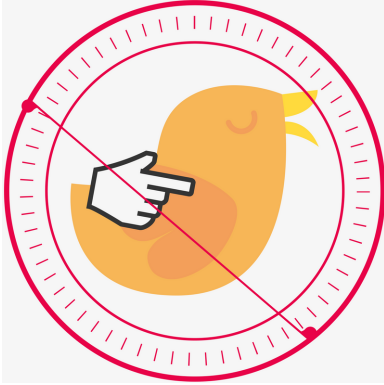


Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"
Published April, 2017

You Say You Want a "Cuddly" Bird?

By Michelle Yesney



An important part of Mickaboo's purpose is to be sure that both bird and adopter are happy together - that all of our birds find a forever home that will ensure their long-term life and health. Sometimes potential adopters tell us they hope to find a "social and cuddly" bird.

Those words can mean different things to different people. Unlike dogs and cats, birds should not be snuggled - it is not a behavior that is natural to them. Being petted, especially on their wings and bodies, can result in unintended consequences. Birds that groom each other all over their bodies do so as part of their mating and bonding behavior.

Stroking a bird stimulates hormones intended to prepare the bird for parenthood, a mental and physical state we discourage in companion birds.

However, most birds ARE social - they live in flocks and/or family units and form strong family units. They will also bond with human companions. Their interactions with people are often entertaining and can be very sweet and charming. Many can be petted or "skritch" on their heads and birds such as cockatiels will solicit head skritches from their human companions.

There is a myth that you must have only a single bird if you want the bird to bond to you, his or her human companion. That is a false assumption. You do need to *maintain* your relationship with a bird; for example, you cannot play with him or her a few minutes a day and ignore him/her the rest of the time and expect the bird to continue to be bonded to you. And because some species of birds really do need constant companionship, we will only adopt out budgies and cockatiels in pairs if there is no other bird in the home. They can and will bond to a human companion, but will also enjoy the company of another bird when the human is absent.