



Where learning comes alive!

Interesting Facts About Parrots

Are there many different kinds of parrots?

There are over 360 different species. Almost 100 of these are threatened with extinction, mainly due to loss of habitat and capture to be pets.

Where are wild parrots found?

Most live in tropical and semi-tropical areas like Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, India, New Zealand and Australia.



Are all feathers the same?

Definitely not! There are three basic kinds of feathers:

Down feathers are the small, soft, fluffy feathers located closest to the bird's skin. They help the bird regulate its temperature.

Contour feathers cover the head and body. They make the bird very smooth so it can travel easily through the air.

Flight and tail feathers are much stiffer and longer than contour feathers. They move the air so that the bird can fly.



What is a parrot's beak made of?

It might seem like a parrot's beak is solid, but it's not. In fact, like many of the bird's bones it is hollow, with fine bony struts inside to make it strong. The outside is covered in keratin (which is what our fingernails are made of). A parrot's beak grows continuously and is worn down by eating, chewing wood, and by grinding the top and bottom parts against each other.



How big are parrots?

The smallest parrots (called Parrotlets) can fit into the palm of your hand. The largest (Hyacinth Macaws) can be over 90 cm from head to tail, have a wingspan of 125 cm and weigh as much as 1,700 grams.



How long can parrots live?

On average, small pet parrots like budgies live about 10 years. Very large pet parrots can live 80 years or even more!

Most parrots nest in tree hollows, but there are exceptions. For example, some parakeets will carve out cavities in termite mounds, and some large macaws will nest in cliff caves. Some parrots will even make their nests in burrows. Generally speaking, parrots lay from 2-7 eggs and incubate them for 22-30 days. When the babies hatch, "mom" usually feeds them and "dad" brings food for her.

How are wild baby parrots raised?



What predators do wild parrots have?

Young parrots must beware of animals like snakes, ants, cockroaches, monkeys and birds of prey. But, large adult parrots (like macaws) have very few enemies – mainly birds of prey and people.

What do wild parrots eat?

Most parrots like fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and a few insect larvae. But, some parrots are specialists – for example, wild Lorikeets eat fruit and nectar. Wild Hyacinth Macaws eat mainly palm nuts.



How do parrots communicate?

Parrots have very loud voices. Different sounds mean different things (like "watch out for the hawk", or "there's food over here"). Parrots learn to make these calls by listening to their parents and flock mates. As pets, some can learn to talk by listening to us. Parrots also use body language (like fluffing their feathers) to communicate.



Are parrots good pets?

Parrots are loud, messy, highly energetic and live a very long time.

They need special food and vet care, huge cages, lots of attention and tons of toys. But, they can be great companions IF you can meet all their needs and give them a home for life.



Just how smart are parrots?

Some scientists think parrots are at least as smart as dolphins and chimpanzees.

For example, Grey parrot count to 6, and name 35 Alex was even learning to read! He was trained by Dr. Pepperberg, who is now training two more parrots just like him! Visit www.alexfoundation.org to learn more about parrot intelligence.



How can we help wild parrots?

Here are a few ideas. Always be sure to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Support groups that protect parrots and their habitats. Never buy a wild-caught parrot as a pet, and always keep learning about conservation.