



Deborah Cowan, DVM

Doctor Deborah Cowan graduated from NCSU-CVM in 1993. She has been working with Exotic animals since 1982 when she attended North Carolina A&T University for her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Lab Animal Science. She was part of the group that started the Wildlife Rehabilitation League in 1978. In addition, Doctor Cowan has done a month long internship at Texas A&M, Galveston campus in Fish Medicine. Dr. Cowan works with small animals such as: hamsters, gerbils, ferrets, rabbits, guinea pigs, hedgehogs, and sugar gliders. Her practice also works with reptiles, amphibians, fish, and birds. She offers wellness check-ups and any health issues that you may notice.

*If you find an injured wildlife animal, you can call or bring it by the hospital. They will provide an initial exam and medical care before contacting a wildlife rehabilitation provider to work with the animal so it may be released back into the wild.*

# Birds as Pets - Need Special Consideration!



**H**appy Holidays to everyone. I pondered long over what topic would be beneficial at this time of the year and then it came to me; a partridge in a pear tree. Often people think of birds as decorative items. "Oh he is so pretty" is the number one describer of birds. Has anyone ever said; "Oh they live so long!?" Unfortunately people do not realize how long lived a pet bird is. When they are given as gifts, particularly to older people or even younger people, no one thinks about the consequences to the birds.

A Macaw or African Grey can live to be in their 70's, that's a long time to be taking care of an animal. You have to clean poop constantly, provide nourishment, vet care, companionship. If you go on a trip, you have to find proper care while you are gone. This is a major commitment!

If the pet is given to someone over 50, they better be planning their wills and making provisions for their pet. Birds are one of the species that has an extremely hard time adapting to new environments. They are very much attached to a person, a food and an environment. Trying to rehome them can be an unrewarding experience for the person and a disaster for the bird. They are not particularly quiet, unlike barking dogs and meowing cats, the screech of an angry Macaw or an African Grey can cause every nerve in your brain to go on overload.

Birds can be good companions, but they have to be worked with from the time they are hatched. They will bite if startled,

that bite can be quite severe and quite painful. You cannot housebreak them, therefore you must be willing to constantly clean up after them.

Finding a veterinarian that will see birds can also be a challenge, many veterinarians know nothing about birds, and the birds themselves can be quite a handful.

So...Before you think of purchasing or giving a bird as a "Gift" make sure that you have thought it out fully and that you are going to commit to this animal for THEIR life. It will put a crimp on yours.

If you have recently adopted an exotic pet and you aren't sure how to properly take care of it, Dr. Cowan will give you some helpful tips and information.

**Animal Hospital of Walnut Cove**  
We treat you and your pets like family!

*We Accept Exotic Pets*

**Dr. Deborah Cowan**

**336-591-8250**

[www.animalhospitalwalnutcove.com](http://www.animalhospitalwalnutcove.com)

