

Female Parrotlets: Myth or Reality?

By Marcy Covault

Feathered Companions Aviary, <http://www.featheredcompanions.com>

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I have read in several places and on lists that female parrotlets cannot be housed together lest they fight, possibly with a fatality, but I have found that to be NOT true in my limited experiments with this. I have kept up to four parrotlet females in a flight together for extended periods of time with no fighting. They will buddy-pair, and claim their own territory, but otherwise, they co-exist just fine. There is NO male in sight of them, however, and perhaps that makes a difference, although I have also kept a full clutch of two males and two females in a flight for several months (prior to sale), and there was no excessive bickering there either.

In addition, a pet parrotlet may accept another same-sexed bird as a buddy. I have written an article about Lima, my 2006 pied parrotlet female that wanted to be a pet rather than a breeder. She was very jealous of her cage space—until Frosty came along. Frosty is a 2010 American white (aka dilute blue) female, and her father is Tuffy (Lima's younger brother). They had been in separate cages, but allowed out into the living/dining area to play together for several hours at a time.

I noticed them grooming each other after a while and even sitting closely and sleeping on a ladder. One day when I put evening treats in Lima's cage, both females went in and ate, and Lima did not act territorial or fuss with Frosty at all. I closed the cage door and continued to observe them that evening and for a couple of days, just in case Lima would get aggressive—but she didn't. They have shared a cage and food, as well as time out together, for some time now, and all is well. There are no male parrotlets in the living room, so I don't know if

that would affect behavior, but these two females are getting along great, with no bickering at all. I will continue to monitor, in case hormonal issues arise and cause friction.

I wouldn't recommend that people try this with all parrotlets, as individuals can be different, but it is, in my mind, a myth that female parrotlets cannot co-exist peacefully!

