and phrases with enough patience. Explained one pet shop owner, "Once you befriend a hird like a cockatiel, it'll follow you around the house like a puppy. They're extraordinarily affectionate."

Teaching a bird tricks, or to talk, takes time and patience. Repetition is the key. Writes William Allen, an expert on dwarf parrots, "Halfmoon Conures almost always make good talkers, the limitations usually being those of the teacher's patience and control, rather than the bird's ability

He adds, "The owner should, of course, realize that no talking birdunderstands what it is saying, closer than vaguely and indirectly associating words with deeds, objects and the time of day. Despite this," he continued, "a bird with a varied reletoire can be a source of

According to Allen, the most difficult lesson is getting the bird to utter its first words. After that is accomplished - often with the use of a record or homemade tape recording - the bird will pick up new phases with much greater case.

All birds, regardless of species, should be purchased when young. because that is the time they can be most easily trained. A bird that, is more than a year old is set in itsways, according to Allen, and can be impossible to train. Allen suggests purchasing a bird four to eight months old.

The variety of colors available in parrots is astounding. Bright oranges, deep blues, greens and striking scarlet markings are common to many of the parrots available in area pet stores. Perhaps most striking, although hard to find, are the Macaws, some of the larger South American parrots.

The Scarlet Macaw, a wise looking creature almost a yard long, has a brilliant crimson body, a white and black beak, and green, yellow and blue wings. Hyacinth Macaws, from Brazil, are a beautiful mixture of purples and deep hlues

Although not as colorful as the Macaw, the African Grey is reknowned for its talking ability. Henry J. Bates and Robert L. Busenbark, authors of "Parrots and Other Related Birds," write, "A good talking African Grey can be exceptional, but there are many which are totally worthless as pets or as talkers - usually trapped adults, or adults which never received training while young.

Although it takes little to care for any of the parrots to keep them healthy, the prospective buyer should check when purchasing for listlessness, wheezing, clogged postrils, and trembling or dull

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