

<http://galah.galahs.com.au>

ARTICLES 001 – 010

The Australia Galah

10 Referenced Articles

Full Text

Updated: March 2005

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ARTICLE 001

Cacatua roseicapilla 36cm
Small pink and grey cockatoo.

Male: brown eyes;
Female: Red eyes.
Juv: Pink areas suffused with grey.

Northern and Eastern birds (race roseicapilla) have eye ring reddish;
Western birds (race assimilis) are paler with eye ring grey or whitish.

Usually seen in loud noisy flocks.

Voice: pleasant 'czzk-czzk'; loud screech.

Nesting: much chewed hollow in eucalypt, lined with eucalypt sprigs The ground below is usually scattered with sprigs; 3-4 white eggs.

Range: common, widespread and increasing in woodlands, tree scattered grasslands, agricultural clearings throughout Australia except forested areas; Increasing in Tasmania possibly due to escapee pets.

SLATER, Peter/Pat/Raoul (1992):
"Field Guide to Australian Birds",
Weldon Publishing
ISBN = 0 947116 99 0
Page: 160

ARTICLE 002

Attracting Galahs

Galahs originally mostly inhabited Australia's drier inland regions, but now they are common around east coast cities. They have even spread to Tasmania.

Attract them with grains such as wheat and by providing large, shallow birdbaths.

Pizzey, G (1999):

"Backyard Birds",

Burke's Backyard Publishing Pty Ltd.

Page: 8

ARTICLE 003

JUST A GALAH!

While Americans pay \$1000 for a Galah on the illegal market and many Australians keep galahs as pets and delight their antics, the Australian farmer can not eradicate this grain-destroying bird quick enough.

Galahs are probably the most abundant and familiar of all Australian Parrots. Scientific opinion about their classification is divided and they are placed either in a genus of their own as *Eolophus roseicapilla* or with cockatoos as *Cacatua roseicapilla*. Medium sized birds growing to about 35 centimetres in length, galahs are grey above but have a rosy chest and underparts and white or pink crest. Their bill is bluish white and legs dark grey, the eyes are dark in the male and pink in the female. Renowned for their beauty and also their ability to mimic human voice, galahs are popular pets.

The galah is one of the few native Australian creatures that has benefited dramatically from European settlement and cultivation of the land. Before British colonisation they were rare, east of the Great Dividing Range but are now found over most of the continent, including Tasmania and some offshore islands. Only in quite recent times they have become established along the eastern seaboard and in the southern half of Western Australia. Observers have noticed that galahs vacate the far north of the Northern Territory during the worst of the wet season but are common there at other times. In arid regions they remain fairly close to water sources.

The great extension in range and burgeoning of numbers is largely due to the growing of grain, the increased provision of water for stock in arid regions, and irrigation schemes, which ensure a virtual year-round supply of food. Typical birds of open forests and grasslands, galahs are mainly seed-eaters and have taken quite readily to introduced cereal crops. They appear to be particularly partial to wheat and oats, but have also developed a taste for the seeds of pasture grasses and oil seeds such as sunflower and safflower. To round out their diet they eat roots, foliage, flowers, nuts, fruits and insects.

Like most cockatoos they are considered pests in grain-growing districts as they invade growing crops as well as harvested seeds. Their depredations have been held responsible for the demise of oilseed cropping in the Wimmera district of Victoria and it is estimated that cockatoos destroy about one-fifth of the total grain crop in New South Wales each year.

Galahs are not protected in New South Wales, South Australia and parts of Western Australia, and the Victorian government has recently agreed to lift restrictions in relevant areas of the state. Methods of eradication range from scarecrows to shooting, trapping and (albeit il-legally) poisoning.

Galahs provide some benefits, too, as they eat large quantities of the seeds of many weeds. Although they occur in greater number in agricultural districts, galahs have made themselves at home in urban areas as well - feeding in parks and gardens, on golf courses and sport fields, and even nesting in street trees.

They feed in flocks of usually 30 to 100, which are made up either of pairs (which usually mate for life) or of non-breeding younger birds. Occasionally these join together and flocks of many hundreds may be formed. Galahs are fond of aerobatic displays, which are incorporated into courtship rituals but also performed daily before roosting and during rain storms. These are accompanied by much swooping through the treetops (or telegraph poles) and loud, raucous screaming. Galahs are strong, fast flyers and reach speeds exceeding 50 kilometres per hour.

Barber, George (1985):
The Living Australia,
Bay Books, New South Wales

ARTICLE 004

Galah (pronounced gh'LAH)

Eolophus roseicapillus

SUBSPECIES:

Eolophus roseicapilla assimilis, a bird with paler pink feathers and a white eye ring.

OTHER NAMES:

Roseate Cockatoo, Rose-breasted Cockatoo

FOOD:

Grasses, herbs, roots, green shoots, leaf buds, insects and their larvae, and grains

HABITAT:

Open country with scattered trees, riverine woodland, farmlands. They can even be found in cities!

APPEARANCE:

Galaha have a pale grey back, wings and tail and a deep rose body and head. They have a white crest which covers the top half of the head, dividing it in half above and below the eyes. The eyes themselves are used to determine sex, as the female has a reddish brown iris and the male a dark black one. They have a pale pink ring around the eyes, which is fleshy, and a pale beak, unlike other Australian cockatoos. They are 15 cm or 7 1/2 inches long approx. making them one of the smallest Australian cockatoos.

CALL:

A delightful double 'chill chill' noise, like a high light squeaky chirp. Also screeches, especially when settling down to roost.

BREEDING:

The galah mates for life at the age of 4 years old. Galahs nest in a hollow in a tree, chewing and stripping the bark around the nest entrance. A clutch of 2-5 eggs is laid, which is incubated by both parents for 4 weeks. The young are fed in the nest for 5-6 weeks, then leave it to roost in a 'creche tree' with other young birds. The chicks are fed by their parents for another 2-3 weeks, as well as other young adult birds without chicks, until they are considered full grown.

MORE ON THE GALAH:

Considered a pest species in many parts of Australia, the galah is the most prevalent Australian cockatoo, and in fact one of the continent's most prevalent birds. Unlike many other birds and animals in Australia, the galah has definitely benefited from European settlers moving to Australia. Originally found only in the dry inland of Australia, they now cover all but the most wet and vegetated parts of the country. The galah is now a common site in Australian cities too, where they populate parks and gardens. Galahs have found the farmlands of modern Australia very favourable for them, and sometimes flocks of up to a thousand birds may descend upon crops or pilfer livestock feed. Agile and intelligent thieves, these beautiful birds are shot, trapped and poisoned in an attempt to reduce losses.

From Galah Designs (2000)

<http://www.galahweb.com>

ARTICLE 005

AUSSIE ENGLISH - GALAH

A grey-backed, pink breasted inland parrot, gregarious and noisy, destructive and useless, and considered to be 'as silly as a square wheel'.

Any human beings who possess these characteristics (particularly drivers of vehicles other than your own) are 'galahs'. Most human galahs are young. If their galah habits persist, they may graduate, and become dills, or nongs.

John O'Grady (1973)
Aussie English,
Ure Smith Pty Ltd Sydney,
ISBN 0 7254 0381 0

ARTICLE 006

The Australian Oxford Dictionary

Galah

(ga-la) n.(Austral.)

1. A rose-breasted cockatoo with a grey back.
2. (slang) a fool or simpleton

The Australian Oxford Dictionary

ARTICLE 007

GALAH

Cacatua roseicapilla

OTHER NAMES

Rose-breasted Cockatoo (USA usage), Rose Cockatoo.

SIZE

Length about 35 cm (14 "), weight about 300 to 400 grams

SEXING

The sexes are very similar except for the eye colour. A mature female will develop a coppery red iris while the male, and immature females, have a very dark iris.

SUBSPECIES

The common subspecies in aviculture and in the wild through much of Australia is *C. r. roseicapillus*. A second subspecies, *C. r. assimilis*, is found in much of Western Australia and is distinguished by a paler grey body colour. A third subspecies, *C. r. kuhli*, has been recognised in the northern part of Western Australia, and into the Northern Territory. It is a smaller bird, about 30 cm, and exhibits differences in the periophthalmic eye ring.

NATURAL OCCURRENCE

The Galah is one of the most widespread of Australia's parrots, being found in all states. It is only absent from the most arid country and from the tip of Cape York. It prefers open grasslands and woodland, is a common species in the cities and towns, and has adapted well to farmed land. The species is gregarious, often forming flocks of several hundreds, although when foraging for food these large flocks will often split into small groups, coming together again at the evening roost site. Feeding is often done on the ground and their food in the wild is dominantly seed, nuts and fruit, and they can cause major damage to cultivated grain crops. For this reason the bird is regarded as a pest species in many parts of its range, and licensed culling is permitted in certain states. The breeding season extends from July to December in the south and February to July in the tropical north. A nesting hollow is lined with leaves and twigs carried into the nest, and usually 3 or 4 eggs are laid. Incubation is shared by both parents over a 30 day period and the babies leave the nest at about 8 weeks old.

AVICULTURE

The Galah, like the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, is commonly kept as a pet bird, but is rarely bred in aviaries in Australia due to the depressed effect on the price of any progeny caused by the ready availability of legally wild caught young birds. Like other members of the Cockatoo group, an aviary at least 5 metres by 1.2 metres by 2

metres high is required, constructed of materials to withstand the inevitable chewing that will occur. A nest box around a 60 to 90 cm deep and about 30 cm in diameter should be supplied. An essential requirement is to keep a constant supply of fresh branches of eucalyptus and other native trees available to avoid boredom.

A supply of leaves that can be used to line the nest box is also essential. Mate aggression can be a problem if older birds are introduced to each other but seems to be less of a problem with birds that are paired up at a young age. Another problem with breeding birds is that they seem to be very clumsy, and broken eggs are by no means uncommon. There appears to be no easy solution to this, although a nest box mounted at an angle or a nest box with a bottom chamber off to one side, so that the parents do not jump down onto the eggs, may be helpful. Alternatively patience is useful, since the problem seems to decrease with age.

The diet needs to be varied, balanced and interesting. A variety of seeds such as wheat, hulled oats, canary, and some grey striped sunflower, should be provided as well as a wide range of fresh vegetables and fruit. Animal protein is also beneficial, given by way of chicken or chop bones, mealworms or other grubs. A tendency of the species to become overweight should be guarded against, and there are arguments for the use of pellets rather than seed for the Galah. The encouragement of flying by the birds is also helpful. Galahs have a tendency to prefer to climb around the aviary rather than fly, and so careful siting of perches and food dishes can help to ensure the birds have to do some flying.

MUTATIONS

A lutino Galah (illustrated left) is becoming well established in Australian aviaries, while cinnamon, silver, and grey and white mutations are also known to exist.

PET POTENTIAL

The Galah can make an excellent pet, with even wild caught young birds capable of becoming affectionate and friendly birds. They will however often become a little unpredictable when mature, and should never be allowed to spend time on a shoulder. They are extremely playful and intelligent birds, which, like most cockatoos, need constant stimulation with toys to play with, and objects to chew, to keep them from getting bored. They are not generally noisy, apart from early morning and evening, although some are the exception to the rule. Both sexes can become good talkers, possibly with the males being somewhat better, however their talking ability is not usually on a par with either Sulphur-crested Cockatoos or the Corellas.

From: <http://www.birdsnways.com/mowen/galah.htm>

Accessed: 26/10/2000

Author: Mike Owen

ARTICLE 008

GALAH DIET

Natural diet in the wild

The natural diet is varied, consisting of several foods that will vary seasonally and depend upon location, mostly consisting of seeds, oats, wheat and several grasses (button, flinders, mitchell), weeds such as cape and storksbill. Galahs also dig in the dirt or grass for insects, larvae and shallow plant roots. These cockatoos also will eat budding new growth on trees, leaves and blossoms of various shrubs, trees, grasses and plants. Also berries and occasionally fruit such as passionfruit, mango, starfruit, pawpaw, lychee, although fruit does not seem to be their most relished food. Nuts such as pandanus and casuarina can be found on the ground and fed to native pet Galahs.

Diet for a pet Galah:

The difference in lifestyles between a wild and a companion Galah need to be considered when you are considering a proper and nutritious diet. A wild Galah uses a tremendous amount of energy on a daily basis, flying, playing, foraging for food, raising families, avoiding predators etc. A companion Galah does not expend the amount of energy to burn up the same amount of calories and because of this can easily become obese if fed the natural/wild diet that is high in fat.

A Galah needs to be fed a diet low in fat if it is going to have a chance of keeping its waistline in shape. Therefore a diet consisting, for example of sunflower seeds, would be totally inappropriate. Not only would this not be nutritionally sound, but would be very high in fat. Sunflower seed contents 35-49% fat, depending on the variety and would lead to an obesity problem for a Galah in no time. Cockatoos in general should be fed a diet consisting of no more than 5-8% fat on average, and a galah with its propensity towards obesity, should be on a diet of about 3-4% fat. This does not mean that a galah cannot have an occasional sunflower seed, or other seeds or nuts as a treat. The concern here, is the total fat percentage of the daily diet. Fat content, calories and carbohydrate intake all need to be considered.

Also a good diet does not consist of one or two items but a variety of items and those items should vary some on a daily basis.

Suggested foods are (organic foods if available): millet, sprouted seeds, grasses, vegetables, greens, cooked brown rice, grains, cooked legumes, wheat pasta, fruits, birdie bread

Why organic?

Over the years our soils have become depleted, losing valuable nutrients. Organic farmers work the soil in a more natural way and the produce ends up containing valuable trace minerals and better overall nutritional content. When the digestive system lacks minerals, vitamins can simply pass through, unabsorbed. Trace minerals are absorbed through the gut and can help keep the gut working properly. Besides, if

you offer your bird an organically grown vegetable and a conventionally grown one, there is a very high chance that it will choose the organically grown one.....somehow they know, possibly because organic is often fresher, or perhaps it looks different to them. Organic frozen vegetables can be served, whenever fresh is not available or is simply more convenient for you. Fresh however, is the most ideal. Also, many seasonal items can be frozen such as pomegranates, pumpkin and cranberries. Organic produce is not always available to everyone. In this case fresh produce is the next best choice, preferably using a vegetable wash (available in most produce sections) to remove pesticides.

Millet:

A good low fat seed (actually a grain) is millet at about 4% fat. There are several kinds of millet and your Galah might prefer one over another. Some tend to prefer the larger millets. Millet is one of the oldest and most nutritious foods we know. As a grain, it is nutritionally balanced, non acid forming and is rich in high grade protein (containing 10 essential amino acids), minerals, vitamins and lecithin. You can buy millet sprays at a bird supply store or unhulled millet at your health food store.

Mega-millet sold at bird supply stores, actually is not millet but the grain milo. Milo is approximately 4% fat, 11% protein and 2% minerals.

For variation, you can plump millet sprays by simmering them for about 10 minutes. You can also sprout millet. Also look for puffed millet in the cereal section of your local health food store, for something a little different.

Seeds:

Although seeds are a source of nutrition, some can be high in fat. If unsprouted seeds are fed, they should only be fed occasionally as treats. Here is a table showing averaged fat percentages of some common seeds.

	Fat	Protein	Carbohydrate
Canary Seed	5.6	15.6	65.6
White Millet	4.1	11.5	69.4
Groats	6.6	14.3	67.5
Sunflower (striped)	33.9	21.7	41.5
Sunflower (white)	47.0	24.0	20.2
Sunflower (black)	49.0	22.0	
Safflower	34.6	15.2	43.2
Pumpkin	42	32	

Sprouted seeds:

Seeds can be an important part of the diet, but must be from a clean source and be fresh. Seeds can provide vitamins such as niacin, riboflavin as well as essential amino acids and minerals. When you sprout a seed, it comes to life, changing its entire chemical composition. The fatty oils found in the seeds are converted to essential fatty acids.

Sprouts are an ideal source of protein that can also help the body to cleanse itself. Besides providing protein, sprouts are rich in almost every nutrient, vitamins (especially vitamin A, B vitamins, C, D and E), enzymes, essential fatty acids and minerals (including iron, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, zinc and chromium) all of which are natural antioxidants that strengthen the immune system and protect against toxic chemical buildup. The few calories that are found in sprouts come from simple sugars, which makes them a quick source of energy.

Sprouting is easily done, and there are several "how to do" articles about it on the internet. Sprouting can be safe, as long as it is done properly by washing, soaking and rinsing with an anti bacterial, anti fungal agent such as grapefruit seed extract or a diluted bleach solution. Sprouting times can vary, depending on your area of the country, time of year, room used etc. You need only sprout seeds until a tail appears. At this time the maximum nutritional value has been reached. Most sprouts that are not greened up and only have tails, can be frozen for storage. It is often easiest to sprout hulled seeds that you can buy in your health food store. There are also sources where you can buy sprouting mixes for birds. China Prairie comes highly recommended, providing a fresh clean product with easy to follow instructions.

China Prairie has had success treating fatty tumors (lipomas) in Galahs with spouts. This is what they said:

The Avian FRESH Diet Program has shown numerous times that it can "remove" (resolve) fatty tumors on Galahs without surgery. Sometimes it takes six to eight months for the tumors to completely disappear, and on one 20 year old male with very large tumors it took nearly two years. What this demonstrates also is that Galahs fed The Avian FRESH Diet Program, that do not have fatty tumors, will be free of the problem. The fat content of a diet is not the most important factor. It is the ability of the bird to process and utilize that fat. Sprouting converts fats to fatty acids and sugars. The herbs in the AFD program contribute to the utilization. Sprouting is always a good thing, but what is sprouted is more important. The components in AFD have proven to be capable of balancing the birds nutritional intake so that elements like fats, proteins, and minerals are utilized whether they be in lesser or greater amounts than what is considered correct. Of course, if detrimental elements like synthetics and other toxics are present in the birds diet, optimum health is more difficult to achieve. Remember that each bird is unique and will respond to good and bad factors in it's diet differently (just like people).

Birdie Bread:

Birdie bread is most often corn bread, to which whole eggs (including the shells for added calcium), several chopped vegetables, grains and fruit have been added. Often sweet potatoes or carrots are added to help supply vitamin A. There are several recipes that can be found on the web.

Food suggestions:**Vegetable suggestions:**

Green peas, broccoli, cauliflower, red and green capsicum, *spinach, celery, zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, cooked white potato, cabbage, small amounts of yellow corn, only a few times per week

Orange vegetables:

Limit these vegetables to 2-3 times per week with the exception of carrots due to their carbohydrate content: cooked sweet potato or cooked yams (dark flesh), butternut and acorn squash, carrots, pumpkin.

Herbs:

Small amounts of the following might be enjoyed: rosemary, basil, watercress, thyme, garlic, dill, cilantro, savory

Greens:

dark leaf lettuces, dandelion greens, collard greens, mustard greens, kale, beet greens, *swiss chard

* spinach and swiss chard contain high amounts of oxalic acid. Whereas several other foods contain a trace or moderate amount of oxalic acid of about 200-400 mg. per 100 g. of food, spinach and swiss chard contain over 1,000 mg. per 100 g. of food. Oxalic acid may interfere with the absorption or use of calcium or magnesium present in the diet. It may combine with these mineral elements to form highly insoluble compounds. It is recommended that the amount of spinach and swiss chard in the diet should be limited.

Both of these greens are highly nutritious and oxalic acid fed in the proper amounts is beneficial for digestion. However, cooked spinach or chard should never be offered as the oxalic acid is rendered useless to aid digestion and it will still bind calcium and magnesium, preventing its absorption. So if feeding spinach or chard, feed it raw and in limited quantities. Excess amounts of cooked spinach have been linked to serious calcium deficiencies resulting in bone loss in humans. There have not been any studies done specifically on birds to know how they react to oxalic acid.

Fruits:

pomegranates (a possible favourite), passionfruit, oranges, berries and apple (fed in limited amounts as apple is mostly fibre with little nutrition), cherries.....you might also want to try - cantaloupe, organic strawberries, nectarines, peaches, apricots, pears, bananas, plums, mango, figs, papaya, kiwi, star fruit

Grass:

Wheatgrass can be found in some grocery or health food stores, growing live in containers. If you cannot find live wheatgrass, you can buy it powdered in capsule form and sprinkle it on food as a limited natural supplement.

Bean and rice mixtures are often greeted eagerly. These should be cooked. Homemade mixtures would consist of several varieties of legumes along with rice and grains. The mixture should be soaked for at least 6 hours, then boiled for 10 min., and simmered for 20 more min. and cooled before serving. Legumes, grains and potatoes are cooked to neutralize enzymes that inhibit digestion and also to neutralize toxins. You can find many of these bean and grain mixtures available premixed, look for the low fat ones. If you cook your own bean and grain mixture, using equal amounts of each, your mixture will contain approximately 2% fat and 10% protein.

Bean suggestions-pinto beans, black-eyed peas, adzuki, green and yellow split peas, garbanzo, black beans.

Grains-wheat, barley, triticale, brown rice, millet, oats

Pellets:

This is a product that is fairly new on the market . Pellets were developed partially to help combat malnutrition in birds, which were being fed a 100% seed diet and also as a convenience for bird owners. If you are feeding pellets, they are not recommended to make up any more than 40% -50% of the diet. There are also some veterinarians who have lowered their pellet recommendation to 20-30% of the total diet. Be sure to offer a wide variety of other foods as well. When looking for a pellet for a Galah, check the fat content. There are some low fat pellets with a 3% fat content available.

Supplementation:

A wide spectrum water soluble vitamin supplement is one choice but not necessarily needed if feeding a fresh variable diet. You can store vitamins in the refrigerator, in a salt shaker, with several holes and sprinkle on wet or green food, sparingly 3-4 times a week, if you are not feeding a pellet based diet. NEVER put supplements in the water, as this can cause bacterial growth. If you feed pellets, be careful offering supplements, as they can easily be overdone. Only offer a sprinkle of them on food one or two times a week on the average. Suggested supplements that are not synthetic are wheatgrass, spirulina, blue green algae (occasionally some birds are sensitive to spirulina or blue green algae).

Foods that should NEVER be offered are:

Chocolate, Avocado, Alcohol, Caffeine

Other foods to avoid are:

refined sugar, dairy products (with the exception of nonfat yogurt and small occasional amounts of cheese), salt, fried foods

Diet Summary:

An optimal diet for a Galah would consist mostly of fresh greens and green vegetables with the additions of orange vegetables 2-3 times a week. If your bird picks through the fresh food, only eating its favorites, then chop food finely or pulse it in a food processor, making a veggie mash. This will help ensure that your Galah is eating all of the variety of produce you have fed it. Finely chopped fruits can be added. Varieties of millet can be added to the diet for the hard seed and sprouts are a wonderful nutritious addition, which are highly recommended. Also a warm cooked bean and grain mixture and a treat of birdie bread will round out the diet. Fruits can be offered daily. Cooked egg can be offered in small quantities once or sometimes twice a week. Be sure that you offer a variety of foods, not just a lot of the same foods. Make every meal is a little different from the last one, this way you should be supplying adequate nutrition.

Obesity:

If you have a galah that is overweight, you will need to make special considerations for its diet, along with making sure it is getting plenty of exercise. If your galah has a very sudden weight gain or loss, you should watch it carefully and consult your avian veterinarian. It should also be noted when referring to weight averages, that Australian Galahs, tend to be a bit larger than the Galahs found in the US and weights can range from 255 to 430gm, the average being 330. Males tend to be slightly larger than females. So you need to know the size of your galah, and what your vet recommends as it's individual ideal weight. The following are suggestions by a post from Sam Foster, who has bred Galahs and is now a professional avian behavioral consultant:

I have mentioned before to several people that galahs are prone to obesity in domestic and captive environments. They have such naturally high 'energy' that it almost seems impossible for us to provide enough aerobic exercise for them to burn off the calories they 'eagerly' devour each day.

As you know, it can often be much harder to lose weight (whether human or avian) than to gain it. The objective in this situation should not necessarily be to lose the weight 'quickly', but to do so in a healthy manner that will reidentify, for the bird, his eating and exercise pattern. This is totally dependent upon the bird's owner.

I would suggest a moderate change in diet initially, and lay out a plan and goal to help the bird attain his 'normal' weight within a specific time frame. One of the keys of course will be to keep a daily chart of his weight, diet and exercise.

It will also be important to monitor his overall behaviour during this time to be sure he is maintaining a normal (for him) playfulness and curiosity. If he begins to seem lethargic or reclusive, this needs to be noted and addressed immediately.

So what I suggest is that the owner, set goals realistically and with consideration for his physical and emotional health during this transition. Personally, I think a 4-6 month time frame would be an achievable goal. A weight of under 325g would be an excellent mark to shoot for, in my opinion.

If he is being fed a broad variety of healthy foods you should not see a 'sudden' weight loss. If this should happen, I would suggest consulting with your avian vet right away as there may be something else causing the problem.

Suggestions:

- Reduce the amount of 'nuts' to one each day, but don't eliminate it completely. Let it be the 'treat' that he looks forward to.
- Give him a number of 'treats' during the day, but make these healthy treats, low in fat, sugar, salt and calories. But this doesn't mean that they can't be 'yummy' and visually interesting.
- Instead of seed, I love to feed all my birds, but especially cockatoos, and more specifically galahs, fresh sprouts as their afternoon 'tea'. This is something they usually relish, in that it is fun to eat, interesting (assuming you are using a good variety of seeds for sprouting), and one of the most natural and nutritious foods you can possibly feed. I've said this before, but I cannot recommend China Prairie highly enough. The quality is excellent and it is a very simple (which is important for all of us) process to follow.
- Bake birdie breads with a corn bread base and add healthy fruits and veggies, as well as any supplements you might want to give to help with any stress he may feel during this change.
- As for pellets, galahs will indeed eat most anything you give them, and it's wonderful that he eats them well. However, if he will eat a broad diet of other foods that are more 'interesting' and fun, this will (in my opinion) make the entire process easier.
- Warm cooked foods are also relished by most birds, so one meal each day might consist of some type of manufactured birdie soak and cook mix (look for one that has no sugar additives, and that is low in natural sugars and fats). Probably stay away from a lot of sweet potato, using carrots and other orange veggies instead.
- Watch the level of simple carbo's.

- You can supplement the protein needs with cooked beans and appropriate vegetables, to make up for reducing the pellets (should you decide to do so).

As far as helping 'burn' calories:

- Let this little guys natural behaviour and energy work to his benefit. Make a play area on the floor and let him run, push, hide, chase and toss to his heart's content for an hour or so each day
- Chase him around the room playing "I'm gonna' get you", then turn around and run and let him chase you. ***BE SURE not to ever corner a galah, or any parrot, where he feels trapped with no way out. Always make sure there is a visible avenue of escape in order to avoid making them fearful of being trapped by a potential predator. This seems to be very critical with galahs.
- I don't know what size cage he is in, but it should be big, and most importantly 'wide', with room to exercise and navigate back and forth easily. The same principle for play gyms or trees.
- Swings, ladders, ropes and things to hang from and climb are great.
- Plenty of soft wood to chew that will keep him burning fat, even when being fairly stationary (pine cones are great, and can be easily sanitized).

During this time, be sure he is getting a good night's uninterrupted sleep to help keep any potential stress to a minimum.

Once the weight has been reduced and stabilized for a period of time, it will be important to maintain a continued diet and exercise program to avoid the same problem he faces now.

Author: Sam Foster

Available from: <http://www.members.home.net/arobe/galah/Diet.html>

Accessed: 26/10/2000

ARTICLE 009

Australian Native Bird Nest-box for Galahs

It's sad, but true. In these areas, even galah numbers are less than they used to be. If you'd like a family of these near your home, try the nest below. Galahs are those pink and grey birds. If you haven't seen one, some people might call YOU a galah!

Special Notes:

Generally nests for these birds will not work horizontal, but there has been success with boxes mounted at 30° (from horizontal). If mounted vertical make sure the inside of the box is very rough to allow the birds to climb in and out.

Face the hole slightly down if possible. 6 metres high is ideal.

Nesting Season:

August to January

Compiled 1998 by Rik Thiel and Adam Murdey
Document: #53609809211138.01

ARTICLE 010

Galah Nestbox

Galahs have used our Rosella box on many occasions. In fact, after chewing a large enough entrance for themselves, several have even bred in the smaller Lorikeet box. They seem to be able to regulate their clutch size to suit the dimensions of the hollow.

Galahs are hugely entertaining birds, and they are delightful to observe when breeding. They are not nearly as noisy and disruptive as when they are being fed, and hence providing a nestbox is an unobtrusive way to attract them and keep them around (although if multiple pairs of galahs are breeding in the same area, the creches that they form for the young are far from unobtrusive).

That said, there are some negative aspects to attracting galahs. For a start, there is no shortage of them; in fact, galahs are extending their range at a considerable rate, and are probably competing successfully with other native hollow-users.

One of the most disturbing aspects of having galahs breed in a box is that they can cause extensive damage to the box. On one occasion a box was totally destroyed within two weeks of installation.

Galahs breed quite successfully in our Rosella box. To provide some protection, the standard Rosella box contains a galvanised metal internal ladder and a grip below the entrance of the same material. Additional protection is provided in our long-life range of nestboxes which are designed specifically to provide protection against chewing. As an example, our long-life Rosella box contains:

- a polycarbonate entrance protector,
- a lid wrapped in galvanised metal sheeting, and
- a galvanised metal plate on the floor.

These are probably the best, general-purpose dimensions for a nestbox, having been used by rosellas, galahs, cockatiels, lorikeets, boobook owls, dollar birds and brushtail and ringtail possums.

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www.powerup.com.au/~ozbox/galah.htm