

# Parrotlet Myths Revealed

## **Female vs. Male**

The only difference between male and female parrotlets is their *individual* personality and temperament. Forget whatever you have heard or read. Females and males have a tendency toward specific personality outcomes, but we have seen many companion parrotlets who have not fit those descriptions. We believe that the personality of the primary caregiver plays an important role in the future personality of the companion parrotlet - and have pets of our own to prove our theory. Every general characteristic you read about males can also be found in females, and vice-versa. From the time they are being handfed, certain qualities will stand out with some birds. However, after fledging and being put in a baby cage, this sometimes changes. Clutch size, daily interaction, and environment can play key roles in their development.

## **Talking**

First, most parrots do not talk - they mimic. Second, there is never a guarantee your parrotlet will talk. Both female and male parrotlets have the ability, but the percentage that do is relatively small. If you work with your parrotlet, and he or she has the desire to talk, that would be an added bonus. We know of, and have, parrotlets who talk. It is a tiny, strange robot sound that is most times very hard to understand. If you are purchasing a bird only for talking ability, a parrotlet is not for you. Realistic expectations dictate that your companion bird will be the result of your hard work, dedication, and commitment, and more importantly, its desire to please you.

## **Time**

It takes hours every day to love, train, feed, and socialize your companion. If you make the purchase, you must also make the commitment to do whatever is necessary for a long and healthy life for the bird. Once you bring a parrotlet into your home they become part of your family and should be afforded the same comforts for life. Birds are not disposable, which is why you should have considered all the pros and cons prior to purchasing a parrotlet.

## **Seed-only or pelleted diets**

Birds should not live on a seed-only diet, nor should they live on a pellet-only diet. Limiting their choices limits the pleasure derived from your bird when finding new foods in their special cup each day. You should prepare yourself to offer your companion a well-rounded diet including fruit, vegetables, grains, and dairy products.



## **Pacific vs. Green-Rumped**

Both of these species make wonderful companions. Their differences lie in their individual personality and temperament. However, slight differences can be made in regard to general characteristics:

- Pacific - hearty, more robust, larger, more adaptable
- Green-rumped - delicate, smaller, shy and timid

However, there are those that will buck the norm. You will find shy Pacific's and robust green-rumped. It all lies within each bird. Your own personality, and the household environment, should dictate which parrotlet you choose. Remember: you won't really be able to get a comfortable feel for the birds until you have seen them and played with them. A breeder's favorite baby may not like you for whatever reason. For those of you who must have a bird shipped, this is where the importance of your relationship with a breeder comes into play again. Rely on the breeder to discuss the various parrotlets available, their personality and temperaments. Ask about each bird and discuss your current household situation.

## **Nipping & Biting**

A companion should not nip or bite unless it is the result of fear or stress (including lack of sleep). Typically, a bonded companion would never think of biting its mate (you). However, using their beak to let you know they don't want to go somewhere, come out of their cage, etc. is not uncommon. This means they use their beak to tap, hold, or move a finger, without actually nipping or biting. If your companion is biting, evaluate your interaction and their environment. What happened prior to the bite? The "NO" command used sternly (in a different tone of voice) each time is usually sufficient, followed by praise when the bird does something good. Try to follow a bite with an activity that the bird likes --- even step-ups so that you can praise him or her. Always praise your bird for good behavior during the course of normal interaction. A happy, excited voice works wonders!

## **Noise Level**

Like any other bird, parrotlets chirp and chatter at various levels throughout the day. Their noise level is such that parrotlets make appropriate companions for those living in apartments and condominiums, without disturbing your neighbors.

## **Lifespan**

The lifespan of parrotlets are said to be over 20 years, however, there are only a few breeders with birds this old (or near this age). Also, the lifespan of breeders cannot be compared to that of companions. Breeders are subjected to the stresses of egg-laying and rearing their young, including complications associated with breeding. Companions are subjected to the everyday dangers that are part of their human world, and unfortunately, most die in accidents due to their small size.

