

Hardbill

Includes canaries, finches, and doves



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Hardbills include a variety of birds, but among the most common hardbills are finches and canaries. They get their name from their mostly seed diet. Hardbills tend to enjoy community living in aviaries or flight cages.



Is a hardbill 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:

1. My home has an appropriate location and space for this bird.
2. My home will provide a safe environment for this bird.
3. I understand that this bird does not require handling or time outside the cage.
4. The natural sounds of this bird will be acceptable to family members and neighbors.
5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

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

Average Size 3 to 8 inches long **Life Span** 5 to 10+ 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
 Fresh greens several times a week, plus slices of raw apples and oranges
 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 fruits and vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours; hardbills appreciate quality and variety in their food

Housing Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature changes; cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts
 A cage approximately 24"W x 14"D x 18"H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 3/8" apart, makes a good home for your hardbill; 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"/> Bird bath	<input type="checkbox"/> Variety of perches
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed	<input type="checkbox"/> Millet spray and grit	<input type="checkbox"/> Variety of toys
	<input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers and styptic gel	<input type="checkbox"/> Cuttlebone and treats	<input type="checkbox"/> Book about hardbills

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Normal Behavior and Interaction

Finches need the company of other finches; same species can be housed together
Male canaries are known for their singing, but females chirp rather than sing; canaries are very sensitive to chemicals and fumes
Hardbills need room to fly in their cages; a flight cage is ideal for this purpose

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, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly
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
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
Ascarids (Roundworms)	Weight loss, loose droppings, ruffled feathers	Seek veterinary attention
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
Lice or Feather Mites	Restlessness, scratching, feather picking	Isolate bird; seek veterinary attention
Mites (Scaly Face and Leg Disease)	White deposits on eyes, beak, legs, and feet	Seek veterinary attention
Pox	Lesions in mouth, scabs on eyes and face	Isolate bird; seek veterinary attention

Red Flags

- Beak swelling or accumulations
- Wheezing or coughing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers
- Runny or discolored 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

Avian Medicine: Principles and Application by Ritchie, Harrison, and Harrison
The ASPCA Complete Guide to Pet Care by David L. Carroll
The Simple Guide to Bird Care and Training by Julie Rach

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.