HARRISON'S BIRD FOODS

HANDBOOK FOR A HEALTHIER BIRD
Why Harrison’s?

Dr. Greg Harrison, the creator and president of Harrison’s Bird Foods, is a certified double-boarded avian specialist with over 40 years’ experience in bird care. He transformed his all-bird practice into an avian wellness clinic, incorporating preventive medicine through proper nutrition with Harrison’s Bird Foods.

The entire Harrison family was involved in the early years of breeding and raising many species of psittacines to investigate food ingredients. The family continued in the bird food business, starting with daughter Tanya Harrison, who managed the operation for 20 years and wife Linda Harrison, who co-edited two of the three avian textbooks edited by Dr. Harrison. Daughter Dana Harrison O’Donoghue is the current CEO of Harrison’s Bird Foods.

With the exception of two new hires, the remaining seven staff members have a combined employment history with Harrison’s of over 123 years, so they are well acquainted with the food and can assist you with any questions you may have.

What you can depend on in the quality of Harrison’s Bird Foods:
The Harrison’s Formulas

What is in Harrison’s Bird Foods?

Our products start with carefully selected premium legumes and whole grains grown by conscientious certified organic farmers with a strict chain of custody traceability. The mixtures are supplemented with vitamin precursors and minerals to result in the proper nutritional content for each formula and backed by over 40 years of proven results.

The finished diets are tested throughout the manufacturing process and packaged in state-of-the-art bags to protect freshness.

What is left out of Harrison’s Bird Foods?

Harrison’s Bird Foods contain:
- No chemical insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, or preservatives
- No artificial colors, sweeteners or flavors
- No animal meat, egg or dairy products
- No pieces, parts or byproducts
- No genetically modified organisms (GMO’s)

Harrison’s screens all of its products for pathogenic bacteria, molds (mycotoxins) and various impurities to assure safe consumption by animals.
What is the Difference Between Pellets and Extruded Nuggets?

With ingredients being equal, the primary difference between pellets and Harrison’s nuggets is in the manufacturing process. Pellets require steam, pressure and a binding agent (such as clay-like products) to bind the grains into a firm pellet. This is an economical process, but pellets are less digestible than formulated diets produced by extrusion and, because pellets have low moisture and fat content, they tend to crumble and may not be appealing to animals.

Harrison’s Bird Foods are actually nuggets, which are produced by a low temperature and low pressure extrusion process. The carbohydrates gelatinize, resulting in a caramel flavor and light brown color. Extruded products are easily digestible and have retained natural colors, which are appealing to birds that see ultraviolet images. The only disadvantage is that extrusion is an expensive process that requires skill in operating the machinery for quality assurance.

Variations in Appearance
The successful growing of organic ingredients depends on nature, and because nature is sometimes unpredictable, the ingredients are not always identical. The resulting Harrison’s products may have slight variations in the color, size or texture of the nugget due to variations in the temperature, rainfall or other factors during the growing season.

Rest assured, the nutritional content is within the technical specs range expected for that individual product, and the natural changes are not artificially covered with dyes or overprocessed for uniformity.
What to Expect
Modifying your bird's diet from one based on seeds to a formula that contains all the known nutrients for avian species will produce some extraordinary results. As your bird adjusts to the new healthy ingredients, you will see improvement in its appearance and perhaps even in its behavior.

Many birds will have a major molt 1-2 months after the conversion and may even show signs of itching. This is because their body finally has the nutrients it needs to make a new set of healthy tissues. Clients have remarked that their birds look more brilliant, talk more and are more playful and better behaved because they are eating better.

Why High Potency?
All birds should start a diet change with an introductory 6-month program of High Potency formula. This provides maximum nutritional support for an effective conversion. Some medium to large parrot species may be fed this formula for their entire lifetime. These may include African greys, cockatoos, large conures, eclectus, macaws and pionus. In addition, birds with temporary special needs benefit from a High Potency formula; for example, birds that are breeding, molting, overweight, underweight, particularly active, housed in a cold climate, recovering from an illness, affected by liver or kidney disease or geriatric birds.

Diet Conversion Tips
Consultation with an avian veterinarian is recommended prior to a diet change and for annual health examinations.

Birds can sometimes be a challenge when it comes to changing their diet. They become accustomed to a certain “look” and texture of what is offered to them. Therefore, some tips might be used to tempt them to try something new.
Monitoring the Bird During a Diet Change

Even if it appears that the new food has been “chewed,” the best indicators of a successful diet conversion are the weight, droppings and behavior of the bird. Some changes may require a consultation with your avian veterinarian.

- The bird should be weighed daily on a gram scale. If it loses 10% of its body weight (3g for a budgie or 10g for a cockatiel), the conversion should be postponed immediately, and the former food offered.

- One should watch the droppings for any change in amount (reduced feces, increased urates) or change in color to yellow or dark green. A color change to brown or light green is normal due to the formulation of the food.

- Attention should be paid to the bird’s behavior. If it appears cold, listless, fluffed up or reluctant to play or talk, resume feeding the original food and attempt the conversion at a later time.

- Early in the conversion, as the bird adapts to the new food, the bird may show signs of itching, molting, flaking of the skin, sneezing and perhaps even a clear nasal discharge. These are signs that the epithelial tissues are healing and beginning to function.
Feeding Recommendations

Diet Composition
- 75 - 80% appropriate formula and size of Harrison's Bird Foods
- 20 - 25% other foods, including:
  - 15 - 20% organic green leafy or yellow meaty vegetables and fruits that provide phytonutrients and antioxidants: spinach, broccoli, chard, kale, watercress, dandelion, collard, mustard greens, turnip greens, celery leaves, basil, carrot, sweet potato, pumpkin, winter squash, cantaloupe, mango, orange, apricot.
  - 5% organic nuts and seeds that provide Omega-3 fats and other nutrients: JUMPSTART Omega, almonds, chia, flax, hemp, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, soy, squash, sunflower seeds, beans, peas, peanuts, watermelon seeds, sesame seeds. (Do not offer Brazil nuts because they are toxic to birds).

Storage
Harrison's is committed to protecting your bird from artificial preservatives. Part of how that is expressed is in the choice of packaging. The bags are multi-layered with impermeable barriers to keep the contents airtight. The nutritional content is guaranteed if the contents of the bag are used before the “Use Before” date.

Here are some suggestions to keep your food fresh:
- Keep food in the original bag. Do not store in plastic bags or containers.
- Squeeze all air out of the bag and zip it shut at the top.
- If the zip lock gets removed or damaged, fold the top over several times and close with a clip.
- Purchase Harrison’s foods only in the original packaging. We are not responsible for claims arising from food that has been repackaged by a vendor other than Harrison’s.
- Refrigeration after opening may help maintain freshness.
High Potency Formulas

The High Potency formulas are for birds of all sizes that are converting to Harrison’s from another diet, have special needs, such as recovering from an illness, are breeding or weaning. All birds should start and remain on High Potency for a period of at least 6 months. Some species such as African grey parrots and larger macaws should stay on High Potency year-round.

High Potency Coarse

Our high energy large nugget for African grey parrots, cockatoos, large conures, eclectus, macaws and pionus.

High Potency Fine

For small to medium birds, such as conures, lories, quakers, cockatiels, budgies, lovebirds and doves.

High Potency Super Fine

This small size nugget is appealing to budgies, canaries, finches, parrotlets and other tiny birds.

High Potency Mash

A distinctly soft, high-energy product that may be used for small species.

High Potency Fine Pepper

This formulation is a variation of High Potency Fine with the addition of organic cayenne pepper.
Adult Lifetime Formulas

After a period of at least 6 months on a High Potency formula, most birds can be converted to an Adult Lifetime maintenance formula. Molting birds should be maintained on High Potency. Some species, such as African grey parrots and larger macaws, should stay on High Potency year-round.

**Adult Lifetime Coarse**
For adult Amazons, cockatoos and other large species.

**Adult Lifetime Fine**
For conures, quakers, cockatiels, budgies, lovebirds and doves.

**Adult Lifetime Super Fine**
For small species including canaries, finches, budgies, parrotlets, cockatiels, and lovebirds.

**Adult Lifetime Mash**
A soft food intended for smaller birds. This is especially valuable for birds with certain dietary sensitivities, because the formula does not contain any peanuts, sunflower or corn.
Pepper Lifetime Coarse
As a spicy alternative to Adult Lifetime Coarse, this formulation meets the nutritional requirements for healthy, non-breeding, non-molting birds, including pionus, Amazons, cockatoos and other medium to large parrots. It may be used as a foraging treat or offered to birds with clinical signs of papillomatosis.

Power Treats
These high-powered nuggets are beneficial for birds requiring extra energy following an illness, or for birds with dry flaky skin, beak or nails and feathers that lack bright coloration or sheen, or for aging birds. They contain a high carotenoid and antioxidant content and are most often used as a treat or enrichment. They are excellent energy boosters for flying birds like racing pigeons. Power Treats can be crushed for smaller birds.

Recovery Formula
Now certified organic, Recovery is a complete, easily assimilated nutritional formula for sick or injured birds and other animals. It can be used as short-term emergency care for medical or surgical patients that are recovering from pansystemic failure, slowed gastrointestinal emptying time, failure to thrive, or as support during a dietary conversion. It is also useful as a handfeeding formula for hatchlings.
Juvenile Hand-feeding Formula
This is an easily digestible food for hand-feeding psittacine chicks over 7 days of age, for birds of any age recovering from illness or injuries, or for support during a diet conversion. This may be used as long-term nutrition following immediate emergency care with Recovery formula.

Harrison’s Bird Bread Mix
Two flavors of premium certified organic “bake at home” mixes (Original and Omega flavors) provide healthy alternatives for owners who choose to prepare their own treats for their bird.

Prepared bread may be used as a diet conversion tool, a vehicle for delivering medications, a foraging reward or as soft food for parents feeding chicks. This is often appealing to a bird when it is warm.

Fauna Flora (Saccharomyces cerevisiae)
This nutritional support for all animals may help improve digestion, regulate normal blood sugar levels, assist malabsorption issues, help improve mental and physical capabilities, stimulate the immune system including increased T-cell production, increase energy and longevity with reduced incidence of disease*. 


JUMPSTART Grey Millet and JUMPSTART Omega
As “healthy” alternatives to conventional seeds that may already be familiar to a budgie, cockatiel or other small seed-eating species, these offer the benefit of being certified organic and free of pesticides and other toxins. The addition of 5% JUMPSTART Omega will balance the nutritional content of all Harrison’s diets.
Working with an Avian Veterinarian

Contact your avian veterinarian for a thorough physical examination of any new bird and annual check-ups after that.

You will see the difference!
Healthy birds that have been properly fed long-term will exhibit certain features.
- Muscle, bones and fat are in the proper ratio.
- Beak is smooth and shiny with no signs of peeling.
- Nares (nostrils) are clean and free of accumulations.
- Bird stands erect and alert on the perch.
- Respiration is even and smooth with no sound of wheezing.
- Droppings are moist and formed, the urine is clear, and the urates are white.
- Feathers fit together like a garment with no bald spots, no plucked feathers and no tattered, broken or abnormally colored feathers.
- Feet grip the perch strongly and evenly with the bottoms of the feet showing a definite pattern – not smooth – with no pressure points.
- Skin on the legs and face is glistening, smooth and soft with no signs of flaking.
- The body shows no signs of swelling or bleeding.
- The bird is calm and does not bite, scream or behave in an aggressive manner.

Improper Nutrition in a Bird
Improper nutrition is the cause of 90% of health problems and the leading cause of death in pet birds. The signs may be subtle and often overlooked for an extended time and may include:
- Abnormalities in body weight and shape
- Improper balance in bacterial population of the gastrointestinal system as seen on a fecal Gram’s stain by your avian veterinarian
- Unusual appearances of feathers, nails, beak and skin
- Black or discolored feathers
- Curling, splitting or tattered feathers that fail to zip
- Beak overgrowth and flaking; bleeds easily when trimmed
- Undesirable behavior
- Change in personality
- Change in eating habits
- Discharge caked in nares

Scan the QR Code for Harrison’s Bird Foods Signs and Symptoms of a Healthy Bird harrisonsbirdfoods.com/signs-info
Exercise
Recent research has shown that a lack of exercise is a primary factor in the development of diseases, especially atherosclerosis. This appears to be a condition that is present in all captive parrots to some degree and worsens with age.

There are a few ways a family can ensure that a pet bird has access to exercise:
- Freeflying would be the ultimate exercise, but there are potential associated risks, such as escape or encountering household dangers
- Housing in a large enough enclosure to allow free flight
- Placing a harness or leash on the bird and have it tethered to an outdoor line under constant observation
- Placing a ladder inside the enclosure to encourage movement
- Providing safe environmental enrichment activities
- Offering daily time for the bird to move around outside the enclosure with supervision
Nutrition
Your bird will thrive on the appropriate Harrison's formula (75-80%) with the small addition of Omega-3 rich supplements (5%), such as JUMPSTART Omega, nuts, or small seeds like chia, hemp, and flax. The dietary selection can be rounded out with fresh organic vegetables (15-20%), especially those dark green or dark yellow color, which have the highest nutritional value. It is important to recognize that birds have relatively tiny bodies and high metabolic rates, so it is extremely important to monitor what is offered for food and to prevent access to chemical pesticides and preservatives.

Sunlight
Access to sunlight is essential for activation of vitamin D and utilization of calcium in the body. For example, African grey parrots, whose natural living conditions are high in the jungle canopy, require an abundance of sunlight in captivity to activate dietary calcium.

There are several ways access to sunlight can be accomplished for pet birds:
- One may expose the bird in its cage or other safe enclosure to outdoor fresh air and direct sunlight for short periods of time. There should be shade available for the bird to retreat.
- Putting a cage in front of a sunny window does not accomplish the same thing. The glass itself prevents transfer of the proper rays.
- In areas or seasons where there is little direct sun, recommended lamps with sufficient UVA and UVB lights may be used to simulate sun rays.

Safety Checklist
Most pet birds are curious and will investigate anything new in their environment. It is important to prevent their access to:
- Overheated items with non-stick surfaces
- Ceiling fans
- Sandpaper-covered perches
- Tobacco and cigarette smoke
- Chocolate and avocado
- Solid air fresheners and scented candles
- Toxic houseplants
- Pesticides
- Easily dismantled toys
- Cedar, redwood or pressure-treated shavings
- Lead or zinc, found in chrome or galvanized metals
- Dogs, cats, ferrets and unsupervised young children
Our friendly customer service staff is just a phone call away. We’re here to help with orders, offer tips for using Harrison’s products and more.

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