

# Sun Conure Care Sheet

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**Lifespan:** 20-35 years with proper care

**Adult size:** 10 to 13 inches long, head to end of tail

**Origin:** South America

**Behaviour:**

Sun Conures are lively and inquisitive. They can be content with their pet parents for hours and require daily interaction.

**Cage size:** Minimum of 24" H, 18" W

**Diet:** (herbivores) - Mixture of Large parrot seed, pellets, fresh fruit and vegetable, calcium and iodine blocks, nuts, leafy greens and flowers (specific ones)

**Talking ability:** We do not talk, but will learn to whistle and mimic sounds. We are known to shriek if we are left alone too much (we need company)

**Sun Conures can be kept alone to bond with pet parent or in pairs to bond with each other.**

## Is the conure the right choice for you?

Conures are outgoing, social, curious and opinionated creatures that enjoy being in the middle of every family activity (they will suffer if ignored). They like to add their comments and observations to any conversation, and they consider their human companions to be parts of their flock, and not the other way around. If your thinking of owning a conure, remember to include them in your lives as much as possible, if neglected they can be known to shriek, pick their feathers out (stress, anxiety), and become depressed.

## What you need to house your Conure:

- Cage (bigger the better)
- Shell grit
- Large parrot seed
- Vetafarm mini or small pellets (depending on age)
- Sulfa aid
- Wormer, Mite & lice spray
- Cage cleaner
- Perches (different sizes and materials)
- Food and water bowl
- Calcium bell, Cuttlebone
- Toys
- Cage cover (to cover at night)
- Cage tidy (to stop seed falling onto the floor)

## Diet:

*Your Conures diet is extremely important and is the key to a healthy Conure along with exercise. Conures need variety in their diet, seed alone is not a complete balanced diet. It is essential for your bird's health that they be fed a combination of large parrot seed, pellets (Vetafarm-Nutriblend Small), fruit and vegetables. Most seeds are very high in fat and when given the choice birds will select seeds with the highest fat content over the ones with lower fat content. Sunflower seeds contain 47-49% fat and safflower 24.6% fat which is why your Conures will always eat these first. Sunflower seeds are thought to be the "Cupcakes and Twinkies" of the avian world. Birds can have high cholesterol levels, become obese, get stroke, heart attacks and other heart problems, or develop serious illnesses such as fatty liver syndrome which is fatal. For this reason it is important to make sure your Conures diet is 60-70% pellets with the remaining amount consisting of fresh fruit and vegetables and a small amount of seeds. Conures may also enjoy small amounts of yoghurt (low fat) boiled egg, chicken, fish or beef.*

## WHAT TO FEED:

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**Pellets (Vetafarm "Bird Maintenance and/or Nutriblend pellets"), small amount of seeds, fresh fruit and vegetables**

### Vegetables:

Sprouts, Spinach, Turnip Greens, Swiss chard, Mustard Greens, Broccoli, Escarole, Chicory, Tomatoes, Beet Greens, Bok Choy, Grated Carrots, Collard greens, Corn on the Cob, Endive, Kale, Yams, Pumpkin, Sweet potato, (Conures like Yams, Pumpkin and Sweet Potato better when they are cooked).

### Fruits:

Mangos, Cantaloupe, Apricots, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches Apples, Bananas, Grapes, Oranges. Make sure your cockatiel does not have any seeds from fruits, some can be very dangerous, like Cherry pits as they may contain trace amounts of cyanide.

### Protein and Meat:

It's OK for your cockatiel to eat chicken, fish or beef, again we are talking here very small amounts. Other sources of protein and cooked eggs (hard boiled or scrambled), yogurt, cottage cheese and peanuts.

### WHAT NOT TO FEED:

- *Avocado, chocolate, fruit seeds, alcohol, caffeine, cabbage, raw potato, asparagus, eggplant, milk, cream, sugar and high fat treats.*
- *Vegetables and fruits not eaten within a few hours should be discarded.*
- *Treats should not exceed 10% of total food (too high in fat and sugar)*

**Fresh water should be supplied each morning, make sure the dish is well scrubbed to remove slime or faecal matter.**

## Housing

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A habitat approximately 30"W x 30"D x 36"H, with strong metal bars spaced no greater than 1/2" apart, makes a good home for one sun conure. The larger the cage the better, your conure should be able to flap its wings without the risks of causing injury (keep an eye on the spacing between the bars as you wouldn't want to risk your bird's head getting stuck or them getting out). Give your bird different sized perches throughout the enclosure to exercise their feet and help prevent arthritis. These can be natural branches from your backyard, make sure that they are cleaned using hot water and a sponge to remove bacteria, sap or droppings from wild birds. Perches should be at least 5" long and 1-2" in diameter. A calcium or pumice perch should also be supplied to keep your birds nails and beak trim. Conures can be kept alone to bond with their owner or in pairs to bond with each other. Different types of birds should **not** be housed together. Remember to keep your conure in a draft free safe area, preferably where the family is located so he/she feels like he is part of the family. Cover your bird at night (especially in winter) with a towel or blanket to stop drafts and to reduce stress to the bird. Clean and disinfect the habitat and perches regularly (every week), replace substrate or habitat liner twice weekly or more often as needed. Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged. Rotate new toys into the habitat regularly to provide mental stimulation and to prevent your conure from becoming bored/lonely or depressed. Ensure that there are no habitat parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird. Birds tend to lick their cage, toys and just about everything and anything kept in their enclosure. For this reason it is important that a natural cleaning product be used when cleaning occurs. Be sure to reduce the amount of chemicals used throughout the house (flea bombs, mertein sprays etc) as these fumes can be harmful.

When considering appropriate toys for your feathered pal, try and choose colourful (we can see all colours and are particularly fond of bright ones), shiny and textured toys as this will mentally stimulate your birds mind and keep him happy whilst you go about your everyday life.

### Recommended toys-

- Natural wood toys (these are particularly great for gnawing the beak and nails down)
- Lofa shapes
- Colourful block toys
- Swings (we love to swing all day long)
- Shiny bells
- Toys with approved leather attached
- Snugly hammocks (to keep us warm and safe)
- Mirrors (not recommended if you want your conure to stay tame or if they are kept in pairs as they can think the mirror is their mate and become protective over it.)
- Bird box – (we like to snuggle, hide and keep warm in these)
- Perches should be at least 9" and 1/2" in diameter (offer different sizes)

### Normal sun conure behaviour:

- Sun Conures like to chew, so ensure they have lots of toys to chew on
- Intelligent and affection birds, they require daily interaction with their pet parents
- Can be loud and noisy (especially if left alone for long periods of time)
- Provide foraging toys, which provide important mental stimulation
- Ensure toys are strongly attached as they can unscrew c-clamps, which can cause injury

### Health:

### Signs of a healthy Conure:

- Active, alert and sociable (cheeky and inquisitive)
- Good appetite (eating and drinking throughout the day as usual)
- Dry nares and bright, dry eyes
- Beak, legs and feet normal in appearance (no growths, dry cracked skin)
- Smooth, well-groomed feathers

### Signs your conure is unhealthy:

- Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers
- Wheezing or coughing
- Sitting on the bottom of the enclosure
- In appetite (not eating or drinking as much as usual)
- Runny or discoloured stools
- Red or swollen eyes
- Eye or nasal discharge

***If your conure shows any of these clinical signs of ill health, seek medical attention by a bird specialist for treatment.***

## Treatments

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**Sulfa Aid**- Sulfa Aid bird medication is for the control and treatment of caecal coccidiosis and enteritis in cage birds. Bird cage should be thoroughly cleaned daily to avoid re-infestation if this occurs. Sulfa Aid should be added to the water when new birds are purchased, introduced to aviaries or after heavy rain.

**Mite and Lice spray**- Your feathered friend should be treated with mite & lice spray every 3 months as prevention. If you are “treating” for mite and lice they should be treated twice a day for up to 14 days. The enclosure should also be regularly cleaned (remove all bedding every 2 days to remove eggs and larvae of the mite and lice). Keep a close eye on your “birdy’s” skin during this time. If symptoms persist visit an animal care facility or a vet.

***Signs of mite and lice are:***

Excess scratching, redness and feather loss may occur. If symptoms persist visit an animal care facility or a vet.

The common signs if your bird has worms are weight loss, diarrhoea and loss of appetite. Treat your cockatiel if you notice these symptoms or every 3 months. If symptoms persist visit an animal care facility or a vet.

***Remember to monitor your bird’s health regularly as birds can be very good at hiding sickness or disease. Watch out for puffy feathers, being inactive, sleeping a lot, not their usual chirpy self. If signs of illness occur contact your local avian Vet for advice.***

