**YVCipedia AVIAN**

Quaker Parrot/Monk Parakeet Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

The Quaker Parrot, also known as the Monk Parakeet, is a small to medium-sized parrot originally from South America. With their bright green plumage, gray chest, and famously animated personality, Quakers are highly intelligent and social birds. They're natural mimics, often learning dozens of words and sounds, and they’re known to form deep bonds with their caregivers.

At YVC, we find that Quakers thrive in homes where they receive regular interaction, mental stimulation, and gentle guidance. These birds are long-lived—commonly reaching 20–30 years with proper care—and they tend to do best with structure and routine, mirroring their communal nesting behavior in the wild.

## **Housing & Environment**

Quakers are curious and busy by nature. They need a cage large enough for climbing, flapping, and exploration, as well as supervised out-of-cage time daily. A setup with horizontal bars and varied perches encourages movement and foot health.

We recommend placing their enclosure in a space where they can observe and engage with household activity but remain protected from sudden temperature changes, kitchen fumes, or loud disturbances. Quakers are sensitive to their surroundings, so a predictable sleep schedule—10–12 hours of darkness—is essential for their wellbeing. Many benefit from full-spectrum lighting or UVB if they don’t receive natural sunlight.

Humidity in the home should stay between 40–60%. During the winter months, light misting or a room humidifier may help maintain skin and respiratory health.

## **Diet & Nutrition**

Quaker Parrots are prone to obesity and fatty liver disease if fed improperly, so balanced nutrition is essential. At YVC, we recommend the following breakdown:

**Daily Diet Composition:**

* **60–70%**: High-quality pellets (Mazuri, Harrison’s, Roudybush)
* **15–20%**: Fresh vegetables (leafy greens, carrots, bell peppers, squash)
* **5–10%**: Fresh fruit (apple, berries, banana, papaya — limit to 2–3 times per week)
* **5–10%**: Cooked legumes and grains (quinoa, brown rice, lentils)

We often suggest Nutriberries and AviCakes as supplemental enrichment tools rather than staples. Avoid seed-heavy diets and limit treats high in fat or sugar. Clean, fresh water should be available at all times and changed daily.

## **Behavior & Handling**

Quakers are clever and opinionated, often displaying a big personality in a small body. They are known to be territorial, especially around their cage, but with patient handling and consistent interaction, they become deeply affectionate and entertaining companions.

Positive reinforcement training goes a long way with Quakers. They respond well to routines, enjoy participating in daily activities, and benefit from learning tricks or tasks. Many will “talk” to their people throughout the day, mimicking phrases, environmental sounds, or even laughter.

They also exhibit a unique tendency to “build nests” using household objects like paper strips or toys, and while this is often harmless, it should be monitored to avoid hormone-related behavior changes.

## **Enrichment**

Mental stimulation is vital for Quakers to avoid boredom-related issues such as feather-plucking or excessive vocalization. They enjoy puzzle toys, destructible foraging materials, and opportunities to learn new tricks or explore novel environments. At YVC, we recommend rotating toys weekly to maintain engagement and avoid overstimulation.

Allowing them to participate in daily routines, such as supervised desk time or helping “sort” objects, can also serve as valuable enrichment for these social parrots.

## **Health & Veterinary Care**

At YVC, we recommend annual avian wellness exams and fecal testing for all birds, including Quakers. Routine monitoring allows us to detect early signs of illness and address nutritional or environmental concerns before they escalate. In some cases—especially with older or behaviorally concerning birds—we may also recommend blood panels or imaging.

Common health concerns include:

* Obesity and hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver disease)
* Feather destructive behavior (often stress- or diet-related)
* Respiratory infections, especially in dusty or dry environments
* Nutritional imbalances from seed-heavy diets

Quakers are generally hardy, but any change in activity level, appetite, droppings, or vocal behavior should prompt a veterinary visit.

## **Facts & FAQs**

Quaker Parrots are one of the few parrot species that build communal nests in the wild—a trait that may influence their nesting behaviors in captivity. They're among the best talkers in the small-to-medium parrot group, often developing a varied vocabulary with regular interaction.

Some states or municipalities restrict Quaker ownership due to their invasive potential in the wild, so it's important to confirm local regulations.

## **Supplies Checklist**

* Spacious cage (minimum 24"x24"x24") with ½" bar spacing and horizontal climbing bars
* Stainless steel or powder-coated finish
* Variety of perches (rope, wood, concrete)
* Food and water bowls
* High-quality pellets and daily fresh produce
* Treats for training (e.g., Nutriberries, AviCakes)
* Chewable toys and foraging devices
* Full-spectrum lighting or UVB setup
* Travel carrier for veterinary visits
* Humidifier (if home is dry)
* Avian-safe cleaning supplies
* Towels and gloves for emergency handling

*Yarmouth Veterinary Center*