queen

of Bavaria) conures, are relatively rare in captivity.

Most Common Disorders of Conures

- Behavioral problems
- Feather and skin disorders
- Injuries
- Black splotches in feathers (malnutrition)
- Bleeding syndrome
- Bacterial infections
- Chlamydiosis

- Polyomavirus
- Papillomatosis

Many common disease conditions in conures are often the result of malnutrition. Visiting your avian veterinarian for routine health checks will help prevent many diseases and support you in having a long, satisfying relationship with your conure.

Zoological Education Network provides educational materials about exotic companion animals.

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