

# Backyard Chicken Behavior



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# A Little History...



- Chickens domesticated in Asia ~10,000 years ago
- Despite many years of selection, behavior of modern chickens remains almost identical to wild ancestors



# Important Behaviors

- Foraging Behavior





# Important Behaviors

- Perching and Roosting



# Important Behaviors

- Dust-bathing





# Important Behaviors

- Nesting



# Social Formation



- One bird dominant, one bird submissive, chained together becomes a dominance hierarchy
- Usually get a peck to the back of the head, hence the term “pecking order”



# Aggression



- Is all aggression bad?
- When is aggression bad?
- When do you intervene?
- Can it be reduced?





# Feather Loss: Are These Signs of Aggression?



# Feather Loss

- No, could be accidental



- Yes, feather picking



# Other Causes of Feather Loss

- Cage abrasion/wear



- Molting





# Fear



- Falls on a spectrum
  - Distress —————> Panic
- Human-Animal Interactions
- Fear as Indicator
- Predators?

- Is this fear?



# Behavioral Indicators of Health

- Environmental Stress



- Presence of Disease



# Conclusions and Questions

- **Increase Positive Behavior**
  - Foraging, dust-bathing, perching
- **Decrease Negative Behavior**
  - Aggression, Feather Picking, Fear
- **Know Your Chickens for a Super Experience**

