## **YVCipedia AVIAN**

Conure Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

Conures are small to medium-sized parrots from Central and South America, known for their playful energy, outgoing personalities, and, in many species, their loud vocalizations. They come in a wide variety of colors and sizes—ranging from the petite Green-Cheeked Conure to the larger, more boisterous Sun and Jenday Conures.

At YVC, we often describe conures as the class clowns of the bird world: mischievous, social, and endlessly entertaining. With proper care, they can live **20 to 30 years**, making them a long-term commitment for any household.

## **Housing & Environment**

Conures are active, curious birds that need space to climb, fly, and explore. While they may be small, their energy is anything but.

A cage size of at least **24"x24"x30"** with **½-inch bar spacing** is appropriate for most conure species. Horizontal bars help with climbing, and the cage should have multiple perches of varying diameter and material to encourage foot health. Conures also benefit from time outside of the cage every day—ideally in a bird-safe room or aviary space.

Cages should be placed in areas with natural light and family interaction but away from drafts, kitchen fumes, or loud, chaotic areas. At night, they need **10–12 hours of quiet, dark rest** in a consistent sleep routine.

## **Diet & Nutrition**

A balanced diet is key to your conure’s long-term health and behavior. At YVC, we recommend a core diet of **60–70% high-quality pelleted food**, such as **Mazuri, Harrison’s, or Roudybush**, depending on the bird’s preferences and needs. **Nutri-Berries** and **AviCakes** can be excellent for training and variety, but shouldn’t replace a formulated base.

Fresh produce is essential—especially vegetables like leafy greens, bell peppers, carrots, squash, and sweet potato. Fruits such as apple, banana, or mango can be offered a few times per week, but due to high sugar content, should be limited.

Grains and legumes can be offered cooked and in moderation for variety. Fresh water must be available at all times and changed daily. Avoid seeds as a primary diet and steer clear of human foods like chocolate, avocado, caffeine, salty snacks, or alcohol.

## **Behavior & Handling**

Conures are highly interactive, affectionate birds that bond closely with their humans. They thrive on **routine social interaction** and **mental stimulation**, and without it, can develop behavioral challenges like screaming or feather plucking.

They’re intelligent and respond well to **positive reinforcement-based training**, especially when it’s fun and engaging. Many love to learn simple tricks, target training, or step-up commands. While some conures are cuddly, others are more hands-off—it’s important to respect their boundaries.

At YVC, we find that consistent daily interaction—without overstimulation—is the sweet spot for a happy, well-adjusted conure. Introducing variety in toys, routines, and social contact helps reduce unwanted behaviors and prevent boredom.

## **Enrichment**

Without daily stimulation, conures can become noisy, destructive, or withdrawn. These birds are highly tactile and love to chew, climb, and forage.

Some of our favorite enrichment strategies include:

* Rotating destructible toys (paper, cardboard, wood)
* Hanging toys they can swing from or dismantle
* Foraging trays or puzzle feeders to simulate natural food-searching behavior
* Background music or bird-safe videos for auditory engagement
* Supervised out-of-cage time for exploring, bathing, and flying

Keep enrichment fresh—swap toys every few days and introduce new challenges often. Even five minutes of foraging setup or training a day can go a long way.

## **Health & Veterinary Care**

Conures are relatively hardy birds, but like all parrots, they hide illness well. That’s why at YVC, we recommend **annual exams and fecal testing** for all conures. Depending on age, health status, or behavioral changes, we may also recommend periodic **blood panels** or imaging.

### **Common Health Concerns:**

* **Feather destructive behavior** due to stress or boredom
* **Psittacosis (Chlamydophila)**, a zoonotic bacterial infection
* **Nutritional imbalances** from seed-based diets
* **Respiratory infections**, especially in dusty or poorly ventilated environments
* **Beak and nail overgrowth** in birds lacking proper chew toys or perches

Watch for subtle warning signs: changes in droppings, fluffed feathers, reduced appetite, lethargy, or behavioral shifts.

## **Facts & FAQs**

* Many conures can learn simple words or sounds, but not all are talkers
* They are known for playful “hanging upside-down” antics
* Conures can be quite loud, especially Sun and Jenday species
* Proper socialization helps reduce possessiveness or fear-based behaviors
* Most conures molt once a year—expect some extra preening and feather debris

## **Supplies Checklist**

* Cage (minimum 24"x24"x30", with ½" bar spacing)
* Multiple perches of different textures and diameters
* High-quality pelleted diet (Mazuri, Harrison’s, etc.)
* Variety of fresh vegetables; occasional fruits
* Nutri-Berries or AviCakes for enrichment/training
* Chewable and shreddable toys
* Foraging trays or puzzles
* Sleep cover or designated sleep space
* Travel carrier for vet visits
* Avian-safe cleaning supplies
* Air purifier if household dust or dander is a concern

*Yarmouth Veterinary Center*