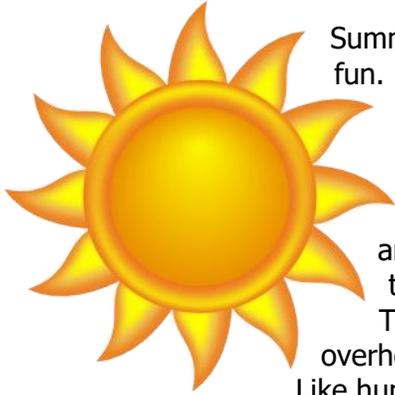


Bird Safety Corner

Summer Safety



Summer brings with it sun, picnics, the beach, grilling, and lots of outdoor fun. Unfortunately it also brings some dangers for your birds unique to the season. Here are a few tips to keep your birds safe this summer.

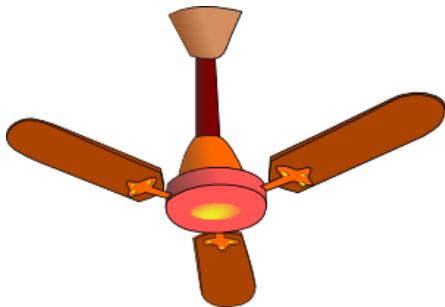
First and foremost is **heat**. This spring was the hottest on record, and the summer is already shaping up to be a scorcher. Most of our birds are from warm climates, but that doesn't mean they can easily tolerate the heat. Parrots in the wild forage in the morning and around dusk. They spend the hottest part of the day in the shade. Our birds can easily overheat in temperatures above 85-90°F.

Like humans, parrots can get **heatstroke**. Signs of excess heat in a bird are **holding the wings out, panting, and difficulty perching**. Parrots do not sweat. If your bird shows any of these signs, immediately mist it with cool (not cold) water, including under the wings. If your bird does not recover right away, take it to the vet. Heatstroke can even cause convulsions and death. Make sure your bird has access to shade and water at all times, both indoors and out. Be aware that sun coming through a window can really heat up a cage.



If you take your bird for a **ride in the car** in the summer, keep the carrier out of direct sun even if you have the air conditioning on. **NEVER** leave a bird (or a dog or a cat or a child or, well, anyone!) in a car if it's hot out. Temperatures can rise very quickly in a parked car and a bird can die quickly, even in a few minutes.

If you have air conditioning, be aware that this can drop the **humidity** down low, so you might want to mist your birds more often. Conversely, too much humidity can cause mold to grow, so if your house is very humid, you might want to consider getting a dehumidifier. Also make sure that if you are drawing air in from the outside that the air intake isn't near outdoor air hazards such as a grill or citronella candles.



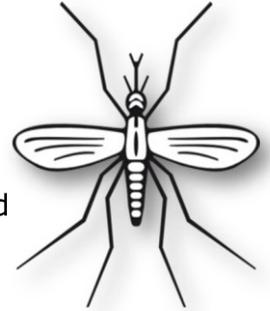
Speaking of water, your bird's **water bowl** can grow bacteria much quicker in hot weather. Make sure you change it once or twice a day in the heat. **Fruits and vegetables** will spoil more easily, so don't leave them in the cage very long. Prepared foods like **chicken, eggs, and pasta mixes** can also grow bacteria very quickly if left out. You don't want your bird getting food poisoning!

If you use a **ceiling fan**, do not have it on if your birds are out of their cages. Ceiling fans act as guillotines and have

killed many a bird. Even a bird that doesn't normally fly can shoot up in the air if it is startled.

Summertime also brings a heightened risk of **accidental escape** because windows and doors are open more often. Be especially aware of where your bird is at all times. A bird can fly out in the blink of an eye, especially if it is fully-flighted. Whether or not your bird's wings are clipped, always have the bird restrained in either a carrier/cage or a harness if you go outdoors. Most birds can still fly with trimmed wing feathers, and all it takes is one good breeze to carry a bird aloft, never to be seen again.

Another danger lurking outdoors is **West Nile Virus** carried by **mosquitoes**. There have been confirmed deaths of companion parrots from WNV who were bitten by mosquitoes in the summer. Keep birds indoors around dusk and dawn, and if you live in an area with lots of mosquitoes, you're probably better off not having your birds outdoors at all.



Just remember that with proper precautions, you and your birds can have a fun healthy time this summer!

Amy Hopkins