

Budgerigar Health And Related

Bumblefoot

1. What is "Bumblefoot"?

"Bumblefoot" is a common term for inflammation or infection of the weight-bearing surface of the foot. "Bumblefoot" is a form of pododermatitis (foot inflammation).

2. What species of birds are affected by "bumblefoot"?

It is very common in budgies, cockatiels, galahs and ducks though it can be seen in any bird.

3. What are the clinical signs of early "bumblefoot"?

Initially there may simply be a loss of the normal scale on the feet and the skin may be red and thin. As the condition worsens, ulcers may form on the pads of the feet.

4. What are the clinical signs of more serious forms of "bumblefoot"? It becomes very serious when the foot is swollen and there are plugs of necrotic (dead) tissue on the weight bearing foot surface. In the worst cases the bone of the foot becomes infected, the foot becomes swollen and the foot's digits cannot move. These birds are severely lame and often very difficult to repair.

5. What are the causes of "bumblefoot"? Hard plastic or dowelling perches and sandpaper around perches, as well as diets of poor nutritional value and high energy will lead to obese birds with vitamin A deficiency. If the perches are unclean, bacteria will build up and can move onto the foot as the foot has lost its protective scales. Any disease that affects birds can make your bird susceptible to "bumblefoot" as the bird will use its energy to fight the other problem.

6. What is the treatment for "bumblefoot"? In the early stages of "bumblefoot" the best treatment is simply to soften the perches with bandages or strips of cloth wrapped around the perches. At the same time, improve the diet by including, among other changes, more dark green vegetables for Vitamin A. For ducks, put down astroturf or grassed areas and make sure they have a clean deep wading pool.

7. What additional treatment procedures may be needed? Antibiotics will be needed as well as anti-inflammatories and antibiotics topically on the feet. If the "bumblefoot" is in the very severe category, a ball bandage may need to be adhered to the feet with regular changes necessary. In these severe cases it may be necessary to send samples of the foot infection to the laboratory to find out the type of infection the bird has. Blood samples may also be taken to check for other problems.

The severe cases of "bumblefoot" can take weeks or months to improve.

8. What preventative measures are needed? An Avian Veterinarian will always check the base of the feet at a bird's annual health check but the feet should be checked at home at least fortnightly as well. [Finding an Avian Vet](#)

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