

Dove Care Sheet

Because we care !!!



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Your Pets Super Store



Congratulations on your new pet. Doves are easy to care for and are hardy. Being good-natured social creatures they will do well in either a cage or in an aviary and can be kept as a single bird or as a pair. Perhaps best known for its gentle temperament, a Ring-neck Dove makes a great pet that is sweet natured and almost naturally tame. Diamond Doves are also popular as pets. When you bring your dove home give it a couple days to get used to its new home and family, and

then you can begin letting it out to explore its surroundings. Domesticated doves and pigeons like human contact. They are quiet and peaceful, and make wonderful pets.

HOUSING

Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures. The cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts and sunny windows. Having one or two sides close to a wall will give them a feeling of security. Sudden loud noises and movements can frighten and stress them. A cage approximately 24" W x 24" D x 24" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 3/8" apart, makes a good home for your dove. Always select the largest cage you can afford. A variety of perch sizes and materials, such as natural branches and sanded perches allow your bird to exercise its feet which helps prevent arthritis. A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird from standing in droppings. Line the droppings tray with cage paper or corn cob litter for easier cleaning. To avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches. You will need a food, water and treat dish, as well a clip to hold millet sprays. Your dove will enjoy some toys to entertain himself and relieve boredom. They will also enjoy getting out of its cage at least once a day. Be sure the area is safe for the bird and other family pets are kept separate. Many owners trim their doves wings to prevent injury or escape through an open window or door. Creature Comforts offers a clipping service for a minimal fee if you are not comfortable doing so yourself.

DIET

Doves are typically seed eaters. Unlike most pet birds (parrots, finches, parakeets, etc.), doves do not husk the seeds before eating them. They swallow the seeds whole. For medium sized doves, (Ringnecks) a Dove seed mix is available, this should be supplemented with a good quality pellet to provide protein. Finely chopped greens (endive and spinach) should also be offered daily. Fresh vegetables should be discarded when not eaten within 24 hours. Small doves (Diamond) will eat a mix

DIET - continued

of millet, canary and finch food as well as pellets and greens. Grit should first and foremost include a calcium source. Other substances that may be included are sand (for food grinding purposes) and tiny bits of charcoal (digestion aid). They need calcium for bone development and egg development. The charcoal helps in digestion and the sand helps grind up the seeds in their gullet. Grit should not be mixed with their food but offered in a separate dish. A cuttle bone should be available at all times. Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, alcohol, or caffeine; these can cause serious medical problems. Doves need access to clean water at all times. They will dehydrate easily and this is a very dangerous condition. You will need to check water dishes daily to see that they are not contaminated with droppings.

CLEANING

Maintaining cleanliness is essential for your birds health and well being. Wash and dry food and water dish daily. Fill with fresh seed mix and fresh non chlorinated water. Once a week, remove the bird to a safe place and wash the cage, perches and toys with Poop Off. Dry the cage thoroughly before returning you bird. Cover the cage bottom with clean cage paper or corn cob litter. If you use a cage cover it should be washed weekly, since it will accumulate feather dust. Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged.

HEALTH

Proper diet and a clean environment are the best ways to insure your pets good health. Nails should be trimmer to prevent injury to your bird. Your dove will also enjoy a bath. Provide chlorine-free lukewarm water in a shallow dish and remove the water when done. As an alternative, mist the bird with water or a grooming spray such as Feather Glo. Ten to twelve hours of sleep are required for your dove to maintain its health. Birds who are not afforded the needed amount of sleep may become depressed, grouchy or even ill. It is very helpful to cover your bird's cage each night, blocking out annoying light that may undermine your dove's sleep. Birds hide the fact that the are not well, often by the time you notice something is wrong they are very sick. If you notice any signs of illness you need to contact your veterinarian right away. Indications of illness would include: beak swelling, fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers, sitting on floor of the cage, loss of appetite, eye or nasal discharge, red or swollen eyes, wheezing or coughing, runny or discolored stools and favoring one foot.

FERTILITY

Doves will breed in captivity. If you do not want babies two females can be kept together.

CHECK LIST

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| _____ cage and cage cover | _____ calcium grit |
| _____ millet spray | _____ cuttle bone |
| _____ nail clipper and styptic gel | _____ cage paper or corn cob litter |
| _____ grooming spray | _____ pellets and fortified seed mix |
| _____ bird bath | _____ food and water dishes |
| _____ varied perches | _____ treat dish and clip for millet |
| _____ vitamin supplements | |