Budgie Behaviour

Different Types of Budgie Behavior

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Understanding what your Budgie is trying to tell you can be hard at times… especially when some behaviors can mean many things. Here, we will try to cover the most common behaviors and some of their meanings. Please be aware this in not cut and dry, it's based on what we, as budgies owners observe and have put to paper.

Stretching legs and Wings: This is very similar to what we do when we are sitting in the same the position for a long period of time. Budgies often stretch one leg at the same time as the wing on the same side. This is also a relaxed behavior. You may also notice when your budgie brings his/her leg back up again, they often curl their toes. This is also normal. A general raising of the wings can also be seen as a sign of contentment or relief.

Resting/Sleeping: Budgie sleep and rest many different ways, the most common being with one leg tucked up under their feathers and their head tucked into the back of their feathers. This is a very good sign that all is well with your budgie and they are very content in their environment. Often when doing so, they also fluff their feathers up slightly. In this circumstance, this is very normal, but is very different to the fluffed up feathers of a sick bird. You may also notice when your budgie is settling in for the night or for a nap, they may chatter away to themselves to… another good indication of a happy bird.

Preening/Shaking: Budgies spend a lot of their days preening themselves and their flock. It is used in courtship between mates and is also in social bonding between their flock (which also includes human owners) Budgies use their beaks, feet and the bars of their cage to preen themselves. You may also notice after their finish preening themselves, they will shake. This is to remove all of the dust particles they have dislodged during their preening session. Budgies also shake themselves a lot at other times. They often shake before they begin a new task… so say you bird just finished eating… he may shake, and then fly off to play with something. Budgies (often young in age) also flap their wings without moving. This indicates excitement and creates movement and noise.

Yawning and Sneezing: As with humans, yawning is contagious amongst birds. They too do it for similar reasons. Sneezing in birds is not done 'because they have a cold'… it is simply to clear their nasal passages.

Biting and Gnawing: These behaviors are done for many reasons…

- To trim their beak. This is why it is important to have natural branches and perches.
- When playing with toys (this is seen as coming from their inbuilt behavior to find seeds and food on the ground)... thus they often pick up toys and alike with their beaks and can undo clips etc... their beaks are very highly developed and versatile.
- Out of stress and fear… this bite is usually fairly hard and can draw blood. You are often given a warning squeak before these self defense bites. This is your chance to withdraw. There are often two displays of self defense biting. If your budgie had its beak open and head up, it is displaying its dominance and will most likely bite you without fear. If your budgie has its beak open but head lowered, it is still defensive, standing his/her ground but is scared.
- Hens also in breeding condition with gnaw the nest box and surrounds to prepare to nest.

Vocalisations: Budgies often chatter between themselves and to their owners. This can escalate to a louder volume when trying to compete with each other or outside sounds. Male budgies increase this chatter towards their 'partners' during the breeding season as part of their courtship behavior. Load screeching is usually heard when your budgies are trying to call for help to each other (including their owners). This can also indicate trouble… from an intruder in the aviary or an injured bird.

Signs of fear: Along with the earlier points of biting, a few other behaviors which can indicate fear, are when budgies hold their wings off their body and pant. This can mean they are stressed and scared or they are over heating/hot. Also, if your budgie has his/her feathers flat to their body, this often indicates they are ready to take flight from a scary object.

Obsession with objects: Budgies can form relations ships with fellow budgies, their human owners and objects in their cages. They often regurgitate on them, try and mount them, dilate their pupils and bob their heads. This behavior is normal towards their female mate, but if it becomes a problem with yourself or other objects, often changing their cage around or increases their 'darkness time' can help.

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