

COCKATIEL

updated March 2017



Range	Australia; also found in Tasmania but are considered to have been introduced accidentally
Habitat	Prefer inland areas to coastlines; open woodland areas encompassed by waterways in addition to savannas bordering waterholes
Diet (wild)	Prefer Acacia seeds to other foods and densely populate areas with Acacia shrubs
Diet (captivity)	
Description	Length: 9½ to 14 inches, including tail; wingspan: 12–14 inches; weight: 2–3 ounces. Cockatiels are the only type of crested parrot that has a tail which comes to a point, and this tail is so long it makes up half their total length. Males exhibit dark brown to gray plumage with patches of white bordering areas such as the upper wing when folded. Their cheeks have bright orange circular patterns, bordered by white. Females are mainly gray, with cheek patches of a drab, burnt-orange shade, which lack a white border.
Lifespan	Wild: 10–14 years. Captivity: up to 25 years; oldest recorded was 36 years old
Reproduction	Cockatiel breeding is tied to seasonal changes, the most important being rainfall. Large spring rainfalls assure plentiful food supplies and usually trigger mating events. Females lay 4–7 eggs, which are laid every other day. Cockatiels are indeterminate egg-layers, having the ability to replace lost or broken eggs with more. Hence, if nutritional demands are sustained, females can continue to lay eggs until a clutch of appropriate size is established. Eggs are incubated for 17 to 23 days and chicks are independent and leave the nest by five weeks, though sexual maturity is not reached until 13 months in males and 18 months in females. Nest sites are usually near water. Cockatiels are secondary cavity nesters, preferring large tree hollows when building nests.
Behavior	Cockatiels are exceptionally social birds, establishing pair bonds early on and usually feeding and moving together in groups of several birds to larger flocks of up to several thousand. Migratory patterns are region-specific; northern Australia's wetter climates have more nomadic cockatiel populations, continually relocating to fresh water and food, while the weather patterns of southern Australia offer more predictability, thus southern cockatiels seasonally migrate in groups.
Our animals	20 individuals: 3 females, 1 male, 16 undetermined
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cockatiels are almost exclusively ground foragers. While cockatiels can feed on a variety of plant and animal matter, their sharp curved beaks are adapted to maximize efficiency in shucking and consuming seeds, their food of choice. • Cockatiels are agricultural pests in Australia, where flocks of several thousand have been known to raid crop fields, particularly fields of sorghum, millet, wheat, and sunflowers. There have been open seasons on cockatiels in Queensland, although they are generally protected by law. • The tall crests, composed of several dozen feathers, which adorn the top of the head, are used in communication: the angle at which the crest is held is indicative of a bird's mood. • Cockatiels are mostly preyed upon by raptors, from above while feeding. They are camouflaged to blend in with the ground. Other than their coloration, cockatiels have no natural defenses to predators other than their high-speed flight.

Phylum
ChordataClass
AvesOrder
PsittaciformesFamily
PsittacidaeGenus
Nymphicusspecies
N. hollandicus