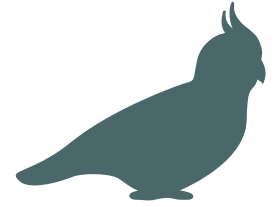


ANXIETY, FEAR AND PHOBIAS IN BIRDS



Fear is a normal response in birds that enables them to manage dangerous situations. But pet birds can also show signs of fear in response to things that we may not consider to be dangerous, such as a new cage, new furniture or new people.

Ongoing fear can be detrimental to a bird's physical and mental health so it's important to discuss your bird's behaviour with your vet if you think there's a problem.

Your bird can exhibit both subtle and obvious responses to situations that cause it anxiety. It may freeze or fidget or employ their 'flight' or 'fight' defence mechanisms. As your pet usually can't fly away, it will instead, move away or hide. A 'fight' or an aggressive response is a huge problem for you, your bird and any other household members, including pets.

Treatment of fear in birds

Your vet can help you to develop a behavioural and environmental management plan. They will start with a physical examination to check for any medical conditions that may be contributing to the behaviour, such as pain.

In developing a behavioural management plan, your vet will need to know among other things:

- when and where the behaviour occurs
- how frequently it occurs and how your bird reacts
- what triggers or doesn't trigger the behaviour
- how you interact with your bird, including the amount of contact you and other humans have with it.



An environmental management plan will commonly involve:

- Identifying and avoiding things that are causing the fear. These may include: where the bird spends its time, other animals in the house and the arrival of guests.
- Providing safe hiding places such as foliage or partially covering parts of the cage so that your bird can hide when feeling frightened. It may also include medication to help with any behavioural abnormalities.

By treating anxieties and phobias in birds, you and your pet can live safe and happy lives together.

If you have any concerns, speak to your vet, the earlier you seek treatment the better.