

# Small Hookbill

*Includes parrots and small conures*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Small hookbills include cockatiels, parakeets, lovebirds, caiques and small conures. They are intelligent and enjoy human interaction. Small hookbills need ample time outside of their cages and lots of toys to keep them entertained.



### Is a small hookbill 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 will provide an appropriate location and a safe environment 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 the 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 small hookbill may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a small hookbill and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion care.

**Average Size** 5 to 12 inches long      **Life Span** 10 - 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

Fresh fruits and vegetables, such as apples, bananas, grapes, mangoes, cantaloupe, papayas, broccoli, spinach, sweet potatoes, carrots, yams, corn, peppers, and peas

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; hookbills appreciate quality and variety in their food

**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 at least twice the bird's wingspan and twice the bird's height from top of head to tip of tail with metal bars spaced close enough to prevent injury makes a good home for your small hookbill; 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**

- |                             |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Recommended Supplies</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Cage and cage cover        | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird bath     | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin supplements  |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cage paper or substrate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuttlebone    | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of perches   |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed | <input type="checkbox"/> Millet        | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of toys      |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and water dishes      | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers | <input type="checkbox"/> Treats and play gym  |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming spray             | <input type="checkbox"/> Styptic gel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about hookbills |

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### Normal Behavior and Interaction

Some species are good talkers, known for whistling and mimicking repetitive sounds and noises

Some small hookbills love to chew things

Most are acrobatic and energetic

### 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

Clipping of 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
Feather Plucking	Bird plucks own feathers	Seek veterinary attention; provide stimulation/new toys
Mites (Scaly Face and Leg Disease)	White deposits on eyes, beak, legs, and feet	Seek treatment from veterinarian
Psittacosis	Appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge	Seek immediate 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.