

**Team Based Learning Exercise 1: Avian Husbandry and Welfare  
Introduction to Companion Avian Medicine VCSP635**

**1) It is your first day on the Special Species rotation, and one of the four pick-ups from the Emergency Service is a 15 year old DNA-sexed female Umbrella Cockatoo who has been anorexic for the past 24 hours. You want to impress Dr. Latney (and make her morning easier) by getting all the materials needed to perform a physical exam on the cockatoo. What items do you lay out on the table before going to get the bird?**



**2) You have recently been hired by a small animal practice that sees some exotics. The owner is excited that you have expertise in this area, but is unfortunately not willing to provide you with longer appointment times for these patients. Thus, you have 15 minutes with this owner of a 1 year old, unknown sex military macaw that she just adopted from a shelter for a wellness visit and annual bloodwork. She also wants your advice on proper home-care for this bird. You know that the physical examination and venipuncture is going to take about 7 minutes. Prioritize what major aspects of parrot husbandry you would like to discuss in the remaining 8 minutes, listing the most important to the least important.**

### 3) Which of the three captive birds below has the best quality of life and why?



“Baby”  
4 year old DNA-sexed female Umbrella cockatoo  
Privately owned in PA

- **Cage:** large parrot cage (4 x 6 x 4 feet) with 1.5 inch bar spacing and multiple perches in TV room by window. Hiding space present. Rope and leather toys (not rotated).
- **Time out of cage:** most of day, bird travels with owner to work where stays in office on T-stand with food, water, and toys similar to what are in his home cage. Everyday they stop at Wawa to get coffee and a donut that they share. Primary flight feathers are clipped.
- **Sleep cage:** Owner covers regular cage with large blanket, bed-time is at 8 pm.
- **Diet:** High quality seed diet from bulk bins in pet store and fresh filtered water. Table food, e.g. lasagna, French fries, and pizza.
- **Exposure to other birds:** none other than at bird club meetings for which owner is treasurer, only people in house are owner and his wife. Bird handled by multiple people in office at work and is very social and interactive, is clicker trained and knows several tricks.
- **Veterinary evaluation:** Other than post-purchase exam and a broken blood feather, bird has not been to a vet.



“Cerulean”  
22 year old DNA-sexed male Hyacinth macaw  
Been housed at a small zoo for the last 10 years

- **Cage:** large outdoor flight with tree trunks, platforms, hide boxes, and branches of browse which are replaced every other day as needed.
- **Time out of cage:** Limited to being carried around zoo by education staff during busy summer months. When outdoor temperature gets too low, bird is kept indoors at night in a slightly smaller flight in temperature controlled room.
- **Sleep cage:** None—bird sleeps in one of hide boxes
- **Diet:** Managed by a nutritionist, base diet consists of commercial pelleted diet, supplemented with fresh vegetables and fruit on hanging kebobs and hidden in toys and logs within enclosure to encourage foraging behaviors.
- **Exposure to other birds:** there are two other male Hyacinths in the enclosure from the same clutch.
- **Veterinary evaluation:** Bird is evaluated by the zoo veterinarian on a regular basis. Bloodwork is performed every six months.



"Tiki"

6 year old DNA-sexed male Umbrella  
cockatoo

Living at parrot rescue since owners gave  
him up 2 years ago

- **Cage:** large parrot cage (4 x 6 x 4 feet) with 1.5 inch bar spacing and multiple perches of varying textures and diameters in a ventilated room with multiple other cockatoos in individual cages. Foot toys, rope and leather parrot toys, and foraging puzzles are rotated by shelter volunteers daily.
- **Time out of cage:** Every day for five hours the bird is placed outside in a 70 foot flight with 5 other birds with whom he gets along.
- **Sleep cage:** Lights out at 8 pm in the cockatoo building which is not disturbed further by staff until the next morning
- **Diet:** Commercial pelleted diet, a cooked bean and pasta mixture made by kitchen staff at shelter, and fresh vegetables and fruit daily hidden in foraging toys.
- **Exposure to other birds:** bird can see and hear the other cockatoos in his room, plus hangs out with his buddies in the outdoor flight every day.
- **Veterinary evaluation:** a visiting veterinarian evaluates the bird once a year.