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: ____________________
I 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: ____________________________________________________________________