

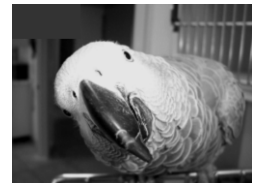
Bird Foraging

In the wild, animals must search for, dig through, uncover, or crack open their food. This behavior is called foraging. Most captive birds do not have the chance to forage, but this activity should be a vital part of their daily routine as it would be in the wild.

Birds spend their day performing four activities: sleeping, foraging, socializing, and grooming. When you remove one of these activities from a captive bird's life, it will fill the gap with one or more of the remaining activities. Feather plucking, for example, is one of the potential overcompensations due to a lack of foraging and socialization opportunities.

Here are some tips to encourage foraging:

- ✓ Cover the bird's food bowl with a paper towel. Increase the level of difficulty as your bird learns to work through the challenge by using heavier material (cardstock), securing the paper with masking tape, or using a small cardboard box. Keep in mind that some birds may need a little help initially.
- ✓ Use rolled up cardstock secured with masking tape to make a tube, and place food and/or healthy treats inside. Cover both ends with a paper towel. To make it even more interesting, layer the food and treats between layers of shredded paper.
- ✓ Cover food in the dish with large wooden beads or polished stones. Use caution and select an appropriate size beads or stones that your bird cannot accidentally swallow.
- ✓ Provide bird with a large Tupperware container filled with shredded paper. Mix seed or other dry food into the paper so the bird needs to search for it.
- ✓ Use your bird's cage! Hide treats in corners, behind food bowls, or hang them from the top. Change it up and keep in interesting! Rotate toys as needed to accommodate hiding places and stimulate interest.
- ✓ Wrap a small handful of food or treats in a balled up paper towel. Wedge the ball between bars of the cage.
- ✓ Place multiple food bowls at various heights in the cage. Only place a small amount of food in each so your bird does not fill up at one bowl and ignore the rest.
- ✓ Place a treat in a small paper cup (make sure it is not wax-coated). Crush the top of the cup to seal it, and let your bird chew through to get the treat.
- ✓ You should challenge your bird with the most complicated toy it can solve. For example, larger parrot breeds are able to unscrew and manipulate complex puzzle toys.
- ✓ Lots of great foraging toys available at: www.birdsjustwannahavefun.com



The important thing to remember is to only use "bird-safe" materials. Print-free cardboard boxes, print-free paper towels, un-dyed cardstock, and healthy snacks for your bird are all easy to obtain. Even using your bird's regular diet inside toys is fine—as long as he has to use his brain to get to it! Use caution with paper towel and toilet paper rolls as the adhesive may contain zinc, which is toxic to birds.