

Dove

Geopelia spp, Streptopelia spp



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Small, graceful birds of the pigeon family, doves are direct descendants of the rock dove depicted in Mesopotamia in 4500 BC. They are gentle and affectionate.



Is a dove the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have an appropriate and safe space for this bird.
- I know that choosing this bird can be a long-term commitment.
- I will provide daily, supervised time for this bird outside a cage.
- The natural sounds of this bird will be acceptable to family members and neighbors.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered, "Yes" to these statements, a dove may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a dove and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Average Size 7½ to 12 inches **Life Span** 10 to 25 years with proper care, depending on species

Diet Specialized pelleted diets are highly recommended and should consist of 60–70% of the diet; use fortified seeds in moderation as they are higher in fat and less nutritious than pellets
 Dove, finch, cockatiel, or wild bird mix; seeds, acorns, peas, beans, and finely chopped greens (endive and spinach)
 Clean, fresh, filtered and chlorine-free water changed daily
 Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, alcohol, or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems

Feeding If your bird is used to a seed diet, convert to pellets gradually
 Fresh pellets or seeds and fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should always be available
 Fresh vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours; doves like to forage for food on the ground

Housing Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature change; cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts
 A cage approximately 24" W x 24" D x 24" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 3/8" apart, makes a good home for your dove; as with all animals, it is best to provide the largest habitat possible; a flight cage is strongly recommended
 A variety of appropriate perch sizes to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended
 A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with cage paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning
 To avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches

Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your birds health

Recommended Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Cage and cage cover	<input type="checkbox"/> Food and water dishes	<input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin supplements
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cage paper or substrate	<input type="checkbox"/> Grooming sprayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Stable perch
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed	<input type="checkbox"/> Millet spray	<input type="checkbox"/> Grit
	<input type="checkbox"/> Book about doves	<input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers styptic	<input type="checkbox"/> Styptic gel

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Normal Behavior and Interaction Make a cooing sound and call pleasantly; shy, calm nature has made them a universal symbol of peace
 Enjoy stretching, preening, sunbathing and daily attention from people
 Ensure a dark area for your dove's night sleep

Habitat Maintenance Clean and disinfect the cage and perches regularly; replace substrate or cage liner weekly or more often if needed; replace food and water daily
 Replace perches and dishes when worn or damaged
 Ensure that there are no cage parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead and lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird

Grooming and Hygiene Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing; remove the water when done; as an alternative, mist the bird with water or a grooming spray
 Clipping flight feathers is not necessary, but when done correctly it can help prevent injury or escape; consult an avian veterinarian on what is best for your bird
 Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird

- Signs of a Healthy Bird**
- Active, alert, and sociable
 - Dry nostrils and bright, dry eyes
 - Clean, dry vent
 - Eats and drinks throughout the day
 - Beak, legs, and feet normal in appearance
 - Smooth, well-groomed feathers

Common Health Issues	Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
	Diarrhea	Fecal portion of stool not formed. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites.	Seek veterinary attention. Ensure correct diet. Reduce fruit intake.
	Pneumonia	Difficulty breathing, caused by bacterial, viral, or fungal infections.	Consult a veterinarian for treatment.
	Trichomiasis	Masses in mouth and throat area; decreased appetite; loose droppings; shortness of breath.	Consult a veterinarian.

- Red Flags**
- Beak swelling or accumulations
 - Wheezing or coughing
 - Eye or nasal discharge
 - Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers
 - Runny or hard, white stools
 - Red or swollen eyes
 - Sitting on floor of habitat
 - Favoring one foot
 - Loss of appetite

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your avian veterinarian.

Sources *Aviary Birds in Color* by Denise Avon and Tony Tilford
Pet Birds by Joan Joseph
The Bird Care Book by Sheldon Gerstenfeld, PhD

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.