

## **Facts about Captive Birds**

1. Trafficking in rare and exotic wildlife is a global business, worth \$7-23 billion annually. Birds are among the most popular animals sought after for the exotic pet trade.
2. According to the Worldwatch Institute, nearly one-third of the globe's parrot species are threatened with extinction due to pressures from the pet trade and from habitat destruction.
3. Since its passage by Congress in 1992, the Wild Bird Conservation Act has cut poaching rates from between an estimated 20 to 50%, proving that limits on legal trade can help struggling bird populations.
4. Despite claims about protecting endangered species, most birds in captive breeding programs are produced solely for commercial gain, and are not part of any official conservation program.
5. Breeding facilities often resemble nothing more than warehouses. "Breeder" birds are routinely placed with in small cages without any environmental enrichment.
6. Even when bred in captivity, birds should not be considered domesticated animals. They are wild creatures whose natural instincts remain intact — and frustrated — when kept captive.
7. Many people are unprepared to provide lifelong care for birds who, depending on species, can live for between 20 to 70 years. Many birds are neglected, relinquished to overcrowded shelters or sanctuaries, or are abandoned in the wild (where they are likely to perish).
8. The stress of confinement can lead birds to a variety of abnormal behaviors, including excessive screaming, feather plucking, self-mutilation, and other destructive habits.
9. Although birds are unsuitable companion animals, their popularity as "pets" has exploded in the past few decades. An extensive 1998 demographic study estimated that there were 35-40 million birds kept as "pets" in the U.S — an increase of more than 250% from 1990.
10. Replacing the demand for birds as "pets" with a demand for preserving birds in the wild will reduce welfare problems associated with captivity while increasing the support of genuinely effective conservation efforts.