

## Hyacinth Macaw

*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*

### FACT SHEET

Developed by BirdTricks.com

The hyacinth macaw is the largest parrot in the world and has the nickname as the “gentle giant” of the macaws. Their wingspan alone is around 4 feet long and they require the most space than all the other parrots. They can be trained easily, and bond will to their primary care givers and are naturally affectionate companions.

#### Are you the right home for a hyacinth macaw?

- ✓ I have a large, safe space appropriate to house this bird.
- ✓ I understand that this parrot is a long-term commitment.
- ✓ I will provide daily interaction with this bird outside of its cage.
- ✓ The natural noises, screams and sounds of this bird will be acceptable to those in my household as well as my neighbors.

If you were able to say the above statements out loud and in all honesty, you might just be able to welcome this type of parrot into your home.

**Average Size**      40 inches                      **Life Span**      60 years or more

**Diet**                      Hyacinth macaws need many more nuts than your average parrot. They eat a majority of palm nuts as they require more carbohydrates than other species of macaws and parrots.

Their diet should be mainly fruits, vegetables and nuts with an organic pellet that is species specific to the hyacinth.

**Feeding**                      Parrots tend to like to “dip” their food or soak it in their water in order to soften it for eating. It’s important to keep their water dishes fresh and clean to avoid bacteria build up. This should be done daily.

Raw fruits and vegetables are the healthiest for companion parrots but some can be picky, in which case, you can try cooking these healthy foods in different ways. Such examples include boiling a sweet potato so it’s soft for your parrot to eat (wait an appropriate amount of time when feeding cooked foods to your bird for these foods to properly cool).

Discard fresh foods that haven't been eaten in at least 24 hours.

To keep your parrot busy throughout the day and avoid boredom (which leads to biting, screaming and feather plucking) it's best to provide fun and interactive ways for your bird to eat its meals every day. Such ways include using skewers for fresh foods and various food finding toys for hard foods such as pellets.

## **Housing**

An outdoor aviary is ideal for parrots; natural sunlight is essential for their plumage (feathers) and overall health. This can be supplemented with full spectrum lighting indoors if your climate does not allow for your cage to be outside.

Parrots do best when put in a "high traffic" area in the home where they will get daily interaction.

Because parrots in captivity are more likely to become obese – a flight cage is highly encouraged as a means to properly exercise and stay as healthy as possible while living in captivity.

As with all animals; the larger the cage/habitat the better. Bar spacing should be no less than 1 inch apart and the proper gauge should be 10g/12g.

A varying diameter and texture of perches is necessary to avoid arthritis and various types of foot sores. The main perches should be made of wood; these are perches your bird will use consistently throughout the day and more often than others. Sandy perches should be placed high in the cage so your bird will be encouraged to sleep on it at night – this allows your parrot to get trimmed nails naturally.

A metal grate at the bottom of your bird's cage is suggested as it makes cleaning up after your parrot easier and keeps your bird out of its own droppings.

## **Recommended Supplies**

- ✓ Indoor Cage
- ✓ Outdoor Aviary
- ✓ Cage Liner (newspaper, walnut shells)

- ✓ Organic Pellet
- ✓ Food Finding Toys
- ✓ Treats
- ✓ Mineral Block
- ✓ Variety of Perches & Shreddable Toys
- ✓ Interactive Training Courses & Tools
- ✓ Bird Perch Scale (weighing in grams)

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#### **Behavior & Interaction**

Hyacinth macaws sleep with a large flock at night and spend all their time with their mates or with their mate and offspring consistently only of 2 offspring. They will socialize well with small groups of people and can learn to be gracious to everyone but will bond better to the primary person caring for them.

They use body language as a large portion of their communication and love training and learning new things – anything that stimulates their mind and challenges them to figure out something new.

They require many different types of chewable toys that they can destroy as well as puzzle toys that challenge them to figure out how to get inside of it.

#### **Habitat Maintenance**

Perches, toys and food finding toys should be rotated regularly and especially if showing wear and tear. Only toys made from all natural materials should be used; any metals such as zinc or lead can be severely harmful to your parrot's health.

Your bird's cage should be changed at least once a week. It may need it more often due to fresh foods and toy parts.

It's recommended to clean and disinfect the bird's cage as often as well.

It's very important to weigh your bird daily to be able to catch on to illness early on. Parrots are very good at disguising illness (as it means the difference of life and death in the wild).

## **Grooming & Hygiene**

Macaws need to be bathing regularly between 3-5 times in the winter months and 5-7 in the summer months is a healthy amount. Most enjoy the natural bath rain outside will provide so an outdoor aviary to enjoy these times is ideal.

If your bird wants to bathe more often, it is good to encourage it as it keeps their skin and plumage looking healthy and can make it easier on allergies to dander.

Bathing can be done in numerous amounts of ways, every bird will have his/her personal preference so it is best to let your bird try them all to tell you what it likes best. Every bird likes to bathe in the wild; it would unnatural if your bird refused to ever bathe as well as unhealthy.

Here are some various ways parrots bathe in captivity:

- An extra bowl for bathing inside the cage (hanging or at the bottom of the cage)
- Misting from a spray bottle
- On a shower perch in a human shower with you (many birds prefer catching the mist off your back)
- Some birds have different water temperature preferences (hot, warm, cold)
- Natural baths in the outside rain provided in an aviary

Clipping flight feathers can be very detrimental to these parrots as they need their exercise and cannot get the proper exercise from simply climbing and walking around. They make very agile, expert fliers and glory in flight. It is a great way for them to get excess energy out before mellowing out to spend time with you.

To determine if clipping is necessary in your household, consult an avian specialist. Nails and beak trimming should be done by a qualified professional if needed.

## **Signs of a Healthy Parrot**

- Active, alert, social and vocal

- Dry eyes and nostrils
- Eating and drinking regularly throughout the day
- Smooth, well groomed/preened and colorful feathers
- A healthy parrot will likely fly around, parrots refuse to fly when not feeling well when they would normally take flight

## **Common Health Issues**

### **Diarrhea**

You can tell your parrot has diarrhea by seeing that the fecal part of the stool is not formed.

This can have multiple causes, such as too much fruit in the diet or a parasite. It's best to seek an avian specialist's opinion and sometimes reduce your parrot's fruit intake.

### **Feather Plucking & Mutilation**

Most parrots pluck due to extreme boredom, an unhealthy diet or some other related illness. Many parrots pluck because they never bathe and it causes "over preening" where they literally end up chewing the feather to bits in an attempt to get them clean. A parrot on the improper diet can lead to malnourishment and cause plucking and mutilation as well.

Boredom is the number one factor most parrots pluck. This can be helped by rotating and changing toys in the cage regularly, giving extra attention through social interaction and training, as well as improving diet or amount of space and location your bird is at/in.

It's also important to seek an avian specialist's advice if the plucking is not related to something physical as the listed above. Some parrots begin after the significant loss of something – such as a mate.

### **Proventricular Dilatation Disease**

This disease occurs when the bird is passing undigested foods, showing signs of depression and/or is losing weight abruptly.

It is necessary to consult with an avian specialist if your bird is showing these signs of illness.

### **Obesity**

Obesity is caused by poor feeding, an unhealthy diet and/or lack of proper exercise.

It's important to regulate high fatty foods in the bird's diet and make sure all foods being fed are organically grown, including the pellet mix. It may be a positive idea to introduce flight training into your bird's learning and training schedule to ensure exercise is obtained every day – or that a flight aviary is implemented in the bird's environment.

### **Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease Virus**

Signs leading to this virus are abnormal feather coloration, the loss of feathers and other beak deformities. It's important to be able to tell the symptoms apart from molting and know your bird's molting cycles to avoid confusion.

An avian specialist is required in properly treating this virus in parrots.

### **Red Flags from Your Bird**

- Beak swelling
- Chewed, plucked or soiled feathers/plumage
- A bird who sits on the floor of the cage/habitat (often it will appear fluffy)
- Wheezing, coughing or other indications of trouble breathing
- Runny or discolored stools (aside from diarrhea from fruit or different color from diet)
- Eye or nasal discharge (runny nose or eyes)
- Red or swollen eyes
- Loss of appetite; a bird who refuses to eat or shows no interest
- Favoring one limb over the other

*If you notice any of the above "red flags", consult your avian specialist immediately.*

**Note: The information on this Fact Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care.**