

## [Resolving Behavioral Problems in Pet Birds](#)

### Resolving Behavioral Problems in Pet Birds

#### What are the problems that a parrot has in captivity?

[Dr. Pepperberg](#), researcher of parrot intelligence, explained it very well:

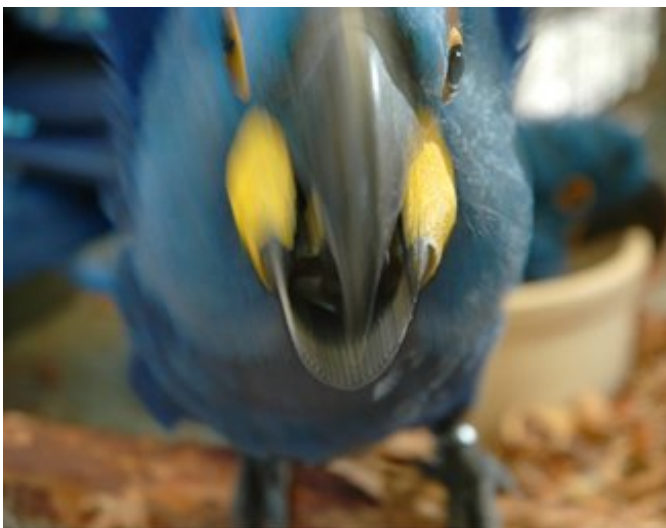
*"Think of putting a four-year old child into a playpen, with maybe one or two toys, for 8 hours a day or longer. You can imagine the anger and frustration that will accumulate over the day. So when you come home, this kid is going to be screaming and yelling and taking out his frustrations, and your response may be "I don't want to deal with this."*

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The basics of resolving most behavioral problems are simple, really:

#### **Lavishly reward your pet for behavior you like and quietly ignore the ones you don't want.**

If your parrot displays undesirable behavior, don't fuss, don't shout, most certainly don't toss that newspaper against the cage to stop a screaming parrot or show aggression towards the bird -- in most instances, it is best not to react at all; or you could accidentally reinforce the undesirable behavior or even create behavioral issues far more severe than what you are trying to stop.



Lunging Hyacinth Macaw  
Photo & Comments by:  
W Struye

"... have I not jumped backwards just in time, I may have ended up with a broken camera and some serious beak injuries to the head."

#### **Common Behavioral Problems:**

Learn to understand and guide your parrot's behavior:

- [Taming a Bird](#)
- [Behavioural Problems in Companion parrots](#) by Greg Glendell
- [Understanding and Guiding Parrot Behavior](#)
- [Learn to Communicate with your Bird and Understand Your Parrot's Body Language](#)
- [Effective Ways to Discipline Your Pet Bird](#)
- Alternatives to Breaking Parrots: [Reducing Aggression and Fear through Learning](#)
- [ABC of Parrot Behavior](#)

Addressing Specific Behavior Concerns:

- [Screaming](#)
  - [Biting / Aggression](#)
  - [Chewing on Furniture](#)
  - **Feather Plucking:**
    - [Causes and Treatments](#)
    - [Behavioral Feather Plucking](#)
  - [Aggressive or Play Lunging](#)
  - [Jealousy in your Pet Bird](#)
  - [Phobias / Anxiety Attacks](#)
  - [Cage-bound Birds](#)
  - Managing [Hormonal Behavior in Birds](#)
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## Why do our companion birds develop "issues"?

The following information has been provided by [Dr. Jill M. Patt, DVM](#) practicing in Mesa, Arizona. She has been keeping and raising exotic birds for years, providing her a unique knowledge and understanding that goes beyond that of a regular vet who does not have the benefit of daily interaction with birds / parrots.

### Too intelligent for their own good?

"Studies have proven that birds are much more intelligent than our other commonly kept pets and they also are very long lived. These two factors often contribute to some of the problems we see in avian veterinary medicine. Because birds are so intelligent, they become bored easily and this commonly leads to behavioral disorders such as feather picking and skin mutilation.

Their intelligence can also get them into trouble. As an example, it is not uncommon for a bird to learn that when they scream the owner comes to the cage and they quickly become attention yellers.

Before anyone acquires a pet bird they need to understand what they are

getting into. Never acquire any type of pet on an impulse and especially a bird. Studies have proven that birds are much more intelligent than our other commonly kept pets and they also are very long lived. These two factors often contribute to some of the problems we see in avian veterinary medicine.

Because birds are so intelligent, they become bored easily and this commonly leads to behavioral disorders such as [feather picking and skin mutilation](#). Their intelligence can also get them into trouble. As an example, it is not uncommon for a bird to learn that when they scream the owner comes to the cage and they quickly become attention yellers.

Also, because they often live for decades on very poor diets, we regularly see diseases associated with severe malnutrition. Therefore, I encourage anyone considering acquiring a bird to become thoroughly educated in the needs of the bird prior to bringing your feathered friend home.

Creating a Fun and Safe Environment / Stopping Destructive Behaviorg Your Home: [Redirecting Negative Behaviors in your Petbird](#) for some excellent tips and tricks ... [Bird Proof Your Home to Protect Your Furniture and Keep your Bird Safe](#) ... [Foraging](#): The Way To Keep Your Parrot Mentally Stimulated and Happy

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## **Common Behavior Problems:**

Chewing: I hesitate to add "chewing" to the "behavioral problem" section, as chewing is a natural behavior of any parrot. In the wild, they "customize" their environment by working on their nest, chewing on branches to keep their beaks in good shape. This is what they do -- and that is natural and good for them. Problems arise when they chew on their owners precious possession (i.e., furniture) or -- as we all know they do if not supervised properly -- damage electric cords, which can cause electrical fires.

Parrots, just like kids, need to be supervised. Some lucky parrots are provided with an entire safe room for their pleasure, which may include a cage, one or more [playgrounds](#), even potted trees which the parrot will enjoy "customizing". Most households don't have that luxury.

Please also consider [caging options, optimal cage placement and safety issues pertaining cages](#) to help resolve behavioral problems.

For our human children, we have learned to "child-proof" the environment -- to assess the areas the child has access to and make sure that safety measures are taken to protect the child. This also needs to be done for our parrots -- especially those that like to chew, which includes just about all the mid-sized and larger parrots, and many small parrots too.

This all being said, owners need to provide their parrots with "stuff" they can

safely chew on: [tree branches](#), [toys](#) ... lots of them. Rotating toys will keep the parrots interested.

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Please also visit the following website for further information on further enhance your parrot's environment: [Keeping Your Parrots Happy and Entertained](#) ... [Foraging](#) ... [Redirecting Negative Behaviors](#)

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