

THE BULLETIN BIRD

FEBRUARY 2025

HARRISON'S BIRD FOODS NEWSLETTER

Behind the Scenes...

OBESITY IN PARROTS

From HBD Nutritionist Dr. Jonathan Stockman:

Obesity is a common problem in pet psittacines. As most pet birds do not get to fly much and are often fed high-fat diets, they can quickly gain weight and become obese unless lifestyle and dietary changes are made.

Obesity is a serious issue because it can lead to other diseases and may result in an early death if left untreated. Birds can suffer from increased blood lipids and atherosclerosis, just like people. Obesity can also lead to fatty tumors and increased joint pain.



Additionally, kidney disease, lung disease and heart disease are all more common in overweight birds. It can be difficult to determine if a bird is overweight just by looking at it due to its feather coverage. However, a veterinarian can assess the fat deposits over the pectoral region, and tracking body-weight can also help in monitoring a bird's condition.

If your bird is overweight, your veterinarian may recommend dietary changes, such as providing a balanced diet and reducing high-fat foods (like seeds) or high-sugar foods (like dried fruit and treats). Some birds can also safely exercise indoors if flighted, but be sure to bird-proof the room to prevent injury or escape.

Toxic Alert

How to Avoid Microplastics in Cutting Boards:*

Microplastics are tough to avoid because of the many ways we rely on plastic in our daily routines and the numerous potential sources of microplastics. One simple way to reduce your exposure at home is by using alternatives to plastic cutting boards – neither glass, marble, bamboo, nor wood will release microplastics.

Wooden cutting boards, which have natural antimicrobial properties, are typically the most affordable option.



*Himani Yadav H, et al: Cutting Boards: An Overlooked Source of Microplastics in Human Food? Environmental Science & Technology 57:22, 2023.

A BRIEF FOCUS ON

You may be interested in following the **Center for Food Safety**. Its mission is to empower people, support farmers, and protect the earth from the harmful impacts of industrial agriculture. Through groundbreaking legal, scientific, and grassroots action, they protect and promote your right to safe food and the environment.

www.centerforfoodsafety.org



The Student Ambassador Program (*Feathers of the Future*) continues to grow under the direction of 2024 DVM graduate, Dr. Kaitlyn Nikirk, with support from Harrison's Bird Foods. The group offers free educational video conferences for students interested in avian medicine.

The next gathering is scheduled for March 9 and will feature prominent exotic animal practitioner, Dr. Tia Greenberg, an active member of the Veterinary Emergency Group. The March event, which will focus on avian emergency medicine, has reached its enrollment limit. However, interested veterinary students may contact Dr. Nikirk

(nikirk.dvm@gmail.com) to join the ambassador program and receive notifications about future events.



FEATHERS OF THE FUTURE