



# CLOVER SAFE

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



#65

## SAFE CARE AND HANDLING OF EXOTIC BIRDS

*Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.*

There are a variety of birds that are considered “exotic” in the United States, including finches, parakeets, cockatiels, cockatoos, canaries, lovebirds, toucans, and mynahs. Many of these exotic birds are native to tropical climates located in the Caribbean, Africa, South and Central America, southern and eastern Asia, and Australia. Having adapted to tropical climates, these types of exotic birds require special methods of care and handling once they become domesticated pets in other places such as California.



*Photograph Courtesy of  
Tuolumne County 4-H Program*

### Safe Care and Handling of Exotic Birds

Always assure that the cage is adequate size for the exotic bird. For larger birds, the cage should be large enough for birds to comfortably turn around with their wings spread and not touching the cage sides. For smaller birds, the cage should be large enough for birds to fly from a perch on one side of the cage to another perch on the opposite side of the cage.

Cages should be cleaned daily, including washing of food dishes and water bowls and a change of fresh paper(s) at the bottom of the bird cage.

Feed the exotic bird an avian veterinarian recommended diet of commercial pellet food which contains more nutrients and less fat than seeds, along with assorted fruits, uncooked vegetables, and grains that are appropriate to the bird species. The pellet food should be specific to the species of the exotic bird(s).

Place cuttlebone in the cage to assure the exotic bird has an adequate source of calcium. Never feed an exotic bird avocado, chocolate, rhubarb, raw onions, or peanut butter.

Provide exotic birds with regular bathing opportunities, including a bath bowl with lukewarm water or sprayed with a mist from a water bottle.

Routinely trim the exotic bird's wing feathers and toenails.

Keep the exotic bird in a comfortable environment where the temperature is not too cool.

Exotic birds need daily socialization with their owners of about one hour a day.

Frequent handling of the exotic bird can help the bird to become more familiar with people. Before allowing an exotic bird to fly in the home, remove potential hazards to the bird such as a pet cat.

If an exotic bird appears to be sick or injured, seek the assistance of an avian veterinarian.

Always wash your hands after handling any bird or animal.