



Cockatiels! What, Where, How

What, Where, and How

https://youtube.com/watch?v=VE_ICe2BuVA

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When I meet an animal for the first time, I love trying to guess how they fit in with all the other animals in the world, and I'm fascinated by their uniqueness, but sometimes, we tend to overlook animals that seem like they're just part of our everyday lives. We see them on TV, in pictures, and sometimes, we even have them as pets. Today, I'd like to explore an animal that's commonly kept as a pet: the cockatiel.

(Intro)

What is a cockatiel, where do they come from, and how do we take proper care of them in captivity? Well, this is a cockatiel, but to really get to know what they are, let's break it down by taxonomy. Kingdom animalia, phylum chordata, because they're animals with backbones. Class aves, because they're birds, meaning they're covered in feathers, toothless beak, four-chambered heart, and laying hard-shelled eggs. Order psittaciformes, better known as parrots. They feature a hard, curved beak, an upright stance, and zygodactyl feet or two toes in the front and two toes in the back. Family cacatuidae, this group consists of 21 species that are mainly found in Australasia. Their distinguishing feature is the crest of long feathers on top of their head. Genus nymphicus. Species hollandicus. They're the only species in this genus and are rather distinct from the other species in the family cacatuidae.

They're the smallest and in the cacatuidae family, they're the most commonly kept as pets. They're so common that they're the second most popular pet of all parrot type birds, coming in just behind the budgerigar from the family (?~1:32). It's interesting that they're so common but relatively little is known about their origins.

From recent molecular studies, we've confirmed that they do have the same ancestors as cockatoos, as opposed to previously being classified with parakeets. The first documentation of cockatiels is from explorer James Cook in 1770. In 1793, naturalist Robert (?~1:52) described them and named them hollandicus, after the area where he found them, New Holland, which is what they used to call Australia. They were found in arid and semi-arid regions of Australia, living in pairs and flocks congregating around water. They'd move from water source to water source and have long been considered sustenance for the native peoples of the region.

By 1845, importation into Europe had begun and ten years later, they had become quite popular with the very rich. In 1894, Australia banned the exportation of cockatiels, though many breeding pairs were already established in Germany and London. Cockatiels made their way to the United States in the early 1900s and their popularity around the world has only increased.

Humans have bred them extensively, seeking out new color mutations. It's amazing to think that the captive population has 15 distinct colors, but they all descended from the very few who survived the importations and poor care in the early 1800s. Since care wasn't up to good standards then, let's rectify that by providing the best care possible from now on.

First, they'll need a place to rest and relax, an enclosure that's 24x24x24 inches is the minimum space you'll need to house one. You'll need a larger space for a pair. The most important aspect of the enclosure is the width between the bars. It cannot be larger than 5/8 of an inch or the cockatiel will be able to stick their head through the gap and get stuck.

Perches should be set up around the enclosure at varying levels. Don't use the smooth factory-made dowels. If a cockatiel perches on them for long, it'll hurt their feet. Make sure you offer varying textures and diameters with the perches you place. You'll need plenty of cockatiel-sized toys to keep them exploring and using their

mind and body to discover new ways to play with their toys.

Now comes their diet. It's important to remember that while cockatiels do eat seeds in the wild, they also eat fresh fruits and vegetables, flowers, leaves, bark, and occasionally an insect or two. Cockatiels in captivity need more than just seeds to fulfill their nutritional needs. Offer them good quality parrot pellets along with fresh produce, like carrots, zucchini, broccoli, apples, or bananas. There's a long list of safe foods to feed parrots, cockatiels included, in the description below.

Cockatiels spend a good amount of time foraging on the ground, so placing a food dish on the side of the enclosure as well as one on the bottom is a great way to encourage them to move around. Fresh water should be offered at all times. In the wild, cockatiels form monogamous pairs, so providing companionship is essential to their well-being. A human companion can provide good company, as long as they spend quite a bit of time every day interacting with their feathered friend.

If you're thinking about having a cockatiel as a pet, make sure you do extensive research on their behavior and care before taking one in to your home. One thing that many people overlook is the amount of dander that cockatiels produce. Their under-layer of feathers are called powder down feathers. They keep them warm, but as they groom themselves, the feathers slowly disintegrate, creating a white dust that covers everything. These guys are not good pets for people with asthma or other respiratory sensitivities.

Thank you for joining us. I hope you enjoyed learning about cockatiels. Steve has been such a good boy. If you'd like to go on an adventure with us every week, subscribe to our YouTube channel AnimalWondersMontana. If you have any questions for me or Steve, leave them in the comments below. Thanks, and we'll see you next week.

(Outro/Credits)

For some reason, she was really hard to name, so we asked for help and you responded with so many great names. We tried a bunch of your suggestions. We kinda took 'em for a test drive for a day.