

BIRD ENRICHMENT OVERVIEW

Pasado's Safe Haven Bird Enrichment Program is designed to provide a more varied experience for our Sanctuary residents, making their stay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

We have put together this binder so volunteers can easily find things to do with our birds, and to identify specific activities that are particularly beneficial for each different group of birds, otherwise known as *targeted enrichment*. Pasado's staff will maintain this binder weekly, add new sheets, and edit when necessary.

Different types of enrichment include: cognitive, tactile, visual, olfactory, physical, auditory, and social stimulation. Using different forms of enrichment and frequently changing what is used provides the animals with variety, which increases mental stimulation. These forms of enrichment are also designed to have *biological significance* to the animal - meaning it is something that elicits natural, biological responses.

Always ask a staff member prior to beginning any enrichment activity. Review the activities on the enrichment sheet before working with any of the birds. Upon completion of your session, **please be sure to write down what type of enrichment activity was done and leave comments so we can monitor the types of activities each group of birds enjoys the most.**

Below are descriptions of enrichment activities for our birds.

Cognitive Enrichment

- **Hanging Treats** – One way to give treats is to hang them up so that the birds have to figure out creative ways to eat them. There is a rope in the enrichment room designated for this activity. Balls of lettuce, melons, and other treats can be attached to this rope and then hung in a bird yard.
- **Treat Balls/ Treat Squares/ Food Puzzles** - We have a variety of treat balls, squares, and other types of treat holders that challenge the birds to figure out how to obtain the treat. All of these can be found in the enrichment room or in the individual bird yards. Some treat holders require specific types of treats while others can be stuffed with produce. Ask a caregiver if you are not sure which type of treat to use.
- **Trick Training** - Birds are very quick learners and can be taught a number of exciting tricks. This can be done by offering the bird a treat when it performs the desired behavior (positive reinforcement). Basic trick training includes: hopping up, jumping over obstacles, and coming when called.

Foraging Enrichment

- **Salads/ Fresh Produce** - Prepare a salad with a variety of different kinds of produce. Salads should be finely chopped so our birds can easily pick up pieces in their beaks. However, some produce such as corn on the cob and berries can be given whole. Salads can be fed in bowls, spread out over the yard, or given by hand. Some other treat ideas include: cheerios, produce cut and put in water bowls for ducks, and soaked chia seeds. Please have a caregiver approve any salads/produce before handing it out.
- **Hidden Treats** - Hide or spread out treats throughout the birds' yard. This encourages the birds to use their senses to locate the food and encourages natural behaviors.

- **Frozen Treats** – In warmer months, frozen snacks are not only healthy, but also help keep our birds cool. Produce can be chopped and placed with water into ice trays. Some produce, such as corn or berries, can be frozen whole. Place completed trays into the enrichment room freezer. If there are treats ready to be used ask a Caregiver about handing them out to the birds.
- **Homemade Bird Treats** - Bird treats can also be made at home by volunteers. Please let a staff member know what the ingredient of the treat is so that we can be sure it is healthy for the animals. One of the birds' favorite homemade treats are pinecones covered in peanut butter and then coated with different types of seeds.
- **Fermented Feed** - Fermented feed is very enjoyable and healthy for our birds. Feed can be fermented by placing it in a jar with water and allowing the mixture to sit. The instruction handout for this activity is in the back pocket of the binder.
- **Oatmeal** - Oatmeal can be cooked and given to the birds as a healthy snack. Dry oatmeal can be placed in a microwave safe bowl with water and heated until cooked. This can then be dispersed in bowls throughout the bird yards.
- **Pasta Treats** - Cooked pasta can be hung over branches/ logs/ or ropes to create a fun, dangly treat. Birds enjoy jumping up to snag a noodle. Pasta can be found in the enrichment room and cooked in the microwave in a microwave safe bowl.
- **Dried Mealworms** - Dried mealworms can be spread throughout the birds yard for foraging. This is more engaging for the birds since they have to look harder for the mealworms. Please ask a caregiver if you are interested in participating in this activity and have not done so before.

Tactile Enrichment (physical change or addition to the environment)

- **Grass Boxes** – Many of our bird yards have grass boxes that we use to grow fresh grass for our birds to enjoy. This is usually a task that is maintained by staff, but we also appreciate volunteer help in keeping these boxes planted. Once grass has grown, boxes can be opened up for the birds to enjoy. Please ask a caregiver before opening any grass boxes as these are sometimes reserved for events.
- **Grass Clumps** – Our birds really enjoy fresh grass, especially clumps with roots and dirt still attached so they can look for any bugs. Handfuls of grass blades can also be given and are especially enjoyed when put in a water bowl.
- **Hay Boxes** – Along with fresh grass, birds also enjoy hay to dig through and nest in. Old hay can be removed with a shovel and rake and placed in the compost pile. Fresh hay can then be distributed. Most of our bird yards have a designated place for hay, please ask a caregiver if you are unsure where to place hay.
- **Fake Grass** – Some of our bird yards are equipped with astro-turf grass patches. These can be used to help simulate the experience of foraging through real grass. Treats such as mealworms, salads, and cut fresh grass can be spread over the astroturf for the birds to scratch through.
- **Moss** – Our birds love to scratch through fresh clumps of moss to look for bugs. Ask our staff if you want to know where to collect moss from.
- **Stumps and Logs** - Stumps and logs can be found throughout the property and placed into bird yards. The birds enjoy looking for bugs on the wood and enjoy perching on them.

- **Dust Baths** - Some of our bird yards have permanent dust baths, while others can use tubs/ litter boxes filled with diatomaceous earth and dirt. If you would like to set up a new dust bath or clean out an existing one, tubs can be found in the enrichment room and diatomaceous earth can be located in the NARN feed shed.
- **Water Fountains** – Birds really enjoy moving water. We have a variety of water fountains that can be found in the enrichment room and set up in most of our bird areas. Please let a caregiver know when you set one up so we can be sure it is cleaned and put away the following day.
- **Waterfalls/ Puddles** - Our birds LOVE puddles. On hot days they enjoy walking through them or just taking a nice drink. Turn a hose on a create a puddle or small waterflow. Our ducks and geese especially enjoy this activity!

Visual Enrichment

- **Mirrors** - Our birds love looking at themselves in mirrors! Some of our yards already have mirrors hung up (which always could use a cleaning), others will need to have a mirror picked up from the enrichment room. Mirrors can be moved around daily to keep things different and exciting.

Toy Enrichment

- **Balls of Tissue Paper/ Pom Poms** - Some of our birds really enjoy playing with tissue paper, especially when it is balled up into pom poms. Tissue paper can be located in the enrichment room, balled up into 3-5 pom poms and distributed in a bird yard. Please do this activity during dry weather only.
- **Music Toys** - We have xylophone toys that can be set up in bird yards. When the birds peck at the toy they can create their own music! The xylophone is located in the enrichment room.

Social Stimulation

- **Quiet Time/ Socializing** - Some of our birds really enjoy just sitting with their human friends. Find a comfortable spot in the yard and just sit. Our turkeys especially enjoy human company.

Sound Enrichment

- **Music/ Radios** - Birds enjoy music! Feel free to use an instrument, your phone, or a radio to play the birds some music. A radio can be found in the enrichment room and set up in most of the barns. Be sure the cord is in safe spot that will not get wet or be tripped on.
- **Other** - Other forms of sound enrichment include, but are not limited to: sound machines, audio books, and wind chimes.

Scent Enrichment/ Olfactory Stimulation

- **Essential Oils** - Different scents can be very engaging for the birds. We have different oils that can be spread on towels, rocks, or branches and given to the birds to smell and decide what they like. Ask a caregiver if you would like to participate in this activity. Please do not place any scents in the barns.
 - Calming oils: Valerian and Lavender
 - Engaging/ stimulating oils: Cinnamon, Cumin, Nutmeg, Ginger

