



Macaw Care – How to keep your macaw healthy and happy!

Macaws originate from South America. In the wild they travel in flocks and are very inquisitive. They are big spectacular birds that are very vocal and generally talk well. Their large beaks are very powerful so it is important to take care when interacting with them and not leave them unattended while free-roaming in the house.

Some of the macaw species commonly available in Perth include the Blue and Gold, Green Wing and Scarlet Macaws.

Diet Being from the tropics of South America it is believed that these species need a lot of fruit and while fruit is an important part of their diet it should not be their whole diet. The reason for this is that in the wild they often will travel large distances each day, which makes them burn off the extra calories associated with a high fruit diet. In captivity, they are generally limited to a smaller space meaning they often do not exercise as much. They also have less variety of fruit available than they would in the wild.



Every macaw is different and has differing dietary requirements so for your own tailored dietary plan please contact us. General guidelines for many of the macaw species can be found below:

- 40-70% premium commercial parrot pelleted diet
- 10-35% vegetables (recommended vegetables include: capsicum, broccoli, chili, corn, carrot, zucchini, squash, spinach, pumpkin, sweet potato, beans and peas) and sprouted seed.
- 10-40% fruits (i.e. melons, strawberries, banana, blue berries, grapes, peaches, pear, apple). Please ensure that all stone fruits and apples are free of their seeds.
- 0-15% quality commercial seed mix.
- 1-2% snacks for training and as treats (unsalted nuts (i.e. macadamia, cashew and walnut), pasta, eggs and brown rice.)

Housing:

Their destructive beaks can get them in trouble and they can quickly destroy furniture if left unattended. Please keep them away from foreign objects. Please do not provide string or rope toys as they often will fray over time and can cause a gastrointestinal obstruction if swallowed.





We advise a good quality powder coated or stainless steel cage of an appropriate size. Some painted cages can contain lead elements which can be toxic to your bird so please take care when selecting your cage. Cages that have been galvanized with a zinc coating can also cause problems so please select carefully.

Stainless steel or ceramic bowls are generally recommended as these materials are not porous making cleaning easier and more effective. Plastic bowls can become porous after a while and can cause problems if bacteria build up in these areas.

Perches of various sizes are important for exercise of the toes and feet health. They also help to promote the natural wear of their toe nails. Natural perches from native trees are ideal as they generally vary in size anyway.

Environmental enrichment is highly recommended and encouraged. Simple things like utilizing cardboard toilet rolls to hide food can provide hours of entertainment for many birds.

It is important that your bird gets enough sleep as long-day light exposure can stimulate excessive moulting and increased reproductive activity. We recommend you keep to the natural day length. If your bird is kept inside in a well-lit area, then you can cover the cage when the sun goes down and place them in a dark room to ensure that their day length is not too long.

Common diseases: One of the most common diseases that we see in macaws is an upset gastrointestinal tract. They will often present for regurgitation, vomiting or diarrhoea. If you see any of these signs we recommend a consultation as there are many different causes and if left untreated you may be putting your bird's life at risk.

Upper respiratory tract infection is characterized by sneezing or ocular discharge and is common in young birds. Once again it is highly advised to bring them in for an appointment as there are a range of different causes of upper respiratory tract disease. Chlamydia infection is common in young birds, this is a serious disease that can be transferred to other birds AND humans.

Macaws are generally very curious and sometimes get themselves into trouble with foreign objects. It is quite common for them to eat or chew on items that they shouldn't (jewelry, plastic





toys, rope toys, electrical cords etc.). If you are concerned that your bird may have eaten or chewed on something that they shouldn't have, then please get in touch with us.

Reproductive diseases and behavioural problems are also quite common in macaws.

If you decide to clip your bird's wings it is highly advisable that it is performed by someone with experience. Incorrect wing clips can lead to serious problems. It is common for birds with incorrect wing clips to hurt themselves when they fall. See our wing clip handout for more information.

If you are at all concerned about your bird please get in touch with us.

Veterinary care: Regular check-ups every 6-12 months are important, as birds are very good at hiding any illnesses that they have. These check-ups allow problems to be detected early before they worsen.

Microchipping is also highly recommended as we see many birds that escape each year. Microchipping allows your contact details to be easily found if your bird is handed in to any veterinary clinic or good rescue facility. We use a specialized small microchip that is inserted into your bird's pectoral muscle; this is a quick, simple procedure that can be performed in a consultation time slot.

If you have any further questions about your macaw please don't hesitate to contact us.



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