

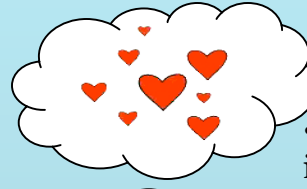


“I THINK MY PARROT HAS A CRUSH ON ME!”

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Don't worry, this is common in many captive bird species!

- To attract, arouse and synchronize a potential mate, parrots perform courtship behaviours which consist of elaborate displays, dances, songs, calls and even the presentation of gifts.
- Birds who properly perform these behaviours have better reproductive success and so these traits have been selected for over time.
- Parrot species can sometimes “fall in love” with their owners and attempt rigorous courtship behaviours. This is due to a natural phenomenon known as imprinting.
- Sexual imprinting occurs in early development when the bird learns the characteristics of a potential mate by observing its “parents”.



Remember regurgitation usually means “I love you”!

- Hand-reared parrots may consider you as a parent, imprinting to you instead.
- When too affectionate with your parrot, by petting under the wing, touching near the vent or nuzzling his beak, it may interpret this as “courtship” behaviour and naturally your bird will reciprocate.
- This becomes problematic, as the bird will respond by rubbing his vent on the owner, regurgitating or becoming extremely aggressive to others in the household as they are viewed as competitors.
- Breeding becomes a problem as the bird may not recognize proper mates and will not display or respond to appropriate courtship behaviours and mating will not occur.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?



♥ Learn to identify courtship behaviour when it is occurring and be careful when choosing a pet, since the behaviour is seemingly worse in Amazon Parrots and Macaws, but not as severe in African Greys, Cockatoos and Pacific Rims.



♥ When the behaviours appear, such as rubbing the vent on your arm, simply put your bird back in it's cage.

♥ Know if your bird is hand-reared or not; imprinting is usually more severe in hand-reared birds with little or no exposure to other birds (and usually irreversible).

♥ Ensure all family members socialize equally with your bird to prevent aggression towards others.

♥ During the breeding season (usually springtime when sex hormone levels increase) avoid performing confusing “courtship-like” behaviours with your parrot.

