

CANARIES

General Information

The canary (*Serinus canaria*) is the second most popular pet bird. They are known for their good nature, attractive plumage and remarkable singing ability. Canaries originate from the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores. The Portuguese introduced them to Europe in the fifteenth century. There are numerous varieties bred in captivity. Some of these birds are bred for their song while others are bred for their conformation, plumage and color.

The canary is relatively easy to care for. It is an appropriate pet for children to learn the essentials of caring for a pet. They are also often found as companions in retirement homes and hospitals.



Purchasing a Canary

Canaries may be purchased from a pet store or a reputable breeder. When selecting a Canary, try to choose a young bird, as it may be easier to tame.

The female Canary does not sing as well as the male. Many people are surprised to find the bird they thought was a male, turns out to be a female with less or often no song. If you want a Canary specifically for its singing ability, make sure you have actually heard it sing. Keep in mind that a canary that is under stress, molting, in ill health or simply in a new environment, may not sing. Hand raised babies often make better pets since they have been completely socialized with humans. Young birds are easier to tame and adapt readily to new environments and situations. Your new bird should be exposed early to different events (young and old people, males and females, other pets, car trips, visits to the veterinarian, etc.) to help promote a calm, well-adjusted pet. The lively, alert bird that is not easily frightened is more likely a healthy bird. After purchasing your new bird, have it examined by a veterinarian familiar with birds.

Veterinary Care

Canaries require regular, routine veterinary health check-ups. Your veterinarian can perform a physical examination, grooming (beak, nail or feather trim) and laboratory tests as needed. During these semi-annual check-ups, health, nutritional and maintenance issues can be identified and addressed. Veterinary check-ups help prevent disease and will aid in the maintenance of a long lasting, healthy relationship between you and your bird.

Color

Mature

The native, wild canary is greenish-yellow

There are over 50 color types and combinations

Common domestic colors include yellow, orange, **red factor**, olive, white, brown and black

Immature

Same colors

Often said to have a plumper **baby** face and less scale on the feet

Sexing

Mature

Both sexes look the same from a distance

Males have a more prominent **nipple** like protrusion of the vent (**anus**) evident more during breeding

Females have a vent that lays flat against the body

Males tend to be better singers

Immature

Difficult to sex

Weight Average 0.7 - 0.8 ounces (20 - 22 grams)

Size Average 5 - 5.5 inches (12.5 - 14 cm) in length

Life span 6 - 10 years (maximum 20 years)

Diet Consult your veterinarian.

Breeding Breed readily in captivity

Brood Size 3 - 6 creamy white eggs will hatch in about 14 days, babies leave the nest in 2 - 3 weeks

Cage Minimum 1 ft x 1 ft x 2 ft (30 cm x 30 cm x 60 cm)

*This client information sheet is based on material written by Rick Axelson, DVM & Shawn Messonier, DVM
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