

# SUMMERTIME SAFETY: CAGED BIRDS

Heat stress and dehydration are both very real killers in Australian aviaries - particularly when the mercury begins to edge the mid 30°C mark. What many keepers don't know (or choose to ignore) is that high temperatures put massive strain on birds.

We have the ability to change our environment to suit our needs, which gives us a huge advantage over our feathered friends in our aviaries. Your birds rely on you for relief from heat stress and dehydration. On a 40°C day, most aviary birds are faced with two options - sit in the blistering direct sunlight or toil through a sweltering 60°C heat under the cover of the aviary. That's a tough choice!

Start taking precautions and preparing for heat **before** the extreme temperatures arrive. There are a number of ways you can prepare your aviary birds for the impending Australian summer.

## HELPFUL TIPS TO REDUCE HEAT AND PREVENT STRESS

### 1 MISTING SYSTEMS

A misting system can be a great help and on average will reduce the temperature by approximately 10°C. However, these systems are not the total solution. Even where a misting system is used, the heat has still taken a toll on your bird's system, and fluids will still need to be replaced.

### 2 ENSURING FRESH AND COOL WATER IS AVAILABLE

Your birds will need copious quantities of clean water. Deeper bowls can keep water cooler for much longer than shallow bowls. Automatic systems should come on at a minimum of 3 times per day to flush cooler water into the bowls. However, if you water manually, it is important to change the water over during the day, and especially in the mid-afternoon.

### 3 SHADE CLOTH

Shade cloth is a wonderful invention, and will make a world of difference for aviary birds. If your cages are iron-roofed, shade cloth suspended about 250mm above the iron will help reduce the heat that reaches the cage. If sprinklers can be set up to dampen the shade cloth, it is even more effective.

**IF YOUR BIRDS ARE HEAT STRESSED, THEY ARE HEADING FOR DEHYDRATION, ELECTROLYTE IMBALANCES AND GENERAL POOR HEALTH.**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ELECTROLYTES

During times of heat stress (e.g. birds have their wings out, are mouth-breathing and are down on the ground) birds are undergoing changes in their body chemistry. Their blood pH is altering, their sodium and potassium levels are out of kilter and their fluid balance is incorrect. While we struggle to control the temperature, we must also help the birds return to normal as soon as possible - this is why we use electrolytes!

When we are talking about electrolytes - it is balance that is key. Not only do all body cells require electrolytes to function correctly, they require certain amounts of each type of electrolyte. Along with the supplementation of electrolytes, **Vetafarm Spark Liquid** also includes vital carbohydrates that will greatly improve the recovery from stress, travelling, illness and, of course, heat.

In conjunction with preparing your bird's aviary for the sweltering summer, Vetafarm Spark Liquid is a must-have to help your bird get through the summer months healthy and happy!



**HOT TIP: SPARK LIQUID CAN BE USED WITH ALL ANIMALS!**