

List of Things You Have Been Given With Your Timneh

Seed Mix

This is the mix I am currently feeding all my larger hookbills. Generally I am not really happy with any one mix I can buy, so I usually buy a couple different types and combine them. I find that a Large Hookbill mix combined with a Small Hookbill mix seems to make a really good combo for the Greys. I also add dried fruit, nuts, and often some unsweetened cereal such as Cheerios. I often use a combination of Sun Seed, Abba and Higgins. The stuff you can buy at Wal-Mart is generally a really poor quality and has a lot of dust in it, so I'd stay away from it. I usually buy my seed in 25 pound bags from an online supplier, either Bird Supply of NH or, more lately, PetSolutions.com.

You have enough seed mix to last several days on it's own, but the best thing to do is to mix half of mine with half of what you have in the seed cup each day. If you're an early riser, or if you are going to cover your bird at night, you can do this in the morning. Otherwise you may want to empty and refill his dish at night so he has food as soon as he wakes up. Mixing mine with yours will help transition him over to your mix.

Pretty Bird Weaning Pellets

These can be soaked (maybe 10 pieces) in very warm to hot water for about 5 minutes so that they get soft. I offer some by hand, then give the remainder in a small crock, once a day. As the babies get older, they may like them dry as well.

Scenic Weaning Pellets

These absorb the water quicker, so don't soak them too long or they will turn too mushy! Once they are very soft but still holding their shape, you can usually offer them to the baby by hand and be amazed as he downs the whole thing in one gulp! The first time that happened I was a bit alarmed, but it seems to do no harm. You can also break them in half and feed them by hand that way.

The babies often will take a dozen handfeeding pellets at a time, so if you make up a dozen and handfeed some and leave the rest in a crock, that should work out fine. I would do this at least once a day because it's a really great way to bond with your kid, by handing him special treats to eat. It also helps encourage him to eat plenty, which is especially important while he is still a baby. I still do this with my Grey, Griff, and he turned five in December of '16!

Zupreem Fruit Flavored Pellets

These are not meant to be soaked, but fed dry. I like to give my adult birds a separate dish of pellets, as a supplemental food. If you can place it where it won't get soiled, you will only need to refill it as needed.

Pretty Bird Species Specific – African – Pellets

Also fed dry.

I think the birds generally prefer the Zupreem Fruit Flavored pellets however I like to offer more than one type. You could alternate them weekly if you prefer, but if I was only going to feed one type I'd personally choose the Zupreem since no pellet will do them any good if they ignore it. Some vets may recommend a complete pellet diet, but I believe variety is really crucial in keeping a parrot happy. Just be sure all his choices are good ones.

Millet

All birds that I know of, no matter how big or small they may be, eat spray millet. Sometimes bigger birds seem more bent on destroying it than eating it, but other times you will observe them being quite dainty in removing single seeds. If I think a bird is not eating quite as much as I'd like, and for new birds, I'd put a couple of millet sprays in the cage. You can also hang one over or next to the seed dish (weave it through the bars to hold it in place) for a new bird to help him realize where his food is located. Millet is quick energy at a time when it's critical that the bird is able to get it. Don't skimp for the first few weeks!

Seed Stick

The seed stick is great because it's a toy and a snack all rolled into one. Just don't be surprised if he doesn't touch it for days and then demolishes the whole thing in an hour. ☺

Toy and Foot Toy

The hanging toy is the type we make for our birds. They are simple and pretty inexpensive to make, and the birds really enjoy toys they can destroy. Much more fun than the indestructible type! With any toy, you must keep an eye on it for problems. Anything with any type of rope or fabric can end up fraying and catch a bird's nail, causing him to be trapped. Birds have died hanging from toys, unable to free themselves. For that reason, I will not use toys with rope in them. With the toys we make, I mainly watch for when they have destroyed any piece of it enough to expose just the wire underneath. That's when it needs to be replaced or rebuilt as I don't want them chewing on the wire. I don't know that it would cause any harm, but why chance it?

One other note regarding hanging toys: most toys now come with the quick links for attaching to the cage. These are usually oval-shaped and have a barrel that screws onto threads to secure. Be very careful of these. If the bird unscrews this, he can get the now-open metal curve at the bottom through the hole at the back side of the lower beak, basically impaling him and rendering him trapped. Obviously this will scare him beyond belief and much thrashing will ensue. Releasing him from this is also a frightening experience for both you AND him! Been there, done that. Now we apply a drop of super glue or loc-tite to the threads before closing the quick link. Obviously you want to do this when the bird is not able to grab hold of it until it's totally shut and wiped off if needed. We also use pliers to tighten it, as an extra precaution. The drawback is that when you do want to remove the toy you will most likely need bolt-cutters to cut through the quick link, but it's worth it not to have a terrible accident.

The little foot toy is certainly an inexpensive little toy to make, but the day I made these and gave them to the kids they spent so much time playing with them! Popsicle sticks are another item that are great toys for the birds. We save the ones from ice cream treats and wash them and dry them and then you can give one to your bird. They love to hold them and chew them up. One of the greys I used to own would scratch her back with one held in her claw! A Popsicle stick is also a handy device for distraction. If you keep one nearby, any time your bird decides he'd like to chew a hole in your shirt or do something you'd like to discourage, you can instead hand him the Popsicle stick. Diversion is your friend! Much better to divert than to force a show-down. Always remember your bird is like a perpetual two-to-five-year-old child. Better to distract and divert when possible to avoid bad behavior. ***Bad behavior can't become a habit if it's not allowed to occur at all, and diversion is the best way to achieve that.***

Paperwork

You have the DNA sexing certificate for your bird, a Hatch Certificate, a copy of my guarantee (the same as what you signed), and a receipt.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me (I get my email frequently and will usually get back to you quickly). And please let me know how your vet visit went, too. Most importantly, let me know how the baby is doing. I don't relax till I know he's settled and eating. It's a really good idea to weigh your baby every day at the same time (I like mornings but as long as it's consistent it doesn't really matter) so you can keep an eye on if he's eating enough. You want

something that weighs in grams, like a postal scale. A good weight for adult male timnehs is 300 to 340 grams and I like to see them around 320. For females, 290 to 320 is about right with 310 being about the norm for my kids. Weight will vary a bit from day to day – and part of that does depend on whether he has just pigged out before weigh-in or not – but if you see more than a ten gram drop, give that baby an extra feeding by hand (beans/rice/veggie mix or warm, soaked weaning pellets) to help keep that weight up and encourage him to eat. I always find that right after a feeding like that my kids will invariably be at their dishes, continuing to eat. **If you take the time to give him some food by hand a couple times a day it will only add to the bonding experience and also help him to keep his weight up and to adjust to his new home and new experiences.** Get all family members in on this, too, so that your new baby associates all of you with a pleasant experience.

Also don't ever be hesitant to send me pictures and updates, even years down the road. I love to see how my kids are doing!

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