

November-December 2004

ParrotChronicles.com

The online magazine for parrot lovers



About this issue | Ask Dr. Harris | Behavior | Diary of a mad parrot lover | Your birds | Product review | Mailbag | Message Center | Contact us | Classifieds | Advertise |

FEATURES

Clicking with your bird.



Clicker training, the concept of using a small plastic

device - or your voice - to teach an animal to perform tricks, can help you develop a great relationship with your parrot.

Call of Guyana.

Nancy Cullity fell in love with Guyana



and its wild parrots. Now her husband

and Boston bird sanctuary Foster Parrots hope to honor her memory by protecting the country's endangered birds.

Stop picking at that!

If he just can't keep



his beak off those stitches, your

bird may need one: the dreaded lampshade. Here's what to look for in a good Elizabethan collar.

Product review: My

Product review

Sterling scale offers appealing simplicity; i2500 does more and costs less

By Marguerite Floyd

Sterling Professional Avian Scale Kit

\$85 to \$109

Sterling Home Products, 609-585-8941.

My Weigh i2500

\$65

HBI Technologies, 800-420-4372


THE FIRST TIME I took one of my birds to the vet, she urged me to buy a gram scale. "It's a handy thing to have," she said, pointing out that one did not cost much - hers was only \$90. Not having a spare ninety bucks lying around, I figured a gram scale could wait.

Then my cockatiel got sick, and I learned the hard way that knowing a bird's weight was a very good thing to know indeed. Hoisting Sugar on my



The Sterling Professional Avian Scale Kit is a good mainstream choice.

Weigh i2500 and Sterling Professional Avian Scale Kit.

 Weighing your bird is a vital part of keeping him healthy. You can make this chore easier by investing in a high-quality scale.

A Bird in the Hand.

 Parrots do more than give you a taste of nature right in your own home. They open the door to all sorts of other kinds of wildlife.

FIND A PRODUCT

The Net is a big place. Let the Product Finder help you find what you're looking for.

 **PRODUCT FINDER**
Bird toys, food, cages, books, gyms & more

FIND AN ARTICLE

Back issues.
Article index.
Go to current issue.

Search this site or the Internet:

ParrotChronicles
 Search WWW

IN THE NEWS

Bird-loving policeman swoops on shoplifter
From *The Courier-Mail*

FAQ: How to take the

finger was not enough to measure weight loss or gain, no matter how much I loved her. After the vet and I got her well, I went looking for scales.

Now, I don't know an ounce from a gram. (All I know is that ounces usually measure food and grams usually measure fat or illegal drugs.) But I finally stumbled on a scale I could understand and afford at my local department store. It was a 5-inch-wide, 8-inch-deep food scale that weighed in both ounces and grams. It cost me all of twenty dollars. And if I ever wanted to know how much cholesterol was in an apple, it could tell me that, too.

I've had that Scaleman for three years now and it has served me well. Whenever I want to weigh one of my birds (which now include three cockatiels and an African brown-head parrot), I just grab it off a nearby shelf, set the bird down and jot the numbers on a piece of paper taped to the wall. If the weight stays the same, all is well. If it drops by more than a couple of grams, I weigh for two more days. A continued weight loss means a trip to the vet. A weight increase means my female cockatiel is conjuring an egg and maybe it's time to start worrying about excessive egg-laying. As for the Scaleman's plastic bowl, I use that to store molted feathers.

One thing the Scaleman does not have is a T-stand perch, which can make transferring a bird to a scale and making it stay put a lot easier. And I have to admit, for a while now I have been wondering about professional avian scales. What have I been missing out on, sticking with my diet scale? I still had not gotten around to establishing the all-important baseline weight for all my birds. (To do this you weigh several days in a row at the same time in the morning, after the first poop and while the crop is empty.) Would a nice shiny new bird scale inspire me?

Sterling versus i2500

I decided to look at two popular avian scales: the Sterling Professional Avian Scale Kit Model 3224 and the My Weigh i2500, including T-stands. I gave the scales a workout, weighing 10 parrots of various sizes and temperaments, including my three cockatiels and brown-head parrot, and seven more birds belonging to friends: two Congo African greys, a military macaw, an eclectus, a Jenday conure, and a Senegal. I tried all the scales' features from basic to fancier options such as tare.

The Sterling Professional Avian Scale Kit is an easy-to-assemble mainstream unit. It comes with two interchangeable platforms: stainless steel without T-stand for birds that have trouble perching, and white plastic with a short wooden T-stand that you screw on. My Phillips-head screw stripped, which left the perch a bit wobbly. However, a couple of my friends who have Sterling scales did not run into this problem, and Sterling promised a replacement screw. Either platform pops on snugly without tools. At 6.5 inches wide and 9 inches deep, the stainless steel platform offers slightly more standing room than my old Scaleman or the i2500. With T-stand, the Sterling is 7 inches tall, the same as the i2500.

Belgium kills 200 parrots as bird flu fears linger

From *Yahoo News*

Now see here:

Parrots' eyes are different
From *The Arizona Republic*

Hungry parrots munch Spanish farms

From *news.com.au*

YOUR TURN

First Person.

Enter our bimonthly essay contest and you could win a \$50 gift certificate to **DrsFosterSmith!** [Click here](#) to enter!

Profile a species.

ParrotChronicles.com is looking for feature articles on mini-macaws, cockatoos, Meyer's parrots, Quakers, and other parrot species. If you would like to contribute, **e-mail** us with your idea.

1-MINUTE SURVEY.

How do you take special care of your older bird? **Tell us!**

COMMUNITY

Bird clubs. Meet fellow owners.

Bird rescue groups. Adopt a bird in need of a good home.

Avian veterinarians. Don't wait until a medical emergency to find a good vet.

PARROT BASICS

Parrot index. Read about the different species.

FAQ. How to care for

With a capacity of 2000 grams (80 ounces or 5 pounds), the Sterling can handle any size of parrot from parrotlet to hyacinth macaw. Weighing options, represented by three color-coded membranes, are fairly basic. However, they do include the invaluable tare function, which calculates the weight of an object separate from its container. This makes it easy to weigh a bird inside a bowl or box, for instance. As a bonus, you get the Hold function, which displays the reading for about five seconds after the object being weighed has been removed. This comes in handy for those times your bird has grown two extra wings and four beaks and is threatening to eat your face if you don't let her off the scale this very instant.

The Sterling's LCD is big enough to easily read; a small arrow indicates ounces or grams. A rear switch flips between the two weighing modes.

Sleek and compact

I would have to give the packing box for the My Weigh i2500 an "R" rating. Mine contained flyers for novelty and roll-your-own cigarettes and a bumper sticker featuring a naked woman (My Weigh's parent company, HBI International, also sells tobacco and tobacco products). But once I began using the i2500, which comes in either attractive black or semi-translucent blue, I was impressed. Setup is even more minimal than the Sterling's, with the scale arriving with the standard platform in place. A clear plastic bowl big and deep enough to weigh a small adult bird or macaw baby is included, but if you would rather use another bowl or none at all the platform has a slight center depression. You attach the wooden T-stand via a stainless steel plate that fits easily over the platform via three small hooks and one security screw.

Sleek and compact at 5.5 inches wide and 8 inches deep, the i2500 will take up slightly less space on your shelf than the Sterling. The backlit LCD glows a soft blue when you first turn on the unit or place something on the platform and displays big, easy-to-read numbers. My only complaint is that the arrow indicating weight mode is a little hard to see.

The i2500 has a slightly higher capacity than the Sterling - 2500 grams or 5.5 pounds. It is also slightly more precise, capable of weighing to the nearest half gram. The weighing options, represented by numerous buttons and digital readouts, are numerous. The basic ones are fairly easy to figure out, but I scratched my head at first over some of the higher-end features, no thanks to the six-page instruction booklet, which seems more intent on warning against cell and cordless phones (they could disrupt the scale's calibration) than covering the i2500's finer points. However, the i2500



The My Weigh i2500 bird scale is sleek and compact with an attractive LCD.

your parrot.

Hazards. How to make your home safe for your bird.

Glossary. From blood feather to psittacosis, learn the lingo.

does offer some nifty functions you might find useful.

One is the "Add n Weigh" feature, which lets you weigh items separately and combined. You place an item on the scale, note its weight, press the tare key, then place another item on the scale and note that item's weight, up to 20 items. Pressing the NW/GW (net weight/gross weight) key shows the combined weight of the items. The NW/GW feature can also count items by first weighing a representative sample. This could come in handy if you make your own seed packets or formula.

Like the Sterling, the i2500 has an automatic shut-off and offers choice of battery or outlet power via an AC adapter.

More features, less expensive

So which scale is the better choice? My test birds did not seem to have a preference. They seemed equally comfortable with the Sterling and i2500, with or without their T-stands. Even the macaw stepped on the i2500's slightly smaller platform without hesitation.

As for me, I found the Sterling, which weighs to the gram, a little easier to use than the more sensitive i2500, especially with antsy birds. The less precise the scale, the faster it settles on a weight. Personally, I would not use most of the i2500's high-end features; they're overkill for me, as I suspect they will be for most bird owners.

On the other hand, it's difficult to refuse a fancier, sleeker scale that does more and costs less. In a check of several online stores at press time, I found the i2500 to be about \$20 less expensive than the Sterling. At **The Birdsafe Store**, for instance, you can pick up the i2500 including bowl, T-stand and AC adapter for \$64.95, not including shipping. It costs almost the same at www.saveonscales.com, which sells the pieces separately: scales and bowl cost \$49.90, the AC adapter is \$5.95, and the T-stand is \$8.95 for a total of \$64.80.

By comparison the Sterling, including scales, T-stand and adapter, ranged from \$85 at www.claviaryonline.com to \$109 at www.birdsupplies.com. HBI attributed the i2500's lower price to less expensive manufacturing practices.

So, if you want a T-stand avian scale that makes you pay a bit more for quick and easy weight monitoring, I recommend the Sterling. But if you need a snazzy-looking bird scale that looks as good in the kitchen as it does in the bird room, can track the slightest change in weight and offers weighing options galore, the i2550 is it.

Both these scales were such a big improvement over my old diet scale, I found myself wanting to weigh my birds all the time. That would make my vet so happy.

About the author



Marguerite Floyd is a hospital documentation manager, but considers her real job to be servant to three cockatiels, Flash, Nicholas and Sugar Franklin, and a 3 1/2-year-old brown-headed parrot named Charli.

To have your parrot-related toy, food, accessory, film or book considered for review, send a request to reviews@parrotchronicles.com.

Comments about this review? Send a letter to [Mailbag](#).

Shop at ParrotDise Perch

ParrotChronicles.com

ParrotChronicles.com. November-December 2004. Copyright 2001-2004© All rights reserved