

PEACH-FACED LOVEBIRD CARE GUIDE

Agapornis roseicollis · Know before you bring one home

ORIGIN	SIZE	WEIGHT	LIFESPAN	NOISE	TALKING
South-west Africa	15–18 cm	45–60 g	10–20 years	Busy	Rare

Personality & behaviour

- Fearless, energetic and full of character. Lovebirds are affectionate with their chosen person and openly hostile to birds they did not choose. They chew constantly and hens build nests out of anything they can shred.
- Two myths worth correcting. First, a lovebird kept alone does not die of loneliness — a single hand-tame bird thrives with daily human company, and a bonded pair will usually bond to each other rather than to you. Second, they are not gentle simply because they are small: territorial biting is common, particularly around the cage, and hens become markedly more aggressive when hormonal.
- Use positive reinforcement only — never hit, shout at or frighten a bird for biting or vocalising.

Housing & cage setup

- Minimum 80 × 50 × 60 cm, longer by preference. Bar spacing 10–13 mm. Never house lovebirds with budgies, cockatiels or any other species — lovebirds attack birds several times their size and cause serious injuries, including lost toes and beak damage.
- Natural branch perches (10–18 mm), a constant supply of shreddable palm, paper and soft wood, foraging toys and a shallow bathing dish. Remove nest boxes and dark enclosed huts unless you intend to breed.

Time, company & noise

- 2–3 hours out of the cage daily plus company. Lovebirds are busy birds that need something to destroy and someone to be near.
- Sharp, busy chatter and a high-pitched call. Not a screamer, but persistent and piercing for its size. Acceptable in most homes and workable in a flat.
- Shreddables above everything — palm leaf, plain paper, soft untreated wood, cardboard. A lovebird with nothing to shred will shred your wallpaper, books and curtains.
- Provide 10–12 hours of quiet, uninterrupted darkness on a predictable schedule. Sleep-deprived parrots become irritable, scream more and are more likely to pluck.

What to feed

- A small-parrot or cockatiel-sized complete pellet as the foundation, converted gradually.
- If seed is fed, a measured 1–2 tablespoons of quality small-parrot mix per bird per day.
- Fresh greens and finely chopped vegetables daily: kale, broccoli, carrot, peppers, dandelion.
- Small portions of cooked legumes and whole grains.
- Millet and sunflower kernels only as training rewards.
- A cuttlebone at all times — critical for laying hens.
- Clean fresh water daily.
- Calcium is the priority in this species because so many hens lay. If your hen starts laying repeatedly, see an avian vet early — managing daylight hours, removing nesting material and adjusting diet is far safer than treating egg binding.

Do not feed

- Avocado — every part of the plant, including guacamole.
- Chocolate and cocoa.
- Caffeine, alcohol and xylitol (sugar-free sweetener).
- Onion, garlic, chives and leeks.
- Fruit pips and stones: apple, pear, cherry, apricot, peach and plum.
- Raw or dried beans — all legumes must be thoroughly cooked.
- Rhubarb leaves.
- Salty, sugary, fried or processed human food.
- Dairy in more than a trace — birds cannot digest lactose.
- Mouldy or fermenting food, including fruit left in the bowl.
- Anything from your mouth, plate or fork — human saliva carries bacteria that kill birds.
- Grit. Parrots husk their own seed and grit can cause fatal impaction.
- Human medicines or supplements unless prescribed by an avian vet.

Health & what to watch

- Chronic egg-laying and egg binding are very common in hens, even with no male present. Also watch for obesity, PBFD, feather plucking and Pacheco's disease.
- **Before you buy:** Ask the seller for the hatch date, the closed ring number, a DNA sex certificate and any disease screening already done. A seller who cannot answer those questions, or who will not let you watch the bird eat, is a seller to walk away from. Ask what the bird is currently eating, so you can keep it stable for the first fortnight.
- **Your first month:** Book a wellness examination in the first week, not just when something looks wrong. Quarantine a new bird for 30–45 days away from any birds you already keep, ideally in separate air space. Recommended screening: psittacine beak and feather disease (PBFD), psittacosis (*Chlamydia psittaci*), polyomavirus and avian bornavirus.
- **Ongoing & human health:** Annual check-ups, moving to twice yearly for larger species over ten. Wing clipping is not routine care — discuss it first, because flight builds fitness, balance and confidence. Psittacosis passes to people as a flu-like illness or pneumonia: if you develop unexplained respiratory symptoms, tell your doctor you keep birds.

Urgent — see an avian vet today

- Difficulty or open-mouth breathing
- Pronounced tail bobbing at rest
- Fluffed, quiet and sitting on the cage floor
- Collapse or severe weakness
- Bleeding that does not stop, including a broken blood feather
- Seizures or loss of balance
- Repeated vomiting or regurgitation
- Not eating, or noticeable weight loss
- Straining, a swollen abdomen, or a hen unable to pass an egg
- Sudden major change in droppings
- Any contact with a cat or dog, even a minor scratch
- Suspected poisoning, fumes or trauma
- A hen straining, sitting fluffed on the floor or walking with a wide stance — suspect egg binding
- Any wound from another bird

Who this species suits

- **First-time owners:** Yes, for an owner who wants a small, characterful bird and accepts that lovebirds bite when territorial.
- **Experienced owners:** Rewarding and easy to keep well; often kept as breeding pairs or as a single closely bonded companion.
- **Families & children:** Suitable for families with children roughly eight and up, supervised — the bite is sharp for a bird this size and comes with little warning.

Before you decide

- I will not house this bird with budgies, cockatiels or any other species.
- I can supply shreddable material every single day.
- I understand a single lovebird is fine with daily company, and a pair will bond to each other.
- I can get avian-vet care quickly if a hen has egg trouble.
- If several answers are “No”, this is not the right bird for you — and walking away is a good outcome.

Recommended avian specialist

- **Bryanston Avian, Exotic & Small Animals Clinic**
- 99 Grosvenor Road, Bryanston, Johannesburg
- 011 706 1381 · WhatsApp 061 533 9950 · info@baesac.co.za
- Not every vet treats birds. Find your nearest avian-experienced practice before you need one.



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