

# Canary

## *Serinus canaria*

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Canaries are the perfect pet for anyone who wants to simply enjoy just watching their beautiful pet bird jump about actively and to listen to the males literally sing their hearts out. Their song is so lovely and sweet that it is truly hard to resist stopping just to listen for a moment. The females are very quiet and peaceful birds, and canaries come in many beautiful colors and breeds to choose from.

### **General Diet:**

Canaries are basically seed eaters in the wild so can be fed a diet in captivity that mainly consists of many types of seeds as found in Canary Seed Mixes, and pelleted diets are available as well.

### **Vitamins/Supplements:**

Birds need a vitamin, mineral, and amino acid supplement added to their food everyday.

### **Treats/Extra Foods:**

Canaries do well if given some soft vegetables and fruit along with their regular diet. These can include cooked corn and peas, dark lettuces (no iceberg), peeled apples, even a little orange once in a while. Basically anything soft and good for you is good for them (just avoid avocado, asparagus, and anything sugary, salty, or greasy). Seed treats such as millet and treat stix are great for canaries! Not only do they give extra nutrition but can keep a bird busy for hours!

### **Housing:**

Canaries need a cage where they can flap their wings and make short flights in easily, so the bigger the cage the better for the bird. Canaries should be kept in cages that have bars no more than 3/8ths of an inch wide. Luckily, there are many colors and styles to choose from and can be matched to the area that it will be placed. One feed cup and one water cup are basics with the cage along with perches and a tray on the bottom. Cage paper or bird litter are best to use in the tray, and never use colored newspaper, cedar shavings, or corn cob bedding.

### **Sanitation/General Care:**

Every day scrub out the water dish with a light dishwashing detergent and rinse well. Birds eat their seed mix from the top, so take off the top layer of seed every day that has been eaten, and then add more new seed and mix thoroughly. Change seed completely every 2-3 days. The tray should be cleaned at least once a week or more often depending on cage size and the number of birds in the cage. Perches should also be cleaned off (washed if plastic, scraped if wooden) once a week or as needed. At least once a month, clean out the cage completely by washing the bars, base, tray, and all toys and accessories made of plastic or metal thoroughly.

### **General Maintenance:**

Most canaries rarely need beak trims, but owners should keep an eye on the bill just in case. The bill is usually kept trimmed by the bird chewing on the beak conditioner and cuttlebone. Nails can grow quickly on canaries, and may need to be trimmed when they get too long. Birds can be offered special perches made out of a material that can help keep the nails short. For bathing, lightly mist your pet with a plant mister, or offer a bird bath, at least three times a week. Only mist or offer a bath to your pet in the morning.

### **Health Care:**

Canaries are generally very hardy and healthy birds and can live up to 6-8 years. They do not need any type of vaccines but should be checked by a veterinarian right away if they show any signs of illness such as lethargy, discharges, a change in their feces, or lack of appetite. Watch their bill and feet for any abnormal growths as well. Their cage should be kept in an area that is free from all drafts. Place the cage away from any vents, windows, or doors.

### **Special Section - Singing:**

Only male Canaries sing those beautiful songs, and will do so for much of their life if they are feeling healthy and happy. They will not sing during times of molt (when they lose and replace feathers) or if they are ill or stressed.

### **Supplies checklist:**

Perches of at least three different diameters	Chew
Vitamin/mineral/amino acid supplement	Wire cage
Toys, especially ones with straw or rope	Food dish
Cage paper or bird litter	Water dish
Beak conditioner	Treat dish
Cuttlebone	Books

