

Avian Feather Damaging Behavior (Feather Picking)

Feather picking or “damaging behavior” is really more of a clinical sign than a diagnosis. Causes of feather picking vary tremendously, depending on the species of bird and the cause.

Whatever the cause, clinical success at resolving feather picking is improved the sooner treatment is started. Success managing chronic feather pickers is certainly lower.

Medical causes of feather damaging behavior are more common in cockatiels, budgerigars and Amazon parrots. Behavioral causes of feather damaging behavior are more common in African Grey Parrots, Eclectus and cockatoos. Macaws are in-between on medical vs. behavioral issues.

Based on a thorough history and physical, an avian veterinary specialist may recommend diagnostic procedures, treatments, and/or behavioral/environmental management. Few real specialists rely on the mental health drugs to manage most kinds of feather damaging behavior.

