

COCKATIELS::

A Little About Them ...

COCKATIELS, along with the Budgerigar were early ambassadors for Australia. They reached Europe early in the 1840's, and were being bred there by 1845.

The Cockatiel has a variety of names. The Aboriginal name is Quarrion, and this name is still used for the bird in NSW, in Western Australia the Cockatiel is more commonly known as the Weero, whilst the well-known ornithologist, John Gould called them Cockatoo parrots. The word Cockatiel has its origins in the Dutch word **Kakatielje**.

This delightful bird ranges over most of Australia, with the exception of Tasmania, it is mainly found in the vast inland areas of Australia.

They have no preferred nesting period or 'season' in the wild. Breeding is largely dependent upon the food supply, which consists mostly of seeding grasses; these in turn are dependent on rainfall.

Cockatiels are nomadic, being swift streamlined fliers; they can cover a large area in their search for water, food and suitable nesting sites.

They nest in hollow trees whenever climatic conditions promise bountiful supplies of seeds for their young. Both the hen and the cock incubate the eggs and both parents work at feeding the chicks.

The native gray Cockatiel is generally referred to as a 'Normal' within avicultural circles. The body is dark grey uniform in colour throughout. Adult males have a bright clear head of deep yellow, with bright orange cheek patches. The white wing patch is well defined and clear of darker feathers. Females are a duller version of the male but she has barring on the tail which is absent in the males his tail being dark grey to black in colour. Juveniles resemble to hen bird until they are around 5 months of age when young cocks will begin to acquire their yellow head.

Basic care of Cockatiels

- Change water daily, check seed container replenishing if necessary.
- Ensure your bird always has access to cuttlebone or some other form of calcium.
- Vary your birds diet, seed and water alone does not provide your bird with the necessary dietary requirements to remain healthy. Silverbeet, Endive, Milk thistle Carrot tops, grated carrot, broccoli, sweet corn, multigrain bread, seeding grasses and arrowroot biscuits are all things your bird will enjoy that will enhance his diet.
- Natural wooden perches of varying diameters are good for your birds feet, - they also provide him with something interesting to chew on.
- Pet birdcages should be thoroughly washed at least once a week, food and water containers at least twice weekly.
- Don't fill the birds' cage with heaps of plastic toys and mirrors, a few at a time is preferable. Better still, gum nuts, eucalypt leaves or wattle branches will provide amusement and can be nibbled on as well.
- Worming your bird on a regular basis (every three months) is a must - keep a note on your calendar as you do for your cat or dog.