

Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
Avian Self-Plucking History Form

Date: _____

Instructions: Feather plucking is a complex problem in pet birds. In many cases, several environmental and/or medical issues are involved. A comprehensive history is an essential part of diagnosing and treating this condition. Please answer the questions below with as much detail as possible. Thank you.

1. Extent of the problem

Does your bird (check all that apply):

Chew feathers, Pull out or pluck feathers, Mutilate skin, Other: _____

Does your bird appear to be itchy? (signs of itchiness include scratching with the feet, rubbing on the cage or perches, and scratching the skin with the beak):

No, Mildly or occasionally, Moderately to severely, I'm not sure

On the drawings below, please shade in the area(s) that your bird plucks or mutilates:

2. Onset, progression

When did your bird first start self-plucking/mutilating? (This is the "onset date") _____

Please check the box that best describes the **onset** of the problem:

- Sudden (one day the bird started self-plucking/mutilating dramatically)
 Gradual (the onset of the problem was subtle)
 I don't know, the bird was this way when I acquired him/her

Please check the box that best describes the **progression** of the self-plucking/mutilating

- Improving: the severity of the self-plucking/mutilating has decreased since it started
- Static: the severity of the self-plucking/mutilating has not changed over time
- Progressive: the severity of the self-plucking/mutilating has become worse over time
- Episodic: my bird plucks/mutilates sometimes, but then lets the feathers grow back
- Intermittent: the self-plucking/mutilating occurs every day (or almost every day) but is worse on some days than others.

3. Patient profile Check ALL the boxes that best describe your bird:

My bird was: hand raised, captive bred but not hand-fed, wild-caught, I don't know

My bird: Loves most people, loves one person and is indifferent or hostile toward others,
 is tame but not attached to any particular person, doesn't seem to like people

My bird loves to be scratched or cuddled: always, sometimes, never

My bird chews/plays with toys: every day, occasionally, seldom/never, I don't know

My bird enjoys: wood toys, plastic toys, rope toys, metal toys, leather, puzzles
 paper/cardboard, mirrors, swings, no toys, other: _____

My bird is fearful of or seems to hate:

- being left alone, loud noises dogs, cats, adults, children,
- strange people, strange animals, new places, new toys,
- other: _____

My bird demonstrates sexual behavior (mounting, masturbation, regurgitation)

- Frequently, occasionally, never, toward human(s), toward other bird(s),

My bird is: very active, moderately active, not very active

My bird is: very vocal or noisy, moderately vocal or noisy, quiet

My bird is: Trained to obey commands (e.g. "step up," "no biting"), and is usually obedient

- Trained to obey commands, but is often inobedient or only obeys one person
- Not trained to obey any commands

My bird's wings are clipped: always, sometimes, never. Who clips them? _____

Does your bird seem to have any other behavioral or medical problems other than feather plucking/mutilation? yes, no. If yes, please describe: _____

4. Family and flock history

How many people live in your home? _____

Is your bird especially fond of one family member? no, yes: _____

Do you own any other birds? no yes. If yes, please answer the following:

List any birds that share a cage with the bird that is here today _____

List any other birds _____

Is this bird friendly toward any of the other birds? no yes: _____

Is this bird aggressive toward any of the other birds? no yes: _____

Does this bird pluck feathers from another bird? no yes: _____

Does another bird pluck feathers from this bird? no yes: _____

Please describe any other people or pets that interact with your bird and indicate if your bird seems to enjoy the interaction _____

5. Environmental history

Does your bird receive sunlight? yes, no

Does your bird take baths on his/her own? yes, no

Do you bathe your bird? yes, no. If yes, how and how often? _____

About how many toys does your bird have in the cage at any one time? _____

How often are toys changed or rotated? _____

How many hours per day does your bird spend alone (no people in the same room)? _____

Does your bird have daily access to the following: window, television, radio

Describe any other diversions you provide: _____

Describe the area around your bird's cage: _____

6. Changes: Did any of the following occur **within 3 months prior to the onset date**? If yes, please give date(s) and describe:

Environmental changes:

move to new home _____

new cage _____

cage moved to different location in the home _____

house or cage changed in some way – describe _____

“Flock changes”

Has anyone been added to your family (e.g. birth, adoption, marriage, or moving in) _____

Has anyone left your family (e.g. death, divorce, or moving out)? _____

Have any birds or other pets been added to your home? _____

Have any birds been removed from your home? _____

Have there been any changes in the amount of time you and/or other family members spend with your bird? Please consider situations (e.g. travel, increased workload, new job, baby, schedule, or hobby) that may have changed the amount of time spent with your bird. If yes, describe: _____

Did your bird’s favorite person leave the home for any length of time (e.g. vacation)? _____

Medical changes: Skin wound, parasites, Other: _____

Please describe any other changes: in the environment, feeding, or social life of the bird: _____

7. How do you respond when you see your bird self-plucking/mutilating?

I ignore the behavior

I scold at the bird or give it some form of punishment. Describe: _____

I pick up the bird or give it some sort of affection or diversion. Describe: _____

The bird plucks/mutilates only when no one is there to see it happening.

Other: _____

8. Have you used any of the following to stop the self-plucking/mutilation?

Collar, bandage, acquired another bird

Bitter substance placed on feathers: _____

Conditioner or medication sprayed on the feathers: _____

Oral medication, herbal supplement, or homeopathic remedy: _____

Behavioral modification or training: _____

Other: _____