Reviewed November 2023



RVC Exotics Service Royal Veterinary College Royal College Street London NW1 0TU T: 0207 554 3528 F: 0207 388 8124

- 4) After the first week, reduce the seed ration in the bowl to a rounded teaspoon once a day
- 5) After the second week, reduce the seed ration to a level teaspoon once a day
- 6) After the third week, reduce the seed ration to half a teaspoon once a day
- 7) After the fourth week you can stop providing seed as routine daily diet

IMPORTANT POINTS:

DO PERSEVERE!

DO provide normal fresh vegetables and fruits during conversion

DO monitor your bird's weight daily and record this in the table attached if your bird loses more than 10% of their body weight during the conversion then you can slow the current stage down by a week before continuing the seed reduction

DO use seeds as treats or rewards for training or foraging

DO NOT MIX seed and pellets they will just pick out all of the seeds!!

OTHER OPTIONS SUITABLE FOR YOUNG AND VERY INQUISITIVE BIRDS, LARGE BIRDS (>150G) OR LARGE GROUPS:

GRADUAL INTRODUCTION

10% of the new food is added to the old food each day. The new food can be mixed in or added as a layer over the top of the old food, which the bird has to forage through to get to the original diet.

Day 1 is 90% old diet, 10% new diet. Day 2 is 80% old diet, 20% new diet and so on. Some birds need a more gradual introduction so try reducing to just 5% of the new diet.

SUBSTITUTION

Offer your bird the usual diet in the morning, but replace with the pelleted food an hour before bedtime.

Birds naturally eat more before nightfall so this method takes advantage of that.

Alternatively try feeding the pellets first thing in the morning when your bird is hungriest.

Providing the bird is eating the new food, gradually increase the amount of time the new food is fed (by approximately 15minutes each day).

Monitor droppings and bodyweight to ensure your bird is eating enough of the new food.

FLOCK FORAGING

This technique works well for species that feed on the ground such as budgies and cockatiels. First thing in the morning place a mirror or piece of white paper on the floor of the cage and scatter with the pelleted diet. The diet will be easy to see on the white background. If using a mirror the bird may be tricked into thinking another flock member is eating the pellets which can encourage them.

Small piles of up to 3 different pellets can be offered, to see which your bird prefers.

With tame birds it can be helpful to pretend to eat the diet yourself as birds are very social and forage in groups. You can make a loose fist with your hand and using your thumb and

Once you determine which of the pellets your bird prefers, these can be offered in a food bowl in the cage. The original diet can be withdrawn once your bird is eating the pellets but monitor their weight to ensure adequate consumption.

More tips for larger parrots

Some birds prefer to eat from the highest food bowl in the cage so try placing the pellets in a high up bowl

Pretend to be eating the pellets as part of your meal and share some with your bird

Soaking in fruit juice can make the pellets more tempting

Try different sized pellets to see which your bird prefers