



THE  
BIRDCARE  
COMPANY

World leaders in supplements

# YOUR BIRD HEALTH & NUTRITION GUIDE

September 2013

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## The secrets revealed

for glowing health and strong bouncing babies

**Bird symptoms & treatments guide**

**Tips for common and tricky problems**

**The secrets hidden in wild diets**



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# The secrets revealed for glowing health and strong bouncing babies

Sickness and disease are clearly the number one enemies when it comes to keeping strong and healthy birds. But what is not often asked is "what is the friend of sickness and disease?". In other words, what issues make it easy for sickness and disease to infect our birds and spoil all our hopes and plans?

Obviously germs from bacteria to viruses and other infectious agents can cause ill health, but a healthy body can put up a very strong and effective fight against such agents if that body has at its disposal all the elements it needs for that fight.

So where does the body get the resources it needs? The answer is, "from the nutrition that the bird keeper supplies for the bird", whether in food or the drinking water.

**Vitamins and minerals play an enormous role** in maintaining health. They all have different roles including helping cells to multiply, to repair damage, to clot blood, to provide energy for the immune system to work, to building strong cell walls to stop invaders getting in and doing their damage, to name but a few. And then each of these different vitamins and minerals also interact with each other in complex ways to further fine tune the body's ability to work at its best.

**Protein, oils and energy sources** are further vital components of nutrition that the body relies on to defend itself and repair damage. Protein for example is in high demand whenever there are new cells to produce, such as when repairing any wounds or body tissues damaged by invading germs. Proteins also play a role in helping to identify invaders and attack them.

**Then what is needed to get those strong bouncing babies?** Well, cell multiplication is very important for producing those eggs and sperm for breeding and again for the embryos and chicks to grow. The vitamins and minerals are needed to build strong walls for every cell in the sperm, egg, embryo or chick. They are also needed to get all those hormones racing.

So whatever the body has to do, be it maintain health, fight off disease, move around and sing, or breed babies, it needs a

good supply of a whole host of nutrients in order to stand any chance of success. And the bird keeper has to supply them all. Any components in short supply can upset the whole apple cart. Biology is a complex thing!

Providing an adequately diverse but suitably balanced diet from a range of natural feeds is a tricky and time-consuming business. Scouting the shops for all the different nutrients to try to make up your own supplements is rather hit and miss.

## **Get it right the easy way.**

We believe that Birdcare Company products are the most complete and sophisticated cage and aviary bird supplements available anywhere in the world. We have put the hard work and

research in for you and the products have been tried and tested by bird keepers around the world for two decades.

**Daily Essentials, ProBoost SuperMax, Calcivet and Potent Brew** are very comprehensive and in just four items you have an easy way to give your birds the extras they need just when they need them.

**If you are new to using supplements, or have a large collection and not much time** then look at our exciting new EasyBird products instead.

## **How to use Daily Essentials, ProBoost SuperMax, Calcivet and Potent Brew**

The first tip is in the name really – **Daily** Essentials – yes, it's to be used daily and that means all-year-round too! This product contains the vitamins and minerals needed on a day in, day out basis. Birds in the wild get their vitamins and minerals whenever they eat, so don't let others talk you into giving them just once or twice a week!

**Calcivet** contains the all important chelated calcium, **so important year-round for health and well being.** So add Calcivet twice a week when birds are not breeding, but increase this to five times a week when your hens start laying.



# The amazing results people report from our supplements system!

## Daily Essentials

Vitamin and mineral mixes for fantastic healthy birds



- ✓ Livelier, more active birds
- ✓ Brighter feather colours
- ✓ Healthier birds, less likely to get sick
- ✓ Faster, less stressful moults

## Calcivet

Calcium supplement for health and breeding benefits



- ✓ Important for year-round health
- ✓ Hens lay a few more eggs, on average
- ✓ Hens no longer suffer from egg binding
- ✓ Hens keep fighting fit right through breeding
- ✓ Better quality egg shells, so more eggs hatch
- ✓ Chicks grow strong bones
- ✓ No more rickets!

## ProBoost SuperMax

Fertility booster for top results



- ✓ Really helps to boost fertility rates
- ✓ Start your breeding birds on it at the same time, and they all come into breeding condition at the same time!
- ✓ More birds in breeding condition together, means you have more choice over the breeding pairs you want to make
- ✓ More fertile eggs, better fed embryos, more chicks hatching
- ✓ Really strong and quick growing young chicks
- ✓ Fewer young chick deaths

## Potent Brew

Fantastic breeding benefits through healthier digestive systems



- ✓ Helps chicks' digestive systems off to a great start
- ✓ Reduces diarrhoea
- ✓ Drier, healthier nests
- ✓ Better parent-fed chicks as they beg so strongly
- ✓ Improves fertility
- ✓ More chicks, great hatching rates

Your hens will be able to lay easily, will make good quality egg shells that breathe properly and allow the embryo to develop healthily. Over a flock of breeding birds you will see the added bonus of a few more eggs on average!

**ProBoost SuperMax is the wonder product for making unbelievable improvements in your birds breeding results.**

It contains a diverse range of nutrients selected for their benefits for fertility and embryo nutrition, combined with a high quality really useable protein to help the embryos and young chicks grow strongly. But it is designed to be used in addition to the Daily Essentials and Calcivet which are providing an important base level of nutrients. So those of you who want to pick and choose and only use some products rather than all will miss out on the full potential rewards. ProBoost SuperMax should be introduced at small quantities 6 weeks or so before you want to pair up. It should be added daily to an eggfood like Feast, or to fruit and vegetables or soaked seed. Each week give a higher level daily, until by pairing up you are giving the full level of the product as recommended on the label. Carry on with this level until the last of your babies is weaned.

**Potent Brew** is like the icing on the cake. It just makes the whole breeding and rearing process go with a real swing. It is



a highly effective liquid probiotic with additional beneficial enzymes. By helping the digestive system to work really effectively, it helps birds fight off debilitating stomach bugs whilst absorbing the maximum nutrients into the blood for use during breeding. Start adding this product alongside the three above from about two weeks before pairing up. Give it daily, in the eggfood or fruit/veg/soaked seed, and keep it up until your babies have weaned.

**You will be staggered by the results!** We can tell you how wonderful these products are, but you will only believe it when you try them. But rest assured, people come back again and again for these products because they work for them. That's why we keep selling them year after year, all around the world.

**An alternative  
EasyBird for an Easy Life!**

So you want all the benefits but you like to keep things really simple and easy and quick.

With EasyBird you have all the above products mixed together for you in a pot – or rather in two pots.

You use one pot when you are not trying to breed your birds. And you switch over to the other pot when you want them to come into breeding condition and rear babies. So one pot for most of the year, and the other pot for the breeding season.

**How easy is that!**



**EasyBird SuperBreeder** is a combination of Daily Essentials, Calcivet powder and ProBoost SuperMax with dried probiotics in place of Potent Brew. It will give you your Easy breeding season. Again start with it about 6 weeks before you want to pair your birds up for breeding and keep using it until your last babies are weaned.

**EasyBird Rest, Mould and Show** is a combination of Daily Essentials and Calcivet powder and is used during all those times of the year when you are not trying to bring your birds into breeding condition or actually breed and are not trying to rear babies.



# Symptoms and treatment guide

**You very rarely actually know what is wrong with your bird.  
Here is a simplified guide to symptoms and treatments.**

These pages attempt to help bird keepers with the most common symptoms they see when their birds get ill. It is based on the problems reported to us through our advisory services and covers the most likely causes of these symptoms and reasonable first aid procedures that the bird keeper can carry out. Space limitations mean it is by no means fully comprehensive and it does not and cannot replace the diagnostic facilities available from your avian vet.

Because most illness in birds is caused by poor diet, **Calcivet plus Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **EasyBird** are likely to help most conditions. These products will help your bird get better, but please don't stop using them when the bird recovers. They should be a part of your bird's diet FOR LIFE. Customers who use these products routinely have far fewer sick birds. Sometimes, for treatment, sick birds need support from one or more specialised 'sick bird' products.

## Appearance symptoms

### Sick Bird Look



Most sick birds tend to look hunched and they fluff their feathers and often sleep with their head turned over their shoulder. This symptom can be caused by hundreds of different illnesses so it isn't much help for diagnosis but it is often the first sign that you will spot. Separate the sick birds if possible. Put them into a warm environment. The quicker you can give such birds

**Guardian Angel** the better. This product will provide energy (fluffing feathers is an effort to maintain body warmth), help maintain the bird's water balance, provide support for the digestive system and give the immune system a boost. In our opinion this approach is far more likely to work than giving broad spectrum antibiotics. If the bird has completely stopped eating you may need to force feed with **Poly-Aid**. Intestinal worms may also cause a general sick bird look. Worm neophemas, and any other birds with access to aviary floors, regularly with **Harkaverm**.

### Poor feathering and/or slow moults

This is generally caused by insufficient dietary methionine (an essential amino acid) and calcium though other deficiencies may also be involved. **Calcivet plus Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **Feather-Up** or **EasyBird** will sort this out. Poor feather condition may also be caused by feather mites. The treatment for this is **Ivermectin**.

### Greasy feathers

This is often a symptom of liver disease. Reduce the workload on the liver by getting **Feast** and/or **Daily Essentials3** or **EasyBird** into the diet. Blood tests are recommended to confirm the diagnosis and help identify the cause of the problem (obesity, fungal infection etc). See watery droppings later.

### Scaly face or scaly legs

This is caused by a mite infestation. Better nutrition will make it far easier for birds to fight off the early infestation before it becomes established and requires treatment with **Ivermectin**.

### Deformed beaks

Beaks that are poorly formed often fail to wear down properly. Deficiencies (methionine, sulphur, biotin and calcium) are the most common cause but liver damage can show a similar effect. Either

way the treatment is the same - **Calcivet** plus **Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **Feather-Up** or **EasyBird**. If the liver is damaged the level of success will depend on how much functioning liver is left. Other likely symptoms include poor feather condition, slow moults and watery droppings. Regardless of the cause it will take 9-12 months for new (better) beak material to reach the 'wearing zone' and during that time beak trimming by your bird vet may be required.

### Lice and mites in cages

The presence of external parasites in the cages or on the birds can cause serious losses - especially to babies. For red mite use **Duramitex Plus** or **Birdy Finect** to spray the cages (especially the nooks and crannies). Dust nest sites and birds with **Blast-Off Anti Mite**. **Ivermectin** will help with mites like Northern mite that live on the bird.

### Swollen and infected feet

Treatment involves good hygiene (disinfect cages and perches with **Avisafe**) and immune support with **Calcivet plus Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **EasyBird** and a short term dose of **Guardian Angel**. You can also wash feet with **Colloidal Silver** to soothingly disinfect them and reduce the irritation.

### Feet with white lumps

If the feet have white lumps under the skin then the chances are this is gout. This is an indication of kidney failure and the bird struggling to cope with the breakdown products of protein metabolism. The kidneys do not repair themselves well but we can reduce the amount of stress on them with the usual supplements of **Calcivet plus Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **EasyBird**.

### Symptoms in the droppings

#### Watery droppings (excessive urine as opposed to diarrhoea)

This is a common symptom of liver or kidney disease or possibly diabetes.

Obesity or infection could have caused the condition though by the time you see the symptom the bird may be very under-weight. Reduce the workload on the liver by using **Feast** and/or **Daily Essentials3** or **EasyBird**. Because the bird is urinating excessively it will be losing water soluble nutrients. **Guardian Angel** and **Calcivet** in the water are advised to help replenish these.

#### Diarrhoea

It is very important that this is differentiated from watery droppings. Diarrhoea is large amounts of water in the dark (faecal) part of the droppings. The most common cause is a digestive tract infection with bacteria such as *E. coli* or *Salmonella*. The herbs in **Feast** will help combat this as will the replenishment of beneficial bacteria through **Potent Brew**. Antibiotics are not our preferred treatment for diarrhoea as they destroy the good bacteria as well as the bad which risks upsetting the gut even further.

#### Vomiting/regurgitating

Especially common in budgies, doves and pigeons, this is caused by the trichomonas parasite but in the last year or so Avian Gastric Yeast (formerly called megabacteria) has reared its head again. **Harkanker Soluble** and **MegaCare** are recommended for these illnesses respectively.

#### Passing whole seeds

This may be a symptom of a host of digestive disorders which could include the rather devastating Proventricular Dilatation Syndrome (PDS or PDD). You may need to feed **Special Needs Diet** alongside appropriate drug therapies from your vet. More likely giving **Potent Brew** and/or worming your bird may solve less devastating digestive malfunction.

#### Breathing problems

##### Tail bobbing, wheezing, nasal discharge

Respiratory infections are very common and can be difficult to get rid of. If taking the drug route, diagnosis and drug sensitivity tests are important. Giving a broad spectrum antibiotic to a bird with a fungal infection may make it worse and there are no treatments for viral infections. Delivery of medicines to the respiratory tract can be tricky. For these reasons we prefer boosting the immune system. **Feast**, **Guardian Angel** and **Calcivet** are the starting point. We believe that calcium deficiency and

respiratory infections go hand-in-hand. We often then suggest extra herbal support from **Flourish** and/or **Wheeze-Eeze** which can be added to food and water as well as sprayed (or better still nebulised) for the bird to inhale. Other approaches that may be helpful are **Colloidal Silver** in the water or nebulising with our disinfectant **Avisafe**.

#### Rattly sounding breathing

This is often an indication of air sac mites in finches and canaries. This requires **Ivermectin**.

#### Behavioural symptoms

##### Fear and aggression - biting - excessive noise

These are common behavioural symptoms of calcium deficiency. Give **Calcivet** five days a week for 1-2 months then drop to twice a week.

##### Feather plucking and other selfmutilations

Whilst giardia and zinc toxicity are possible causes by far the most common problem is calcium deficiency. **Calcivet** plus **Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **EasyBird** is very successful, though adding **Potent Brew** short term (2- 6 months) seems to relax the birds and improve the situation enormously.

#### Physical symptoms

##### Egg-binding in hens, small clutch sizes, splayed legs, rickets in very young birds and poor co-ordination, twirling and star gazing in recently fledged babies are all calcium problems relating to breeding

Give **Calcivet** twice a week prior to breeding and five days a week to all breeding and baby birds from the commencement of egg-laying to 1-2 months after reaching full adult size.

#### Fits and seizures

These are all potential physical symptoms of calcium deficiency in adult birds. Give **Calcivet** five days a week for 1-2 months then drop to twice a week.

##### Falling off perches, poor co-ordination, poor flying, twirling, star-gazing, clenched fists

These are all potential physical symptoms of calcium deficiency in adult birds. Give **Calcivet** plus **Daily Essentials3** or **Feast** or **EasyBird**.

#### Frequent infections and general illness

This is a sign of general malnutrition with

## OVEN-READY PARROTS?!



We know of many plucked parrots that have been unsuccessfully treated with all sorts of behaviour modifying and mind-bending drugs that have responded brilliantly when given **Daily Essentials3**, **Calcivet** (five days a week) and **Potent Brew**. Long term **EasyBird Complete Pet Supplement** alone may be the best option but **Calcivet** is very important initially.

particular emphasis on vitamin A which is involved in the effective formation of membranes within and surrounding all cells. Poorly formed cell walls are prone to infection. Vitamin C, vitamin E and selenium deficiencies may also be involved. **Feast** or **Daily Essentials3** or **EasyBird** is the standard prevention as they all provide a very broad spectrum of vitamins and trace minerals plus herbal immune and digestive system support. **Guardian Angel** is the normal first aid treatment.

# A closer look at some common problems

## 'Going light' in young finches and canaries

This applies to birds losing weight, eating a great deal and dying at around 8-12 weeks old. A few adults may be affected if they are weakened by other stresses. This disease, which is caused by a parasite called coccidia, is very unlikely to occur in birds fed **Feast** soft food or **Flourish** supplement as both contain anti-coccidial herbs. Sadly not everyone yet feeds Feast and these people may continue to see this problem - especially breeders of British/European finches. When active outbreaks occur we usually recommend a combination of drugs (**ACOX**) and **Feast** or **Flourish** for one breeding season, reverting to **Feast** or **Flourish** alone after that. The trick with this illness is to treat the adults before the eggs hatch, as the adult feeds the parasite to the baby. Regular herbal treatments work really well in reducing the level of parasites passed on to the chicks. The drugs only reduce the level of coccidia - they will not eliminate them completely so they don't achieve anything we can't do with herbs. Some drugs for this bug will cause male infertility problems so should be used with great care. **ACOX** is fine in this respect.

## Intestinal worms

These can be a problem for birds with access to dirt floors. Such floors harbour insects that are the intermediate host for worm parasites of the digestive tract. Symptoms include diarrhoea, blood in droppings, general lethargy. Pet birds and breeding birds without access to soil floors probably don't need worming very frequently. Your vet can look for worm eggs in dropping samples though this does not give a definitive diagnosis. We can supply **Harkaverm**. Talk to us if you are in any doubt. If you keep neophemas

they definitely need regular worming!

## Giardia infestations

This parasite is not very common in the UK. It is far more common in the USA and other countries where many bird keepers rely on untreated bore water. It is unlikely to be a problem with properly treated domestic water supply from your water utility. *Giardia* can cause feather plucking in some parrots and can kill some susceptible finch species. If your water is questionable fit effective water filters and UV treatment to your water supply before resorting to regular drug treatments (**Harkanker**).

## Vomiting budgies, pigeons and doves

### Rarely found in other species

This is generally caused by the crop parasite trichomonas though there is more Avian Gastric Yeast around now than we have seen for many years. Although many birds may have low levels of this parasite normally only stressed birds will exhibit symptoms. This will slowly cause the bird to weaken and eventually die. Generally good nutrition will prevent outbreaks in nearly all cases but drug treatment (**Harkanker Soluble**) is recommended if symptoms occur. For **AGY** we now have **MegaCare** which is working very well.

These days we recommend that only symptomatic birds are treated for **AGY** and this allows the rest of the flock to build up a natural resistance.

## Bacterial infections

In the UK anti-bacterial drugs are only available from your veterinarian. Because of the risk of resistant bacteria becoming even more common we believe this is exactly how it

should be. In our view many vets still use antibiotics too freely and don't yet understand the value of immune system support. Fortunately we are not alone in this belief. One well known avian vet recently gave a talk to other vets in his locality entitled '*not all sick birds are Baytril deficient*' to highlight that reliance on a drug like Baytril was frequently overdone. The Birdcare Company's immune support ingredients are likely to work against most different types of germs - viruses, bacteria, yeast and fungi. So try **Feast**, **Calcivet** and **Guardian Angel** for most sick looking birds. For digestive infections use **Potent Brew** as well.

## Crusty deposits on face or legs

This is usually caused by a mite infestation and is commonly called scaly face, or scaly legs. By far the best treatment for this is **Ivermectin**. Poultry, pigeons, budgerigars and other cage birds can sometimes suffer.

## Scaly face - not a pretty sight



# Obesity - The Big Killer!

**It is highly likely that obesity is the most common cause of premature death in pet and caged birds, yet it is the easiest of problems to prevent. As a result it deserves special mention in this guide.**

Over many generations bird keepers have tried to match the food we feed with the diets of wild birds. This is fine in theory but our cage birds get far less exercise than their wild cousins. We are constantly being told that to lose weight we need to eat less and exercise more. The same applies to our birds.

Unfortunately limiting our birds' food intake doesn't work all that well. Small birds risk starving to death and any bird on a restricted diet risks amino acid deficiency.

Interestingly birds will eat until their protein (amino acid) requirements are met. With diets that are low in protein but high in energy (oils, starches and sugars) birds will continue eating to get enough protein but, in the process, they get lots of excess energy that they store as fat. Boosting the protein level of the diet means they eat less food to satisfy their protein needs and so don't get fat.

There are two ways to achieve this. The most obvious is to feed foods with high protein levels relative to their energy content. Actually this is quite hard to do as only lean meat, egg white or peas and beans are likely to satisfy this requirement. Alternatively a very high

protein supplement like **ProBoost SuperMax** can be used and, surprisingly, this is probably the cheaper option.

However there is an even more efficient and cheaper approach. This involves helping the bird to use all the protein it currently eats. With traditional diets the bird can only use about 60% of the protein it eats. By adding adequate quantities of the limiting amino acids lysine and methionine to the diet we can enable the bird to use virtually all the protein it eats. We provide these key nutrients in **Daily Essentials3, BirdPark Essentials, EasyBird** and all of our **Feast** softfoods. So our standard supplement system prevents obesity with no extra cost to you!

Better than that, most overweight birds that are properly supplemented like this will actually reduce their total food intake and lose weight completely safely. They will never starve to death because, as soon as they need more energy, they will feel hungry again.

However for a few birds this approach doesn't work. These birds are those that have become addicted to fats, sugars or salt - again the same foods that can do we humans into eating too much. So the birds must be offered a balanced diet, not one made up of just sunflower seed, chips or sweet treats! For these birds we have designed **Fussy Feeder Essentials** and **Fussy Eater Banquet**.

Obesity risks the same diseases in birds as it does in humans - liver and kidney failure, heart and circulatory disease and diabetes are probably the most common. Birds with liver disease normally lose weight before the major symptoms show so it can sometimes be difficult to convince their owners that obesity was the original issue.

## Reducing stress on the liver and kidneys

None of the organs that obesity damages are very good at repairing themselves which is why they are the prime diseases we humans now treat with transplant surgery.

However we are able to reduce the amount of work that the liver and kidney have to do. This is done with the limiting amino acids in **Feast** and **Daily Essentials3** or **EasyBird**. This method is actually better for birds with organ damage than the simple boosting of protein levels because high protein diets involve the removal of the 40% of protein the body cannot use.

This is hard work for a damaged kidney!

## The power of ultra violet



Birds eyes work differently to ours. They see in a different spectrum of colours to us as they can see ultraviolet rays in a way

we humans cannot.

The more brilliant colours they see have an effect on the way they interact with each other and whether they find other birds attractive or not. So this can have quite a marked affect on whether their colourings give the right sexual messages to each other. After all breeding cocks and breeding hens usually have distinctly different colourings!

Ultra violet rays are not present in normal indoor lighting and so most birds are deprived of this visual normality. Arcadia lights for birds have the correct spectrum including ultra violet and it can make the world of difference as to whether they are happy with their surroundings and mates and whether they feel

like breeding.

**Now is the time to change your lighting as winter breeding approaches.**

Full spectrum Arcadia lighting boosts breeding and improves health. However, the bulbs do need changing every year to remain effective. Available in pairs mail order.

**Buy now**

**Excellent arcadia prices**

Size	RRP	Our Price
24"	£18.49	£32.00 per pair
48"	£22.99	£33.00 per pair
60"	£33.49	£45.00 per pair
Screw	£36.99	£29.95 each

Post and packing applies. Ask us for details.





# The secrets hidden in wild diets

Australia is the driest continent in the world. So we all know that the wildlife there exists on very dry feed all year round don't we? Wrong!

Certainly this is true of the dry season. This is why many Australian and African species can tolerate poor quality diets for extended periods of time. They survive, but they don't thrive or breed.

However, in the wet season even the deserts come to life and bloom. The dried up creeks flow into the salt pans and turn them back into real lakes again. Plant growth is spectacular; the landscape turns bright green, insect numbers increase and feed quality improves dramatically. In the wet season wild birds breed. In temperate climates it is the summer that provides the best nutritional conditions for breeding. This much higher feed quality is so good for the birds because the plants contain much higher levels of vitamins, minerals, proteins and other elements that are so important for healthy, fertile adults and for strongly growing healthy chicks.

Nowhere in the world has a climate that is totally stable. Whether it is summers and winters, or wet seasons and dry seasons, everywhere has some sort of seasonal variation. This has an impact on the growth of plants. Birds that naturally eat lots of fruit and other vegetable matter come from much more stable environments than dry land species. The tropical rain forests are always moist and, although feed quality does vary seasonally, the ups and downs are much less dramatic. So where a budgerigar, cockatoo or zebra finch is adapted to survive periods of low vitamin intake this is not true of macaws, Amazons, conures, pekin robins, parrot finches and other forest birds.

Most animals and birds respond to these seasons by breeding in the good times (summers and wet seasons). "Good" in this sense involves both quantity and quality of food. During dry seasons and winter most plants are relatively dormant. As food sources they are poor - low in protein, minerals and vitamins. When the season improves they start to grow and the level of nutrients in them rises. This makes them much better food.

In the fresh, lush plants many minerals are tied up with complex molecules like proteins. Probably the most well known comparison is the iron in the haemoglobin in your blood, but magnesium linked to the chlorophyll in plants is just as good an example. When eaten by birds or animals the molecular connections remain intact and this makes it much easier for the gut wall to grab hold of the mineral and absorb it. In effect little "molecular pumps" in the gut wall hurl the minerals into the bloodstream. So not only does the lush plant have a higher vitamin and mineral content than dry plants, but the birds absorb them much better as well, so the benefits multiply.

The most important change in lush plants is the higher protein level. Rapidly growing young birds require a lot of protein for good growth. So, as the protein level of the diet increases, this



sends a message to the adult birds that raising chicks is likely to be a good prospect.

At the end of the wet season, or the end of summer in temperate climates, the plants largely start to ripen their seeds and dry off. In this process the vitamins and proteins degrade and many minerals flow down the sap and back into the soil, where they remain available for the next generation of plants to use. This means that dry seeds are often mineral deficient

Also during the ripening process many of the protein/mineral bonds are broken (the chlorophyll breaks down which is why a green leaf turns brown) so the minerals that remain are difficult for the bird to absorb. During winters and dry periods birds are in survival mode.

When foraging around wild birds and animals inevitably consume a broad range of different plants and medicinal herbs that contain quite a range of different vitamins, minerals, proteins and other elements which combined help to both treat and prevent various illnesses. They also get a huge range of beneficial bacteria this way too. These support good digestive function for better health.

## Typical cage and aviary bird diets

The dry seed diets given by bird keepers reflect dry season diets and are not adequate for either the long-term health of

birds or good breeding performance. They are even less adequate for forest dwelling birds like counes, Amazons and macaws. However, dry seed is practical for us to store safely. So it is up to the birdkeeper to turn this low grade food source into a diet offering greater variety and more suitable levels of vitamins, minerals and proteins for healthy birds and successful breeding.

Typically, bird keepers use more than one variety of seed, add in egg foods and maybe fruit or vegetables, depending on the species kept, plus possibly some supplements to improve the quality of the feed. However, as the bird is not leading an athletic life flying great distances as in the wild, it is very easy for it to effectively get too many calories and become obese. It also easily gets too few of the other important elements of feed and so, gradually, becomes run down and unhealthy.

There are 13 different vitamins, but dry seed is easily deficient in 11 of them. Contrary to popular expectation, a diet made up of seed, carrots, broccoli, corn-on-the-cob, apple, grapes and bananas is still deficient in 8 vitamins! Each vitamin plays an important role in many different functions of the body at a cellular level. By contrast a wild diet at its lushest could be comprised of in excess of 80 different vitamins, minerals including trace minerals, amino acids and other minute elements. Biology is very complex!

### How to benefit by mimicking those wild diets

The main points to address with your own birds' diets is reflecting the seasonality that would occur naturally in their wild diet, as this can trigger hormonal and other changes in your birds, as well as providing a complete and adequate range of all those vitamins, minerals and other essential components. And the simplest and most effective method of doing that is to add appropriate supplements to the diet.

All Birdcare Company vitamins within the **Essentials** or **EasyBird** ranges contain a full range of all the vitamins, provided in appropriate balance with each other to perfectly complement typical bird diets. This takes away the risk of overdoing or underdoing some as easily happens when people buy Vitamin A,D and E here, add K from over there, pick up a few B group supplements and so on.

To make it even easier for you, we have variations to suit adding to the water or adding in the food (eggfood or on fruit, soaked seed, etc.), and we have variations for different types of birds, for example for raptors and hawks (carnivores), for insectivorous birds, for pigeons, and for poultry.

Not only do these products contain those essential vitamins, but also a very good blend of highly absorbable minerals. The 'Rapisorb' minerals we use mimic the quality of the minerals found in those lush green foods, being tied up with complex molecules as we described earlier. Unfortunately, there are

plenty of supplements out there that use much more basic forms of minerals that do not absorb easily and usefully into the body.

Calcium is an exceedingly important mineral which plays a huge role in many functions within the body. Well, at least chelated calcium does, which is one of these complex mineral/molecule combinations. It is also exceedingly important



for chicks and laying hens and overall is the most common deficiency in cage and aviary birds, causing many problems. Cuttlefish, although used in the tonnes by bird keepers, achieves little to help, as most of it goes straight out in the droppings as it is not a very absorbable form of calcium.

**Calcivet**, our calcium supplement in liquid or powder forms, uses a chelated mineral technology similar

to the Rapisorb minerals. So it is easily absorbed and quickly gets to the bones, nerves and muscles where it is needed. It is such an effective calcium source that most of the year you will only need it once or twice a week (definitely twice for African greys and eclectus).

When egg laying commences increase **Calcivet** to five times a week to meet the increased demand for breeding. You will get more eggs, fitter hens that don't struggle with egg-laying and strong boned chicks.

Hens require extra calcium to make good quality egg shells. As most birds only carry enough calcium stored in their bones to make about three eggs **Calcivet** normally increases clutch sizes, ensures good shell quality and minimises stress on your hens.

Young birds require plenty of calcium for strong bone formation and efficient nerve and muscle function. Insufficient calcium can lead to young birds having trouble flying and perching properly, as well as rickets. **Calcivet** should be continued through the breeding season at the five times a week rate to maintain their natural reserves of this precious mineral. In very hard water areas it may be possible to use **Calcivet** at lower application rates or less frequently.

Calcium is a crucial mineral for brain function and inadequate amounts in the diet can cause both physical and behavioural problems. These range from poor co-ordination and falling off perches to fits and seizures.

Feather plucking, fear and aggression are common symptoms of calcium deficiency too.

### Protein, protein, protein - critical for top breeding results

Traditional cage bird diets have protein levels between 8% and 12%, rather than the 20% provided by those wild diets during the lush breeding season. These are too low for either good adult breeding stimulation or maximum chick growth. There are two ways to improve dietary protein. The first is to add limiting

# Feast eggfood

- ✓ Tasty, so your birds will love it
- ✓ Contains anti-coccidial herbs to prevent going light in young finches and canaries
- ✓ Contains prebiotic herbs to boost the digestive and immune functions

## Are you new to bird keeping and unsure of the role of eggfood?

Eggfood is the name commonly given to a supplemented crumb-like food which bird keepers have traditionally fed to their birds alongside suitable seed mixtures. Quantities given usually increase markedly during the breeding season. Eggfoods are great for increasing the protein and vitamin/mineral content of the seed diet for better breeding results. They are also a really great food for adding other supplements to. Dry seed is not good for this role. Most birds husk their seed

meaning they would then not actually eat the supplements you might have thoughtfully added. Eggfoods can also be mixed in with chopped fruits and vegetables for parrot species.

*All at highly competitive prices!  
What fantastic value for money!*



Dry Feast	
1kg from shops or shows.....	£4.40
1kg mail order.....	£7.70
2 x 1kg mail order.....	£11.70
3 x 1kg mail order.....	£15.00
1 x 5kg.....	£19.20
5 x 5kg.....	£79.70

Gold Label Feast	
1kg from shops or shows.....	£4.70
1kg mail order.....	£7.90
2 x 1kg mail order.....	£12.20
3 x 1kg mail order.....	£15.70
1 x 5kg.....	£19.70
5 x 5kg.....	£95.70

Insectivorous Feast	
1kg from shops/shows.....	£5.50
1kg mail order.....	£9.00
2 x 1kg.....	£13.90
3 x 1kg.....	£22.00
1 x 5kg.....	£23.30
5 x 5kg.....	£97.80

Plus our usual post and packing charges on mail orders. Prices quoted apply to the mainland UK only.

amino acids to the diet. This guarantees (if you add enough) that the bird can use all of the protein in the seed, fruit or pulses that you are feeding it. Without these extras your bird can only use about 60% of the protein it gets from plants.

These important amino acids are included in **Daily Essentials3** and **EasyBird** and they bring the added benefit of helping maintain your birds at the correct bodyweight - not too fat! **Daily Essentials3** and **EasyBird** are great for adding to **Feast** eggfood, or fruit, vegetables and pulses.

For maximum stimulation of breeding birds, though, we need more. For this, add **ProBoost SuperMax** to the same foods, or switch from **EasyBird Rest, Moulting & Show** to **EasyBird Super Breeder**. **ProBoost SuperMax** is a very high (84+%) protein supplement that works wonders for fertility, chick growth and feather quality. So some of this high protein mix combined with the lower protein eggfoods, and the 'very low protein' seeds ends up giving a great result.

Our objective is to allow the birds to control their own dietary protein by offering them both high and low protein foods simultaneously. So we feed the supplemented feed in one container and the "low protein" seed in another. The fertility and feather quality benefits of these additives are very significant. And, as the birds eat less when the protein levels are higher, your seed bill drops as well!

### Peak digestive performance

The digestive system of birds is very easily upset. Any slight stress causes a reduction in the blood supply to the gut. The biochemical conditions then change reducing the effectiveness of the gut and increasing the risk of infection by harmful bacteria. Keeping the gut topped up with beneficial digestive bacteria keeps the bad bugs under control and ensures that as

much of the food as possible is actually absorbed into the bloodstream. This is the job of a probiotic.

Many breeders and vets have now demonstrated to themselves the superiority of **Potent Brew** over the traditional, freeze dried probiotics. **Potent Brew** works so well because it contains bacteria that act immediately they get into the gut (they don't have to rehydrate themselves like dried probiotics do) and it also contains enzyme components for active food digestion. However only buy **Potent Brew** in small quantities, as it is a

live product with a short shelf life (4-6 months) and ideally it should be stored in the fridge.

Because **Potent Brew** stimulates efficient gut function and improves the bird's ability to absorb nutrition it contributes markedly to bringing adult birds into breeding condition. It is widely used in the breeding season by bird keepers, who also report the added benefit of chicks begging

strongly and being well fed by parents.

When young chicks hatch they should have no bacteria in the gut. They rely on their parents to supply them with their food. **Potent Brew** in the food starts the chicks' digestive system off very quickly ensuring rapid early growth and excellent resistance to otherwise dangerous digestive diseases.

During the breeding season we now give the gut flora even more support in **ProBoost SuperMax**. Amongst many other things **ProBoost SuperMax** contains herbal extracts designed to help the good bacteria in the gut and to help the young birds' poorly developed natural immune system work to the best possible effect. So **ProBoost SuperMax** (or **EasyBird Super Breeder**) and **Potent Brew** are the two supplements that stimulate breeding condition, improve fertility and give chicks a fabulous start in life.



## We can also help your dogs and cats and small furry animals!



DrS brings you health promoting and problem solving products for small animals such as rabbits, rats and guinea pigs. These have been selling well through retailers for many years now.

Two years ago we extended the range to solve some key problems for dog and cat owners. The products can simply be added in with their normal dinner.

### Keep your dogs and cats Cool, Calm & Collected!

Mac was a very spooky Patterdale terrier who really went loopy when he heard any loud noises, to the point that leaving the house was a nightmare. DrS put him on Cool, Calm & Collected and within a couple of weeks this is what his owner Ailsa said "No bolting for the back door, or cowering. Even when he's been out for a walk, when he's heard a bang he hasn't immediately turned for home, which is what he would always do before. We're delighted with the difference in him. It's the first calmer treatment that's actually worked on him!"



I have 7 working kelpie dogs (these dogs work as contract cattle musterers) and I need them to work as a team. Tootsie is a 3 year old kelpie that has only ever played with one of her siblings. After 3 days on Cool, Calm & Collected she started playing with her sisters and is not so aggressive towards me anymore. After 5 days on this product I gave her 3 days off and on the 3rd day she started a fight. She did not do this during the 5 day loading period, which she normally would.



I will be continuing to use this product as I need my dogs to be able to work and play together!

Cool, Calm & Collected:

40g £6.00

80g £8.70

300g £19.70

1kg £50.00

Pam Dollard  
Australia

### Fight Back at itchy coats and hair loss!

Sheba had horrendously itchy skin and also a couple of sore patches where her hair had fallen out. The vets had put her on a long course of drugs but nothing was helping Sheba. Blood tests were done and it was found that Sheba had allergies to dozens of different things including mites. DrS put Sheba on FightBack right away and guess what...She's doing great! She's itch free, drug free and her fur has even grown back. Her owner Vicki said "I can't believe the difference in her".

Fight Back: 40g £8.90

80g £15.70

300g £37.70



### Ease out joint stiffness

Wolly, a very active 8 year old Lab, is my much loved companion. On beach walks she constantly tears around chasing balls and crashing over waves. Unfortunately she has a real problem with arthritis and was very stiff with pain, especially when getting up or going up stairs. She has been on a medicated painkiller for years and a glucosamine supplement. Although the pain killers help, I was concerned they were simply disguising the pain rather than helping her.

I came across DrS Easy Mover For Dogs & Cats. Based on good reviews and the explanations of its four in one approach to treating the joints, ligaments, tendons and muscles, we decided to give it a go.

We've really noticed a difference in her. She can have some stiff moments, but you can really tell that she is more relaxed, nowhere near as stiff, even her coat looks better! She spends ages playing in the cold water and it often takes its toll on her the following day, so we had to miss a walk to let her recover. NOT ANY MORE! Now she is up for it, no more limping or joint clicks. It seems to have done the job so we are very happy. I would recommend this supplement to anyone with an older or very active dog.

Thanks DrS!

Joll, Jackie and Wolly, Devon

Easy Mover: 30ml £4.00

100ml £7.90

250ml £15.80



### And keep them fit as a fiddle all year round

For rabbits, guinea pigs and rats:

Essentials Plus

Tiny Animal Essentials

Coat Magic

Calcivet, Potent Brew, BioPlus, Poly-Aid and Guardian Angel are all used in small animals.

Available under the DrS label, these products have the correct usage instructions for a range of small animals.

# Key Product Guide

A selection of the most important products from The Birdcare Company with prices applicable to mainland UK - please ask for overseas rates.

## All year round supplements for collections of birds.

**EasyBird Rest, Moul't & Show** - vitamins, Rapisorb minerals, amino acids, high quality protein, essential oils, probiotics, prebiotics, bio-available calcium and immune support. Supplement for addition to Feast or fresh food 5-6 days a week. 100g £8.80, 300g £18.20, 1 kg £34.60.

**Calcivet** - Super-saturated liquid calcium, magnesium and vitamin D3 supplement. Once or twice a week for non-breeders, five times during breeding. 30ml £4.30, 100ml £8.30, 250ml £13.60, 500ml £23.90, 1 litre £42.30

**Calcivet On-Food Powder** - Concentrated calcium, magnesium and vitamin D3 supplement. Once or twice a week for non-breeders, five times a week during breeding. 40g £6.80, 80g £8.80, 300g £28.60, 900g £64.40.

**Daily Essentials3** - vitamins, Rapisorb minerals, amino acids, prebiotics, essential oils and immune support. Daily supplement for addition to Feast or fresh food. 50g £4.50, 100g £6.60, 400g £13.60, 1 kg £25.80.

**Daily Essentials 1** for in water application (contain no amino acids). DE1 50g £5.90, 100g £8.10, 400g £20.30.

## Supplements for pet birds

**EasyBird Complete Pet Supplement** - vitamins, Rapisorb minerals, amino acids, high quality protein, essential oils, probiotics, prebiotics, bio-available calcium and immune support. Supplement for addition to Feast or fresh food 5-6 days a week. 50g £5.80, 100g £8.80, 300g £18.20, 1 kg £34.60.

**Calcivet** - Super-saturated liquid calcium, magnesium and vitamin D3 supplement. Once or twice a week for non-breeders, five times during breeding. 30ml £4.30, 100ml £8.30,

**Fussy Feeder Essentials** for sunflower junkies. 100g £8.10.

**Banquet - Parrot Mix and Cockatiel/budgerigar Mix** - Fully supplemented complete foods based on a combination of the very cleanest seed and dried fruit mixtures and Feast. 500g £5.30, 1.6kg £11.60, 6kg £31.50

**Feather Plucking Starter Pack** - contains Calcivet 30ml, Potent Brew 30ml and EasyBird Complete Pet Supplement 50g. £13.50

## Supplements for breeding

**EasyBird Super Breeder** - vitamins, Rapisorb minerals, amino acids, lots of high quality protein, essential oils, probiotics, prebiotics, bio-available calcium and immune support. Supplement for addition to Feast or fresh food 5-6 days a week. 100g £10.00, 300g £27.70, 1kg £59.20.

**ProBoost SuperMax** - High value protein, fertility enhancing vitamins and minerals, essential fatty acids, organic acids and prebiotics. Daily before and during breeding. 100g £5.10, 360g £12.20, 900g £27.80, 1.5 kgs £40.30.

**Potent Brew** - Powerful liquid probiotic. Daily before and during breeding. 4-6 month shelf life. 30ml £5.80, 100ml £11.40. 250ml £23.90, 500 ml £41.30.

## Supplements for health and problems

**Guardian Angel** - Vitamins, minerals, probiotics/prebiotics, white cell support, electrolytes and long lasting energy. 40g £10.10, 80g £15.60, 300g £38.70.

**Poly-Aid** - Long term energy, protein, vitamins, electrolytes, Flourish herbs and "white cell support system". 40g £8.90, 80g £13.00, 300g £24.80.

**Flourish** - Herbal blend for addition to fresh foods. 40g £5.90, 80g £7.70, 300g £17.60.

**Feather-Up** - Vitamins, minerals, amino acids, sulphur and high value protein for specific moulting problems. 50g £5.30, 100g £8.20, 300g £17.00.

**Potent Brew** - Powerful liquid probiotic. Daily before and during breeding. 4-6 month shelf life. 30ml £5.80, 100ml £11.40. 250ml £23.90, 500 ml £41.30.

**BioPlus** - Probiotic/prebiotic blend. Daily before and during breeding. Weekly for non-breeders. 40g £5.90, 100g £8.60,

**MegaCare** - For Budgies 200mls £17.30

**Spark** - Electrolytes and long term energy. Ideal show tonic 40g £7.50, 80g £10.50, 300g £21.50.

**Wheeze-Eeze** (Concentrate and Ready-to-Use) - herbal blend for a healthy respiratory system. **Conc:** 30ml £11.70. **RTU:** 250ml £14.40.

**Colloidal Silver** - anti-microbial drink or wash. 250ml £10.30.

Order Online:  
[www.BirdcareCo.com](http://www.BirdcareCo.com)  
or ring  
0845 130 8600 (lo-call)  
or  
01453 835330

## Disinfectants

**Avisafe** - Halogenated tertiary amines disinfectant cleaner. Defra approved, broad spectrum activity, low allergy, long life when mixed. Used by many veterinary clinics. 100ml £4.80, 500ml £11.40, 1 litre £17.20, 5L £54.10.

**Aviclens** - Water sanitiser to prevent germ growth in drinkers and on soaked seed. 30ml £4.40, 100ml £6.60, 250ml £10.50, 500ml £16.80, 1 litre £26.40

## Anti mite

**Birdy Finect** - For use on birds and to spray cages. Kills mites and dries eggs out to reduce infestations. 1litre £19.00.

**Blast Off AntiMite** - 250g £10.80.

**Duramitex Plus** - 200ml £10.35

## Medicines

**Ivermectin 0.1%** 10ml £17.99.

**Ivermectin 1%** 10 ml £32.99.

**Harkanker** - for Trichomoniasis. 10 x 4g £17.60

**Harkaverm** 100 ml £9.90

**Acox** - for Coccidiosis. 30ml £4.60

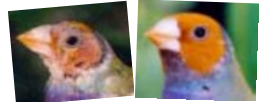
£4.80 Post and Packing applies to UK mainland mail orders. Seed orders normally charged £7.00 P&P unless ordered with £25 worth of supplements/Feast. All prices correct as at September 2013. Whilst every effort is made to maintain prices we reserve the right to alter them at any time if circumstances change. We have separate price lists for the Channel Islands, Eire, Germany, Holland, Belgium, other European Union and Non-EU countries.

# 6 Top Tips - to resolve those tricky problems

## Slow moults and feathering problems

Feathering problems and slow moults are common signs of methionine deficiency. Other deficiencies may also be involved. If the bird does not have sufficient of the right building blocks to make the feathers it tries to resolve the problem by dropping feathers over a very long spread out period and therefore growing new ones at a very slow rate. This is very stressful for the bird and can lead to health problems.

**Top Tip:** Add **Feather-Up** and **Calcivet**, or **EasyBird Rest, Molt & Show**, to the bird's food. This will top up those methionine and other amino acid levels, as well as calcium levels which are also needed. Give the levels we recommend on the label and your birds could be on the show bench in 3 to 4 weeks! This resolves many supposed French Molt problems in budgerigars.



The same bird - before and after Birdcare Company supplements.

## Young chick deaths

Are you fed up with losing baby canaries and European finches in the first few weeks? These species are extremely prone to coccidiosis, which is caused by an organism carried by the parents. When the parents feed the babies the bad guys are passed on. Babies succumb really easily to liver damage and die.

**Top Tip:** Prevention is better than cure! If you've had problems in the past, you need to treat the adults before the breeding season. By reducing the number of bugs they carry (it cannot be eliminated completely) they will pass fewer on to their chicks and your losses will be a thing of the past! The solution is **Acox!** Easy to use, you just put it in the drinking water a few weeks before pairing up.

**2nd Top Tip:** If you have treated with **Acox**, you can then help to keep the problem at bay by feeding **Feast** eggfood or **Flourish**. **Flourish** is a herbal blend that helps the immune system work really well against many disease agents, including coccidia. You can buy **Flourish** separately, or buy any of our **Feast** eggfoods, where it is included in the price! Birds fed **Feast** regularly rarely develop coccidia problems.

## Parents not feeding their babies well

Many bird breeders find they have to top up the feed given to their babies because the parents do not do the job. This is time consuming and also risks spreading disease from one chick to the next. Often the chicks are not begging demandingly enough. We believe that too many embryos are not fed well in the egg and so are not strong. Treating for diseases before breeding is important to reduce the risk of infection being put into the egg. Adults need good nutrition when preparing for the breeding season to pass it on in the egg yolk for the embryo.



**Top Tip:** On top of our standard recommendations for breeding supplementation with **EasyBird Super Breeder**, or alternatively with **Daily Essentials**, **Calcivet** and **ProBoost SuperMax**, breeders find that **Potent Brew** makes an amazing difference. Adults seem to eat their eggfood up with great gusto when **Potent Brew** is added to it. Many breeders report the adults go straight off to feed their babies, and bingo! Problem solved!

## Messy fruit-eating parrots

Do your birds throw more of their fruit around the room than they eat? So frustrating!

**Top Tip:** Cut it up nice and small and you will find your birds are much more likely to eat the whole piece. Supply it in chunks and they will take a bite and toss the rest away! For fruit-eating parrots always add supplements into their chopped fruits and not into their drinking water. As the fruits contain a lot of moisture, these birds drink very little and so don't get enough of the supplement from the water. Give them what they need and keep your costs down by adding it to the fruit! Also don't give them heaps more fruit than they can eat in a few hours. You can always give them more that is nice and fresh later in the day if it has all gone.



Photo: Les Rance

## Soaking seed safely

Seed is normally and naturally fairly well covered in germs. So if you then go soaking them in water you can easily concoct a very unhealthy mix and many birds die this way. However, soaked seed is highly nutritious and very attractive to many finch species and is a frequent addition to their diets during the breeding season.

**Top Tip:** Add a little **Aviclens** to the water you soak the seed in. This will stop the germs from multiplying and causing problems, so the soaked seed will remain healthy and smell lovely. A tried and tested solution used by bird keepers for the last two decades!