

# Button Quail

*Coturnix chinensis*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Also known as Chinese painted quail, button quail are the smallest of the quails. Like all quail, they are ground dwellers, with feet unable to perch on sticks or branches. Button quail should be kept in tall aviaries or cages with soft tops due to their tendency to “popcorn”, or jump straight up into the air when startled.



### Is a button quail 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 location and space for this bird.
- I will provide a safe environment for this bird.
- I understand that this bird does not require handling or time 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 button quail may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a button quail and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

**Average Size** 4 inches long

**Life Span** 4+ years with proper care

**Diet** High-quality, fresh, fortified seeds or pellets for finches, turkey or game birds, chicken mash  
Fresh greens and insects daily (mealworms and crickets recommended)

Clean, fresh, filtered and chlorine-free water in containers placed one to two inches above the habitat floor to prevent contamination by bedding or feces; change daily

Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, alcohol or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems

**Feeding** Fresh pellets or seeds and fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should always be available  
Feed in shallow dishes on floor of habitat

Fresh fruits and vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours

**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

Cage should be rectangular and at least 8 cubic feet, with solid flooring; as with all animals, it is best to provide the largest habitat possible; a flight cage is strongly recommended

Provide several hiding places

Cage top should be fabric or other soft material to prevent injury when the quail “popcorns”

**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"/> Treats                | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of toys  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cage paper or substrate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Millet spray          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuttlebone            | <input type="checkbox"/> Styptic gel      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food dish                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin supplements   | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about quail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water dish                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mealworms or crickets |   |

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### Normal Behavior and Interaction

Male button quail are territorial and generally should not be kept together  
Males kept without females may crow almost continually  
Communicate with a variety of relatively quiet sounds, including crowing, clicking, and chirps

### Habitat Maintenance

Clean and disinfect the cage regularly; replace substrate weekly or more often if needed; replace food and water daily  
Replace 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

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 appear normal
- 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. |
| Lice or Feather Mites | Restlessness, scratching feather picking.  | 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
- Uneven gait or difficulty walking
- 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.