

## Brief Overview of Mitigation of Reproductive Behaviors:

Whether your bird laid an egg for the first time, just started showing hormonal behaviors, or has been having problems for years, these are a few key points that can help you manage hormonal behaviors at home.

- Talk to your veterinarian about ways to limit the kinds of environmental conditions that triggers breeding behavior in the wild.
- Breeding Season: Reduce day length to make it less like spring, when breeding commonly occurs.
  - Offer 10-12 (maximum) hours of light per day.
  - To do this effectively, set up a separate day and smaller night cage.
  - The night cage should be a separate room that can be completely darkened.
  - Simply putting a blanket over the cage in a lighted room is generally not effective.
- Courtship Behavior: Limit touching/petting which resembles to courtship and mating behavior in the wild.
  - The best practice is to simply not pet or touch your bird at all.
  - If you MUST touch your bird, limit this to brief head scratches only.
- Nests: Eliminate nests and nesting materials that would be plentiful during mating season in the wild.
  - Do not provide actual nests or huts designed for birds.
  - Remove anything that your bird appears to be using as a nest or as nesting material.
- Mates: During most of the year, birds live peacefully with flock members, but they will begin isolating in pairs during the breeding season; courtship regurgitation and actual mating naturally follows.
  - Remove any objects that your bird regurgitates to or mates with - this can be ANY object.
  - If your bird begins displaying courtship behavior towards a person, that person should temporarily cease interacting with the bird.
  - Always emphasize interaction with multiple family members and willing visitors to reinforce natural non-mating flock behavior.
- Egg Production: Despite best efforts, some birds will still produce eggs in captivity
  - The benefits of leaving vs. removing eggs are under debate; discuss these strategies with your veterinarian.
- The End of Breeding Season: Mating behaviors end naturally when chicks hatch and then fledge. In captivity, hormonal/breeding behaviors can be reduced by removing as many triggers as possible. Some birds benefit from medications to reduce elevated hormone levels. Keep in mind that some birds who have experienced chronic hormonal stimulation may have developed reproductive disease, and may require medical care, or sometimes even surgery. For this reason, prevention is the best treatment.

For more information, see our video on forming proper social bonds with birds at:  
<https://www.exoticvetclinic.com/videos-birds>

