



# African Grey



[www.parrotclubofman.ca](http://www.parrotclubofman.ca)  
email: [info@parrotclubofman.ca](mailto:info@parrotclubofman.ca)  
P.O. Box 68020 R.P.O Osborne Village  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 2X9 (204)942-2993

# African Grey Parrot

These sophisticated parrots have above-average intelligence and exceptional talking ability and delight bird owners everywhere.

## *Origin*

African Grey parrots are native to the central belt of Africa from the Ivory Coast to northwestern Tanzania. There are two types of Greys: the Congo, with black beak and a strikingly brilliant red tail and the Timneh with a horn coloured beak and a dark maroon coloured tail. Both types have light to dark grey feathers and can vary in size with the Congo being slightly larger. These parrots are approximately 13 to 14 inches in length and have an average lifespan of 50 years. It is difficult to visually distinguish the sexes of these parrots, but the breeder may be able to tell with experience.

## *General Personality*

African Grey parrots are typically independent and have a tendency to be one person birds if not introduced to different people and places sufficiently while young. An African Grey that is living in a stressful situation can, and often will, become a feather plucker. A healthy African Grey will produce a larger amount of feather dust than many other parrots. When it comes to talking ability these parrots top the list. They have a larger tonal range than most parrots and this enables them to duplicate practically anyone or anything in their environment. African Grey parrots generally do not scream and the noises they do make are not usually annoying or disturbing. Their beaks are large and strong enough to cause damage if they bite, but a well-treated and cared for bird will normally not bite.

## *Food*

African Greys are noted for having a good appetite. Their primary food source should be a quality parrot pellet which is available at pet stores. This should be offered daily along with clean water, fruits, vegetables and occasionally a mix of seeds. Sunflower seeds are high in fat and should be offered only as a treat. Grit or gravel is not necessary and should be avoided for most caged birds.

## *Housing*

Offer these birds a cage that is wider than it is high so they have plenty of room to climb and so there is room to hang toys that they love to play with. Toys are an important part of a bird's life as they provide entertainment while inside their cage. Make sure that all toys are appropriately suited for their size and check the toys daily for any loose parts that may injure your African Grey. Natural branches that vary in thickness make good perches inside the cage. It is important that an African Grey be allowed outside the cage either on a playstand, on top of the cage or with someone for at least a portion of the day. If no one is in the room to supervise though, the parrot must be locked in his cage for his own safety.

## *Health Care*

Wing trimming is essential for your bird's safety. The loss of a pet bird flying out an open door is devastating. Nail trimming is also necessary for proper grip on perches and a comfortable grip on arms and fingers. Nails trimmed too short however can cause the African Grey a great deal of difficulty in gripping the perch and climbing. Most birds love to bathe whether it be in a dish of warm water, spritzed with a pump sprayer or in the shower with its owner. Parrots should have a bath or shower at least weekly.

**The Parrot Club of Manitoba** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at St. Alban's Anglican Church, basement level, 486 Rathgar (off Osborne). Check community announcements or contact the club in case of changes. Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have African Greys as pets and would be able to tell you how these birds are in the home environment.

Winnipeg veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine are:

- Dr. Heather McDonald of Centennial Animal Hospital
- Dr. Nancy McQuade of Winrose Animal Hospital
- Dr. Carolyn Eickhorn of Winrose Animal Hospital
- Dr. Birte Klug of Winrose Animal Hospital
- Dr. Andrew Davidson of Corydon Animal Hospital
- Dr. C. Skavinsky of Anderson Animal Hospital
- Dr. Lisa Sawka of Charleswood Veterinary Clinic