The Complete Book of PET CARE

PETER ROACH

Lansdowne

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Birds Cats Fish
Dogs Guinea Pigs Horses
Mice Rabbits Reptiles

Lansdowne Press
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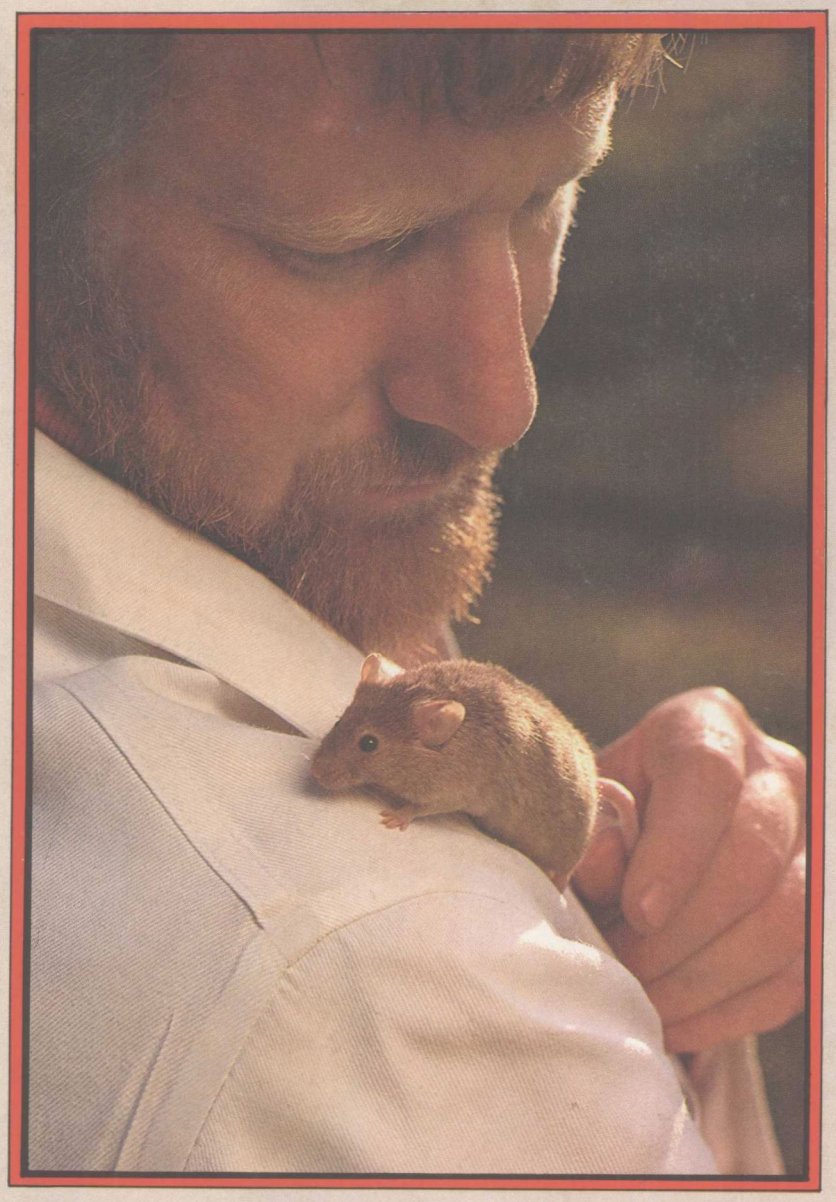
CONTENTS



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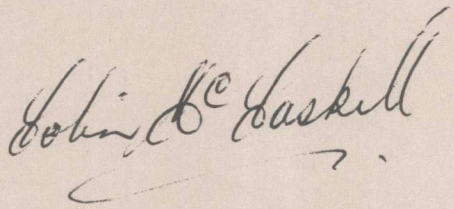
FOREWORD

During the past decade the public has shown a tremendous increase in awareness of the need to provide animals with proper care and attention. This has been particularly noticeable in the case of domestic animals. However, most of these owners have had no practical training in animal care and are at a loss to determine if their pet is in good condition or 'off key'. All too often, the owner receives dubious advice from fellow owners, frequently to the detriment of their animals. For these reasons, I was delighted when I was shown the manuscript of *The Complete Book of Pet Care*.

Here is a publication brimming over with good, sound, easily read information, providing the pet owner with a quick reference for clarification and reassurance. Indeed, it is almost as though the reader is consulting the Veterinary Surgeon, who is instructing his client in how to provide the necessities and extras which will give the pet animal every opportunity to enjoy a long life of good health, with mutual contentment. The reader is also advised of the sort of information which the owner should collect to assist the Veterinary Surgeon in arriving at a professional diagnosis.

This book is a significant advance in providing pet owners with an opportunity to appreciate the veterinary requirements of their animals which are dependent upon them for good health. After all, kindness brings satisfaction to the giver as well as the receiver.

Peter Roach is to be commended for his initiative in compiling *The Complete Book of Pet Care* and Lansdowne Press for undertaking its publication. I recommend this book to all those who have become, or are about to become, 'a pet owner'.



Colin F. McCaskill,
Executive Director, The Royal
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,
New South Wales.

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Various clients who allowed me to photograph their pets.

Particular acknowledgement is made to the Post-graduate Committee in Veterinary Science, The University of Sydney. This organisation plays a vital role in keeping the Veterinarian up to the minute with the latest information by way of articles, cassettes and courses. Great reference has been made to this valuable source to ensure that readers of this book have the latest information.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the director of the Committee, Dr T. G. Hungerford O.B.E., B.V.Sc, F.A.C.V.Sc., H.D.A., whose energetic and tireless activities through the Committee have helped both man and animals.

INTRODUCTION

During my twelve years as a practising Veterinarian and on my 'talk-back' radio programme I have been constantly asked questions by pet owners about their animals. Some owners feel that their question does not justify a visit to the Vet. Some pet problems occur at odd times and sometimes it is difficult to know whether a condition is serious enough to warrant consulting the Veterinarian. Often, even in a consultation, the Vet may be too busy to fully explain the background to a problem. Some pet owners like to follow-up their pet's problem by additional reading.

I felt there was a need for a book of this nature to act as a household reference book.

Some readers may find some of the photographs or illustrations a little disconcerting, but they are included to help you, the pet owner, to quickly and accurately identify your pet's problem.

The information within the book is based on the latest knowledge available to the veterinary profession, coupled with my own twelve years of intensive veterinary practice.

It is devoid of 'old wive's tales' and is written in plain English, so that you will find the facts, but will not be confused by technical or academic jargon.

Those owners who wish to pursue a certain subject in greater depth, should, as the next step refer to an academic text recommended by a Veterinarian.

This book covers the management, care, problems and common ailments of birds, cats, dogs, fish, guinea pigs, horses, mice, rabbits and reptiles: in fact, all the pets a household is likely to have. As well as being a pet owner's household reference it is an ideal text for the newly graduated Veterinarian, Veterinary nurse, animal breeder and zoo attendant.

Peter Roach

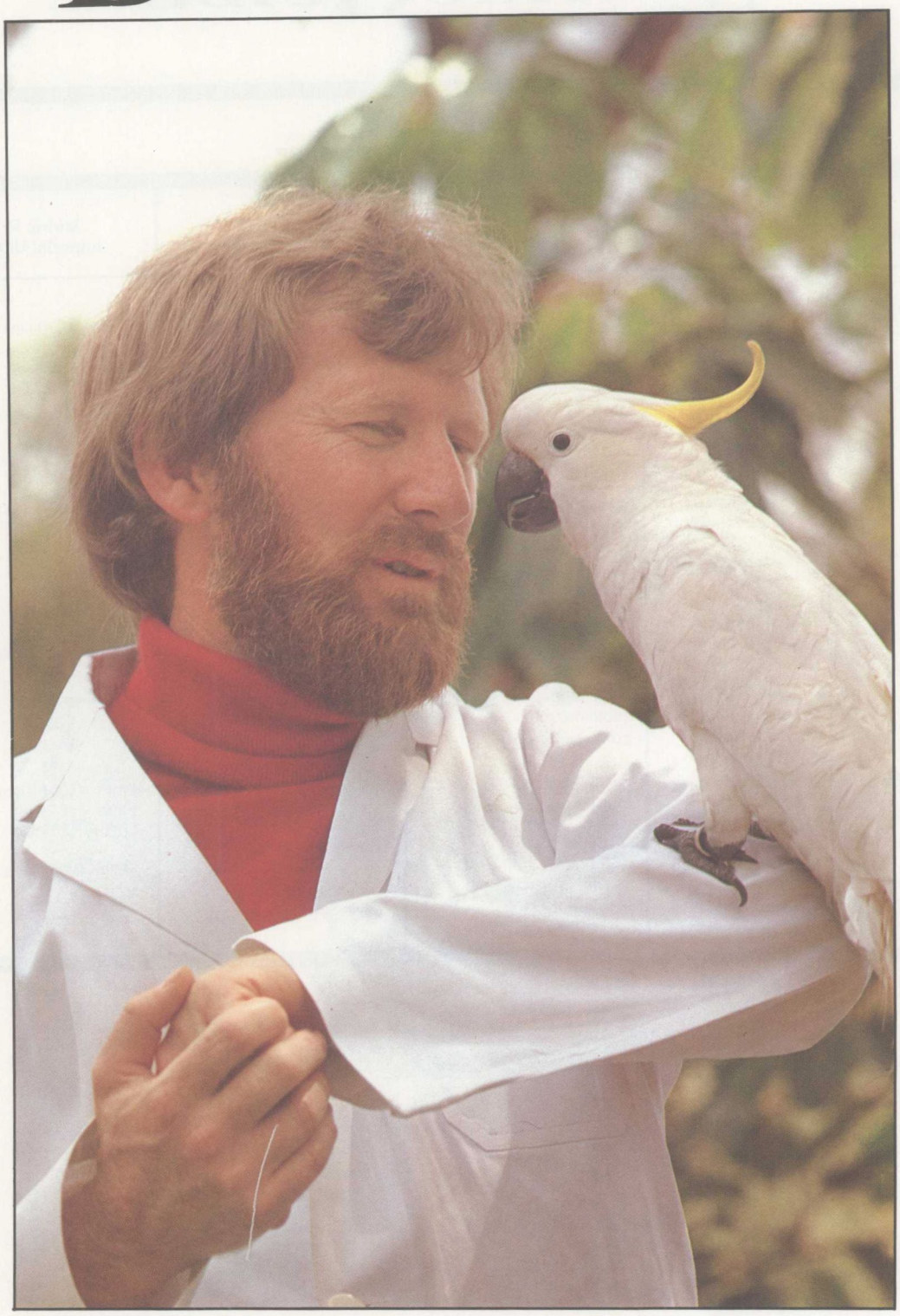
Peter J. G. Roach B.V.Sc., M.R.C.V.S., M.A.C.V.Sc.
1983

METRIC GUIDE

CONVERSION
METRIC UNITS FOR EVERYDAY USE

Quantity	Conversion Factors (Approximate)			
	Imperial Unit	Metric Unit	Imperial to Metric Units	Metric to Imperial Units
LENGTH	inch (in)	millimetre (mm) or centimetre (cm)	1 in = 25.4 mm	1 cm = 0.394 in
	foot (ft)	centimetre or metre (m)	1 ft = 30.5 cm	1 m = 3.28 ft
	yard (yd)	metre (m)	1 yd = 0.914 m	1 m = 1.09 yd
MASS	ounce (oz)	gram (g)	1 oz = 28.3 g	1 g = 0.0353 oz
	pound (lb)	gram (g) or kilogram (kg)	1 lb = 454 g	1 kg = 2.20 lb
	stone	kilogram (kg)	1 stone = 6.35 kg	1 kg = 0.157 stone
	ton	tonne (t)	1 ton = 1.02 t	1 t = 0.984 ton
AREA	square inch (in^2)	square centimetre (cm^2)	1 in^2 = 6.45 cm^2	1 cm^2 = 0.155 in^2
	square foot (ft^2)	square centimetre (cm^2) or square metre (m^2)	1 ft^2 = 929 cm^2	1 m^2 = 10.8 ft^2
	square yard (yd^2)	square metre (m^2)	1 yd^2 = 0.836 m^2	1 m^2 = 1.20 yd^2
	perch (p)	square metre (m^2)	1 p = 25.3 m^2	1 m^2 = 0.0395 p
	rood (rd)	hectare (ha)	1 rd = 0.101 ha	1 ha = 9.88 rd
	acre (ac)	hectare (ha)	1 ac = 0.405 ha	1 ha = 2.47 ac
	square mile	square kilometre (km^2)	1 square mile = 2.59 km^2	1 km^2 = 0.386 square mile
VOLUME	cubic inch (in^3)	cubic centimetre (cm^3)	1 in^3 = 16.4 cm^3	1 cm^3 = 0.0610 in^3
	cubic foot (ft^3)	cubic metre (m^3)	1 ft^3 = 0.0283 m^3	1 m^3 = 35.3 ft^3
	cubic yard (yd^3)	cubic metre (m^3)	1 yd^3 = 0.765 m^3	1 m^3 = 1.31 yd^3
	bushel (bus)	cubic metre (m^3)	1 bus = 0.0364 m^3	1 m^3 = 27.5 bus
VOLUME (fluids)	fluid ounce (fl oz)	millilitre (ml)	1 fl oz = 28.4 ml	1 ml = 0.0352 fl oz
	pint (pt)	millilitre (ml) or litre (l)	1 pt = 568 ml	1 litre = 1.76 pt
	gallon (gal)	litre (l) or cubic metre (m^3)	1 gal = 4.55 litre	1 m^3 = 220 gal
	acre foot	cubic metre (m^3) or megalitre (Ml)	1 acre foot = 1230 m^3 = 1.23 Ml	1 Ml = 0.811 acre foot
TEMPERATURE	temperature (°F)	temperature (°C)	$°C = \frac{5}{9}(°F - 32)$	$°F = \frac{9 \times °C}{5} + 32$

BIRDS



Selecting a bird

A few decades ago, caged birds within the house were very popular pets. In recent years, many people have changed their ideas on confining birds to small cages. The discovery of the disease psittacosis (carried by birds and transmitted through the air to cause pneumonia in humans) has also had some effect on the decline in popularity of indoor birds.

Nevertheless, many little birds are kept in small cages within the house and give their owners great pleasure.

In the last few decades, outdoor aviaries have become enormously popular. They provide, in my opinion, a much more humane method of keeping birds captive. Many aviaries are large enough to allow flight, and the inclusion of natural vegetation. This usually provides such a satisfactory environment that the birds will reproduce, despite being in captivity.

The most popular birds are canaries, tiny finches, budgerigars, small parrots and quail. The keeping of large parrots such as the Australian white sulphur crested cockatoo in small wire cages should be outlawed. These birds are very intelligent and in most cases can be set free to return as 'free roaming pets'.

Whether you obtain your bird from a pet shop, a breeder or a friend, make sure that it is in good condition, with a sleek plumage, bright eyes, and an alert manner. Examine the bird's cage for evidence of diarrhoea. The normal droppings are target-like with the centre white (urine) and the outer a dark brown (faeces). Check the cage for signs of moulting. If the bird is 'fluffed up' it is likely to be sick, especially if it is on the floor of the cage.

It is best to get a young bird so that it becomes attached to you. Newly hatched parrots, canaries and finches are blind and naked for the first month or so. After the first moult, which usually occurs at twelve months, it is not easy to determine a bird's age. Older birds tend to be fatter and their plumage is less smooth and sleek.

Sexing of birds is difficult unless the plumage of the male and female of the same species is different in colour.

Any bird locked in a small cage will get bored and this may cause health problems necessitating a trip to the vet. Include in the enclosure toys such as swings, chains, bells and mirrors, as well as some fresh vegetation. Above all, the bird will need your company, so place the enclosure (whether cage or aviary) in an area where there is plenty of human activity.

Birds can also be trained on the reward system to do various 'tricks', usually of the vocal type. Most canaries are bought for their song, and most members of the parrot family in the hope that they will develop an elaborate vocabulary. The best way to be assured of a songster or a mimic is to get a bird already showing its prowess in these fields.

Birds do not need any vaccinations. In fact, most birds, if kept in hygienic conditions with regular food and clean water, lead a healthy life without ever needing veterinary attention.

Small birds are very popular and give their owners much pleasure.

Housing

Of all the pets kept for the enjoyment of the human race, birds probably suffer the most restrictions. Birds, like any other animal, will live and breed successfully only if their environment is satisfactory. It is most important that intending bird purchasers obtain the type of aviary the particular bird requires. For all but canaries or budgerigars, substantial aviaries are needed. Plan and construct the aviary before the birds are purchased.

The large open aviary

All birds except the canary or the budgerigar (which seem to cope with small cages) should have room not only to stretch their wings but also to fly. If you have the space available it is best to build a large aviary 2 metres wide, 2 metres high and up to 2.5 metres long. The bottom of the aviary should