

# Expert Companion Bird Care Series: Vol. 1

This DVD introduces a new concept in bird DVDs—a guide to caring for companion birds, produced and narrated by avian veterinarians. A phrase I use with my clients when they tell me “The breeder said...” is that, while I have been driving a car for 33 years, I am not a mechanic. Avian veterinarians have the training, the expertise and the experience to advise pet bird owners on a wide range of issues involving the care and health of pet birds. This DVD is an excellent starting point for new and experienced pet bird owners to learn more about their charges.

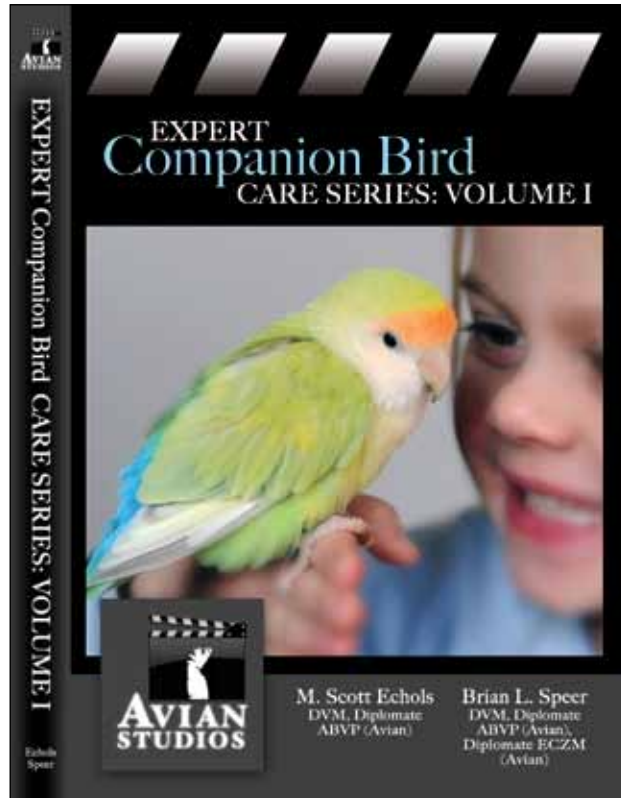
Scott Echols and Brian Speer are internationally renowned avian veterinarians. They have brought together a team of exceptionally talented American avian veterinarians (Jeleen Briscoe, Greg Burkett, Susan Orosz, Laura Wade, Paul Gibbons and Kemba Marshall) who each discuss a section: how to identify commonly kept parrots, housing the pet bird, basic avian nutrition, household dangers and toxins, identifying when your bird is sick, and how to select an avian veterinarian. Each section discusses, over a 15-minute period, an overview of the topic and highlights the most important areas.

The DVD is well produced and well illustrated. For Australian viewers, it could do with some more Australian input. However, it does provide the opportunity to view species and cage setups that are outside the typical Australian experience. This more than cancels out the negative aspects of minimal Australian content. With the content divided into separate sections, the viewer is able to break up viewing time into more convenient blocks—an aspect I always find appealing for those of us with busy lives.

I would strongly recommend that people contemplating the purchase of a bird for the first time watch this DVD before making any decisions or commitments. I would also recommend that those who already own a pet bird watch the DVD to learn or revise concepts they may feel they are conversant with. Veterinarians and pet shop owners would find this DVD to be a useful staff training tool. Breeders supplying the pet market, pet shops and avian veterinarians should be able to find a ready market.

~ Bob Doneley BVSc FACVSc CMAVA,  
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While aimed at bird enthusiasts, this DVD also contains useful information that veterinarians who work with birds will find helpful in day-to-day practice. For example, Dr. Greg Burkett, in his chapter on cage layout, gives an excellent run down on available perch types and advocates spiral swinging rope perches as a way to provide more open space in a large bird's cage when compared



with traditional side to side perches. Dr. Laura Wade does a good job of covering household dangers and toxins.

The species identification chapter shows species that are commonly seen in U.S. avian practice. With exotic parrot species becoming more and more popular here [in Australia], the DVD provides a good introduction. Different species of birds vary significantly in their dietary preferences and requirements. The chapter on how to choose an avian veterinarian discusses health insurance and comprehensive diagnostic testing, both of which are well worth discussing.

I highly recommend this DVD for veterinarians, and for veterinarians to offer to bird owners at the time of their bird's first examination. Overall, the contents are quite comprehensive for a beginner bird owner and the DVD/video format is an excellent way to cover the material. It gives entertaining and credible coverage of points that are typically included in any well bird examination. I look forward to the next three DVDs in the series, which I suspect will include behavior and basic training, the other major points of discussion in a well bird examination. It is most welcome to have informed, targeted, multimedia educational material available for owners to help to improve bird welfare and the bond between pet birds and their carers.

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