

PARROT-WISE

WHY SHOULDN'T I GET A PARROT?

- It is illegal
- Captive wild parrots are unhealthy and they generally don't live long in cages
- Parrots are wild animals. They do not make good pets
- Belize relies on abundant wildlife to generate income from tourists - taking birds from the wild reduces population numbers

IS IT REALLY ILLEGAL TO KEEP A PARROT? Yes it is illegal. Forest Department may grant a permit if your bird is healthy and you comply with minimum standards and conditions. Contact Forest Department or visit our website for more information

WHY ARE CAPTIVE PARROTS IN BELIZE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE US?

Belizean parrots know that they are wild parrots. They are captive within their natural environment and every day they hear and see other parrots flying free, and they want to do the same.

WHY DID MY BABY BIRD DIE? Captive birds die from bad diet or lack of food and water, inappropriate caging and perches, lack of shelter, sickness, injury, and even sadness.

HOW LONG SHOULD POLLY LIVE? Wild parrots can live up to 90 years, but most captive parrots die in Belize within 5 years.

HOW SMART ARE PARROTS? They are as smart as a 3 year old child. They can think, evaluate, reason and remember. They are emotional, intelligent, wild creatures that require special care and attention.

HOW CAN I GET HIM TO TALK MORE? Take appropriate care of your licensed bird and he could live for 50 years or more -the longer he lives and the happier he is, the more he learns.

"I CAN'T COPE WITH POLLY ANY MORE!"

That's simple: contact us or call the Forest Department on 822 1524. Your bird can be rehabilitated and eventually released into the wild.

PLEASE: don't just let him go – he will not survive.

NOT JUST A PRETTY POLLY

A healthy and safe home

Enclosure: Forest Department minimum standards state that an indoor cage should be at least 4 feet around and an outdoor cage must be 8-foot around.

Use ½" wire mesh so rats, snakes and possums can't reach in. Provide a covered area for protection from weather extremes and an open area where he can choose rain or sunshine. Parrots hate to be at ground level: The top perch must be 5-feet off the ground. It's more natural if his cage is positioned under a tree.

Perches: Use different thicknesses of sticks at different heights. Secure them so they don't twist around. Give fresh green branches and leaves for him to chew. Replace perches regularly

Bathing: Take him out in the rain or use a gentle spray-bottle of warm water. Bathing keeps his feathers clean and healthy.

Playing: Parrots are social birds and they live in large flocks. Boredom makes them aggressive and miserable. He may even pluck out his own feathers. He needs toys and a friend (human or parrot) exactly like human children. Give him plenty of toys and attention - being alone and bored is torture for a parrot

Take time for your bird

1. Free Time: let him roam outside of his cage as often as you can. Parrots are a lot nicer when they're free.

2. Play Time: he needs toys and interesting things to chew on and explore. Bored birds bite.

3. Social Time: sit still and let him climb on and around you. Only cuddle and scratch him if he allows you to.

4. Quiet Time: too much noise and fuss can frighten him and he'll bite. Make sure he gets a full night's sleep.

5. Time Out: sometimes he's just plain grumpy, so leave him in peace for a while. You may think you're in charge, but you're not!

YOUR TIME: If you don't have the time, then don't keep a parrot

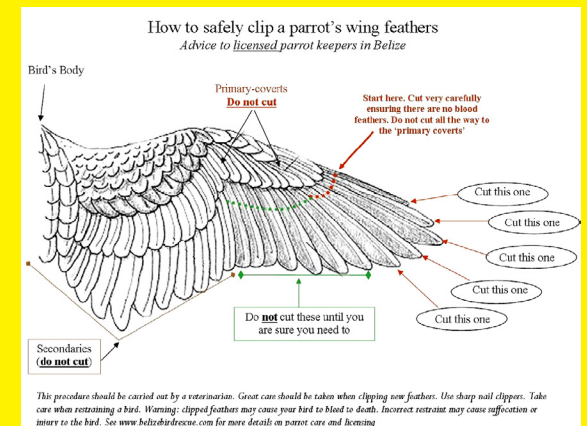
WING CLIPPING

Trimming wing feathers does not make him tame. That can only be achieved by hard work and dedication.

He needs wings to control body temperature and keep dry, for protection, to exercise muscles and to control landings and avoid injury, so

If you must do it, do it right:

You do not need to clip all of the wing feathers



- **Never** cut growing feathers: these have a white sheath and/or the shaft appears darker than the others. They have nerves and a blood supply and your bird could bleed to death if you cut them
- **Never** clip baby parrots: they need at least 3 months with full wings for their muscles to develop properly
- **Use sharp** nail clippers to avoid scissor injury
- **Always clip both wings.** Mismatched wings cause uncontrolled, painful falls
- Do **NOT** cut his tail feathers: that's just ugly



FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING: Banana, mango, watermelon, papaya, unsalted nuts, sunflower seeds, sugarcane, figs, oranges, kinep, plums, celery, spinach, pineapple, carrot, okra, craboo, hibiscus flowers, fresh corn, dried yellow corn, green beans, ackee, all apples & plums, grapes, chilli peppers, in fact most fruits and vegetables and even flowers. Note: Too many sunflower seeds will make him fat. Experts advise not to give peanuts as they may carry a fungus that is toxic to birds.

SICK-MAKING: salt, alcohol, fizzy drinks, sweets, sugary cakes, salty chips etc.

POISONOUS: chocolate, avocado, onion.

ALWAYS: CLEAN, FRESH DRINKING WATER

PLAY TIME

MAKING TOYS FOR YOUR PARROT: Join together craft beads & popsicle sticks, wood blocks, small bush sticks, sugar cane slices, plastic bottle tops, leather strips, leaves, coconut, flowers, pasta pieces, toilet roll inners, clean rags, buttons, nuts, mango pits and baby toys. Connect them with pipe-cleaners, ropes, string, vines and cable ties (also excellent for securing perches)



Contact us to:

- Get information on licensing your bird
- Enter him into the rehabilitation programme
- Report injured, orphaned or abused birds
- Receive educational talks on the birds of Belize at your school or workplace
- Receive educational materials for your school



Hopefully you now have some ideas to help your licensed bird live a long and happy life. If you would like more information, contact us or visit our website



BELIZE FOREST DEPARTMENT

Forest Drive, Belmopan
 (+501) 822-2079/1524
 e-mail: secretary.fd@ffsd.gov.bz
 www.forestdepartment.gov.bz



BELIZE BIRD RESCUE

Bird Sanctuary & Rehabilitation Centre
 Cayo District, Belize.
 (+501) 610 0400
 belizebirdrescue@gmail.com
 www.belizebirdrescue.com

Belize National Wildlife Advice Hotline

Toll-free and confidential
 0800 822 8888 or text 605 8888

CARING FOR YOUR CAPTIVE PARROT



How to care for your licensed bird to give him a long and happy life as a member of your family

THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR OWNERS WITH BIRDS THAT ARE ALREADY IN CAPTIVITY

It is illegal to capture parrots from the wild or to hold them in captivity. If you have a bird, you must get Forest Department Permit



Parrots are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, Chapter 220 of the laws of Belize