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Recommended stocking densities for birds kept in a pet retail environment

Background:

In line with a decision made by PIJAC Canada's National Board of Directors, the association was asked to prepare a set of recommended stocking densities for pets kept in a pet retail environment. This document represents the second segment of the exercise and refers to birds.

The following draft is the result of some extensive research. Before its completion, it is expected this document will be subject to additional consultation. At this particular point in its development, the document reflects the expertise identified and selected by the staff of PIJAC Canada. Through our involvement with the **International Pet Advisory Council** we were able to review pertinent documents from other pet industry associations around the world. Further consultation with PIJAC USA resulted in, among other references, a referral to the State of Colorado's published Animal Care Facilities guidelines.

The first draft created some concerns, i.e. some of the calculations and cubic densities were in question, and as a result of the feedback from our membership, we have reviewed the method of calculation used in the formula originally proposed. Another methodology that was examined uses area (sq. cm.) rather than cubic space. The theory is that most birds will gravitate to the top of the cage. Hence, the height of the cage (and subsequently cubic measurement) is irrelevant and possibly misleading in determining stocking density.

Assumptions

The following assumptions have been taken into account to come up with the recommendations appearing in this document.

1. Definition of Pet retail environment. "Pet retail environment" means any place or premise used in whole or in part, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, for the purpose of retail sale, trading or otherwise transferring pet animals to the public.

In addition to the traditional pet shop or wholesaler, pet retail environments shall include the keeping for transfer or the transfer of pet animals at temporary facilities such as flea markets, mobile facilities, department stores, merchandise outlets, discount outlets, pet animal shows conducting a sale, and other types of retail outlets.

2. Notwithstanding the other assumptions, it is understood that while this document specifically refers to stocking densities, it is assumed that all other pertinent animal welfare considerations, as outlined in other PIJAC Canada publications, are being met. More specifically this means:
 - 1 Primary enclosures are those animal enclosures in which the animal normally rests or sleeps (also referred to as housing).
 - 2 Primary enclosures shall be structurally sound and maintained in good repair to protect the animals from injury and to contain them. Primary enclosures shall be constructed such that they can be routinely maintained to allow animals to stay dry and clean (as appropriate for the species) and to provide convenient access to clean food and water. The floor of the primary enclosure shall be constructed to prevent injury to the animals' feet and legs. All the surfaces of the primary enclosure must be constructed of a material that is water resistant and can be cleaned and sanitized. All primary enclosures shall allow each pet animal to turn around, exercise normal postural movements, and to experience necessary socialization with cage mates.
 - 3 Display cases may be utilized as primary enclosures during the workday; however, animals should not be kept in display cases overnight unless the display case also meets the requirements of and functions as a primary enclosure.
 - 4 Display cases must be constructed of a material that is water resistant and can be cleaned and sanitized. Display cases must be well constructed and kept in good repair. The area around the display case must be well ventilated to prevent odor buildup. Display cases for birds shall be maintained in good repair and constructed of non-toxic metal or other water resistant material, which can be cleaned and sanitized.

In light of these assumptions, PIJAC Canada recommends the following as suggested cage stocking densities for birds kept in a pet retail environment.

General considerations: Minimum Space Requirements

- (a) Other than for head, wing and tail clearance, the housing must be large enough to provide full body extension without contact with the confines and must be wide enough in at least one direction to accommodate completely stretched wings.
- (b) A single well-placed perch may be adequate for Psittacines i.e., the bird can stand completely upright on the perch without having the head contact the ceiling of the cage and at the same time not having the tail contact the floor or grate. For those species, such as Finches, Canaries, etc. that prefer flying or jumping to climbing, adequate perches, minimum of two, one at each end of the cage, must be provided. Perches should be strategically placed to prevent droppings from contaminating food, water or other birds.
- (c) Minimum space requirements for multiple birds housed temporarily depend on the calculated Housing Density Factor and the overall length of the bird as measured from the tip of the tail to the top of the head. *Additional birds are added as space allows based on the formula.*

The following calculation is will now be used to determine the number of birds that could be housed in a given enclosure:

$$A + B = C$$

- Where **A = 1**, (represents the calculation of the first bird's space requirements (see Density Factor Chart)). * **If this is less than one (1), this means this cage is not suitable for this type of bird.**
- where **B** is the calculation of how many additional birds may be suitably added.,
- where **C** is equal to the total birds suggested for that particular space.

Calculation of A:

$$\frac{(\text{cage size in sq. cm.}) - (\text{single bird need in sq. cm.})}{\text{where the answer is } > 0^*, \text{ then}} = A = 1$$

Calculation of B:

$$\frac{(\text{cage size in sq. cm.}) - (\text{single bird need in sq. cm.})}{(\text{additional birds needs in sq. cm.})} = B \text{ (rounded down)}$$

Calculation of C:

$$A + B = C$$

Example: What is the suggested maximum number of cockatiels in a 2400 sq. cm. cage?

$$A = \frac{(2400 \text{ sq. cm.}) - (1 \text{st Cockatiel @ } 1000 \text{ sq. cm.})}{\text{where the answer is } > 0^*, \text{ then}} = A = 1$$

$$B = \frac{(2400-1000)}{\text{additional birds needs @ } 250 \text{ sq. cm.}} = B = 5.6, \text{ (rounded down to 5)}$$

$$C = 6$$

Measurements are based on the actual living space and do not include T-stands or perches attached to the outside of the cage.

Outdoor Aviaries. The size, shape, and design of the cages shall be appropriate for the species being housed and shall allow space, without overcrowding, for the normal exercise requirements of each bird. Flight cages shall be constructed to prevent injury to birds. A covered portion of each cage shall be provided where birds can avoid direct sunlight or adverse weather conditions and commingling with non-captive animals.

Density Factor Chart

Bird Group (size related)	Length of bird (cm.)	Single bird needs (sq. cm.)	Additional bird needs (sq. cm.)
African Grey		1500	750
Amazon	under 40	1500	750
	40 +	2000	750
Budgie		675	125
Cockatiel		1000	250
Cockatoo	under 35	1500	750
	35-45	2000	1000
	45 +	2750	1325
Lovebird		750	150
Macaw	under 35	1250	625
	35-50	2250	1000
	50 +	3750	1200
Parakeet Long Tailed	under 25	1000	250
Conure or Rosella	25-35	1000	250
	35+	1400	450
Caique or Pionus or Senegal	to 30	800	275
	30-35	1250	625
	35+	1500	750
Parrotlet		400	150
Lories or Lorikeets	under 30	1250	375
	30 +	2000	500
Dove	To 22.5	500	400
	22.5 +	1250	625
Finches including Silverbills and Waxbills	To 12.5	650	100
	12.5-17.5	750	150
	17.5 +	1000	200
Mynah		1500	750
Pekin Robin		1000	200