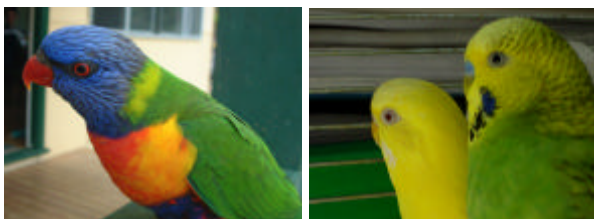


Bird Health Briefs:



**CHOOSING AN
AMAZON
PARROT**

General information

The colourful Amazon parrot (*Amazona sp.*) is the most common of all the pet parrots kept in captivity. They originate from Mexico, Central America, South America and the adjacent islands of the West Indies. There are numerous types of Amazon parrots. They are a stocky, medium sized bird with a strong beak and short, rounded, blunt tail. These birds can be very personable and interactive. Amazons bond readily, often with one member of the family or specifically with males or females. This bond occasionally leads to aggression towards others. They are generally very affectionate and will often persistently solicit petting and head scratches. Widely recognised for its extraordinary ability to mimic, some amazons develop extensive vocabularies of words, song, verse, whistles, sneezing, coughing and electronic sounds such as telephones and microwave oven beeps. Some species are prone to loud squawking especially in the early morning and late afternoon. They are very playful and enjoy climbing and chewing. Providing non-toxic, washed, fresh branches and pet-safe toys will afford many hours of entertainment and exercise for this inquisitive pet. These handsome, good natured birds make excellent companions and family pets. The Blue-fronted, Yellow-naped and Double Yellow-headed Amazons are best known for their talent to talk.

Some commonly kept Amazon parrots include the Double Yellow-head Amazon, Yellow-naped Amazon, Blue-fronted Amazon, Green-cheeked Amazon and Orange-winged Amazon.

Purchasing a Amazon Parrot

Amazon parrots may be purchased from a pet shop or, better, a reputable breeder. When

selecting an Amazon, try to choose a young bird as it may be easier to tame and train. Older, wild, colony or parent raised birds may prove difficult to tame. Hand raised babies often make better pets since they have been completely socialised with humans. Young birds are easier to tame and adapt readily to new environments and situations. Importantly having a captive-bred bird also means that the wild bird population is not threatened further by catching and importing wild birds. This practice is bad both for the bird captured and transported as well as for the dwindling population left in the wild. Your new bird should be exposed early to different events (young and old people, males and females, other pets, car trips, visits to the vet, etc.) to help promote a calm, well adjusted pet. The lively, alert bird that is not easily frightened is more likely a healthy bird. After purchasing your new bird, have it examined by your vet.

Veterinary care

Amazon parrots require regular, routine veterinary health check ups. Your vet can perform a physical examination, grooming (beak, nail or feather trim) and laboratory tests as needed. During these semi-annual check-ups, health, nutritional and maintenance issues can be identified and addressed. Veterinary check-ups help prevent disease and will aid in the maintenance of a long lasting, healthy relationship between you and your bird.

Colour

Mature

- green is the predominant body colour with red, orange, yellow, white and blue adorning the head, wings and tail differently amongst the various species.

Immature

- somewhat less colourful

Sexing: no external sex differences

Weight: average 10 - 20 ounces (300 - 600 grams)

Size: average 10 - 20 inches (25 - 45 cm) in length

Life span: 15 - 25 years (maximum 75 years)

Diet: consult your vet or see the diet sheet in this series

Breeding: sexual maturity at 3 - 6 years, large environment is needed to breed this challenging bird

Brood size: 2 - 7 eggs hatch in 17 -31 days, young leave the nest in 4 - 8 weeks

Cage: minimum 2 ft x 3 ft x 4 ft (60 cm x 90 cm x 120 cm) depends on the size of the bird