

APPLICATION OF A DRY, MANUFACTURED DIET FOR MULTIPLE LORY SPECIES

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Abstract

Lories, lorikeets, and other psittacines that include plant pollen and nectars as a portion of their natural diets have historically been offered liquid nectar solution (LNS) diets as some portion of a captive feeding program. Although readily accepted by these species, LNS diets are nutritionally dissimilar to foods consumed by free-ranging individuals, primarily due to high moisture content and subsequent nutrient dilution. The high fluid intake associated with consumption of LNS diets exceeds the water requirements of the individuals, resulting in excretion of high moisture feces, which can contribute to environmental contamination. Under typical feeding conditions, due to their high water and carbohydrate content, LNS diets provide an excellent media for microbial growth. As such, use of LNS diets requires one large feeding provided in a prescribed timeframe and/or distributing feedings in small amounts, and replacing uneaten quantities throughout the day to prevent overgrowth of food-borne bacteria and yeasts. In an attempt to: 1) remove food safety concerns associated with offering a LNS diet, 2) reduce labor associated with appropriate feeding of a LNS diet, and 3) incorporate a nutritionally complete diet for psittacines formulated based on information on the nutrient requirements of these species, an entire collection of lories, lorikeets, and similar species were converted to a dry, commercially available lory powder (DLP) diet (Marion Zoological, Inc., Plymouth, MN). Food intake and body weight were documented for 48 individuals representing 9 species offered the DLP as a component of their total diet. Body weights were maintained during the diet transition. Overall, acceptance of the DLP was high, both during and post-transition. Water content of diets offered to the various species was reduced by an average 45%. Observations regarding steps that can be taken to facilitate this transition in other avian collections will be provided.