

## End Your Parrot's Screaming and Biting with "Clicker Training!"

Does your parrot scream or bite? These are two very common and very annoying behaviors. Especially when company is over! If you are at your wits end, give clicker training a shot. Since we can not reason, or sometimes beg, with our pets, we must communicate through other means. Clicker training helps bridge the communication gap and be quite successful in ending bothersome behaviors. You don't have to be a professional trainer to teach your pet. Owners have successfully trained their parrots to hold their wings out for feather trimming and hold out their toes for nail cutting. Can you imagine your bird holding still while you put a harness on it in order to go outdoors? And the joy of a veterinary examination without biting! Bring on the clicker training. Before you can teach Polly how to fly around freely and come when called, you must first teach her what the clicker is. So, what is a clicker? A clicker is a small, hand-held device that makes a "clicking" noise when pressed. You can purchase a clicker at any pet supply store. Now, just going around clicking is not going to do anything for your bird. The next step is to teach her that the clicker is good. When beginning, don't make your parrot do too much to get a treat. In fact, they need not do anything at all. For the first session or two have your treats ready and hand them out freely. Good treats are nuts and seeds. For about 5-10 min just press your clicker and then give your bird a treat. The idea here is for the bird to put the sound and the treat together. "Click-Click" means "treat-treat." Birds are smart and it won't take long for the connection to be made. Once the sound and treat mechanism is established, try to get an actual response from your bird before pressing your clicker and handing out a treat. Trainers use what they call a "target." This target is some sort of object that the bird can touch and then get rewarded with the click and treat. Often, your bird will accidentally touch whatever you choose as the target. Who cares?! Click and treat. Soon your bird will figure out that to get a treat he needs to touch the target. You do need to take care when picking a target. After your bird is trained to look for the target, you can then use it to lead your bird to another target. And it's definitely wise not to use their perch. Once you get the basics down, there are a myriad of tricks you can teach your parrot. It all depends on what your end goal is. Training your parrot truly doesn't take terribly long. Birds are smart and you will be quickly rewarded with the time you spend together. Remember to have fun, your bird will sense it and be even more responsive to your training!

### About the Author

Persons may apply to be Oregon Registry Community Trainers at any time. Community trainers may also conduct standardized training sessions.

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