



This sheet covers keeping these birds as pet birds in a cage in your home – not as aviary birds living outdoors. For outdoor aviary care, see our Aviary Birds page.



CANARIES



ZEBRA FINCHES

Canaries and Zebra Finches are both birds you watch and listen to rather than handle – neither can be tamed or picked up. Canaries are kept for their song (particularly the males); Zebra Finches do not sing, but bring their own colour and constant gentle activity, with a cage set up for their company of their own kind rather than for you.

KEY FACTS

	CANARIES	ZEBRA FINCHES
EXPERIENCE	Beginner	Beginner friendly
LIFESPAN	8–12 years	4–8 years
TEMPERAMENT	Independent, self-contained, not physically affectionate	Lively, sociable with own kind, skittish around hands
TAMEABILITY	Cannot be tamed or handled	Cannot be tamed or handled
TALKABILITY	None – valued for singing rather than speech	None – valued for chatter and activity rather than speech
NOISE LEVEL	Moderate to high – known for singing, particularly males	Low – frequent chirping and chatter
SOCIAL NEEDS	Content alone or in pairs; doesn't require human interaction	Best kept in pairs or small groups; not suited to being alone
SIZE	Approx. 12–14 cm, head to tail	Approx. 10 cm, head to tail
GENDER	Requires expertise – sexed by an expert, often by song	Visually sexed by staff – males have orange cheek patches and finer barring that females lack
HYPOALLERGENIC	Low dust – oil-based feathers with very little loose powder	Low dust – oil-based feathers with very little loose powder

PERSONALITY

- **Canaries** are independent and self-contained – valued for their song rather than company, particularly from the males.
- **Zebra Finches** are lively and constantly on the move, full of chatter and activity within their own flock.
- Neither will bond with you the way a parrot or budgie might – their appeal is visual and auditory, not hands-on.

GROUP SIZE?

Canaries do fine alone or in pairs, but males can turn territorial with each other come breeding season. **Zebra Finches** are best kept in pairs or small groups, and shouldn't be kept singly – they won't bond with you as a substitute for their own kind. Mixing species in one cage isn't something we'd recommend without talking it through with us first.

WHAT THEY NEED

- **A spacious cage** – please check with us for the right size; these are active, flighty birds that need room to move.
- **A quality seed or pellet mix** suited to the species, in open dishes, changed daily.
- **Grit** – a pinch twice a week aids digestion.
- **Calcium & vitamins** – a supplement powder, or a cuttlefish and iodine block.
- **Varied natural perches** – washed apple or hazel branches.
- **Fresh water** daily, and a shallow bath dish a few times a week.



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Scan for our Pet Birds page · www.riversideaviaries.co.uk

Based on our own years of experience breeding and keeping birds — every bird is an individual, so this is a guide rather than a guarantee.