

Caring for Amazon Parrots

- Highly intelligent and curious, Amazon parrots can acquire a large vocabulary and are considered by many people to be the most trainable of all parrots.
- Without the proper attention, social interaction, and toys, Amazon parrots can develop behavioral problems.
- Parrots should be kept in their cage or a “bird safe” room when they are not being supervised.

Amazon parrots are highly intelligent, very outgoing, and renowned talkers. They adapt well to captivity, adjusting easily to their cage or aviary (enclosure). However, Amazon parrots require a great deal of mental stimulation. Without the proper attention, social interaction, and toys, Amazon parrots can develop behavioral problems. People who are willing to devote a considerable amount of time to their parrot will have a delightful companion pet for many decades.

Biological Facts

- More than 30 *Amazona* parrot species have been described. Popular species include:
 - Blue-fronted Amazon parrot (*Amazona aestiva*)
 - Orange-winged Amazon parrot (*Amazona amazonica*)
 - Double yellow-headed Amazon parrot (*Amazona oratrix*)
 - Yellow-naped Amazon parrot (*Amazona auropalliata*)
 - Red-lored Amazon parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*)
 - White-fronted Amazon parrot (*Amazona albifrons*)
- Young Amazon parrots have gray-brown irises (colored parts of the eyes), which change to red, red-orange, or chestnut-brown within 2 or 3 years. After the irises change color, it is very difficult to determine an Amazon parrot’s age.
- Weight: 350 to 600 grams

- Sexual maturity: 4 to 6 years of age
- Males and females look alike in most cases. A simple blood test can determine the sex of your bird.
- Average life span: 40 to 50 years of age
- Maximum recorded life span: 80+ years of age
- Origins: Central and South America; Caribbean islands

Behavior

Highly intelligent and curious, Amazon parrots can acquire a large vocabulary and are considered by many people to be the most trainable of all parrots. Tamed Amazon parrots readily adapt to new surroundings and activities; therefore, new owners can immediately expose their parrots to other pets and daily activities in the household. Amazon parrots like to explore their surroundings and need environmental enrichment, interesting toys, and foraging exercises to reduce the chance of behavioral problems. Without enough attention and environmental stimulation, Amazon parrots can be very noisy and destructive.

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Diet

In the wild, Amazon parrots feed on a variety of seeds, fruits, vegetables, and nuts. In captivity, seed-based diets are not recommended because they permit pet birds to select an imbalanced diet. Formulated diets (pellets or crumbles) should make up about 75% of the diet because they provide more complete, balanced nutrition. Dark leafy greens, vegetables, and fruits can account for 20% to 25% of the diet. Treats should be limited to only 5% of the diet. Clean, fresh water should be provided daily.

Caring for Your New Pet

Environment

- Enclosures should be as large as possible; at a minimum, your bird should be able to fully extend his or her wings and flap without touching the sides of the enclosure.
- The enclosure should be clean, secure, safe, and constructed of durable, nontoxic materials.
- Perches of various widths, heights, and textures should be provided. A concrete perch should be available to help maintain the toenails.
- To prevent contamination of food or water, perches should not be placed directly over food or water dishes.
- Access to natural light is preferred.
- The enclosure should not be kept in drafty areas.
- Parrots should be kept in their enclosure or a “bird safe” room when they are not being supervised.
- Birds with unrestricted access to the home are at risk for accidents such as toxin ingestion, electrocution, attacks by other pets, and drowning.

Preventive Care

- Physical examinations should be performed every 6 to 12 months. Consult a veterinarian

with experience in avian medicine if you have any questions or concerns about your bird’s health.

- Annual fecal examinations for parasites, yeast, and bacteria are necessary.
- Your veterinarian may recommend vaccination for *Polyomavirus*.
- Routine blood testing is important.
- The wings and nails should be trimmed as needed.

Common Medical Disorders

- Obesity
- Atherosclerosis (disease of the arteries)
- Respiratory infections
- Discolored feathers (due to malnutrition or liver disease)
- Foot necrosis (cell death)
- Chlamydiosis (infectious disease resulting from nasal, sinus, or intestinal infection)
- Fatty liver disease
- Papillomatosis (multiple warts)
- Chronic sinus infection
- Egg binding (inability to pass an egg, causing pain and straining)