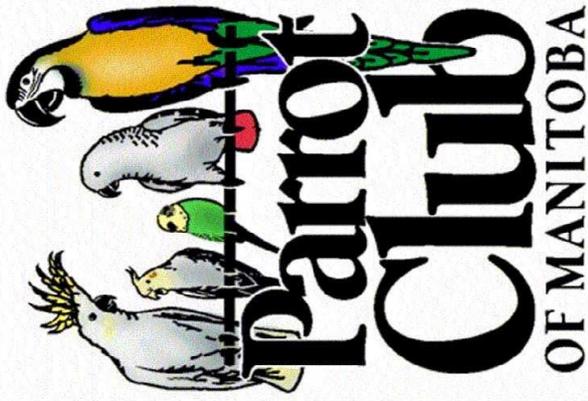


# Macaw



Scarlet



Established 1980

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# Macaw

When the word “parrot” is mentioned, most people think of the macaw with their long tail feathers, large wings and that typical bare patch of skin around their eyes and bill. However, macaws come in a wide range of sizes and a variety of colours and they make interesting pets.

## **Origin**

Macaws are native to Central and South America. Nature has lavished a rainbow of colours on these birds including green with red, blue with accents of yellow, blue and gold, scarlet with yellow and blue and red with blue and green. They range in size from the smallest at 13 inches in length to the largest at 40 inches in length. The smaller macaws (known as mini macaws) do not normally have the bright colours of their larger cousins, but their personality matches. These birds have an average lifespan of 20 years for the smallest macaws to 50 years PLUS for the larger macaws. It is difficult to visually distinguish the sexes of these birds.

## **General Personality**

These parrots make superb pets as they are extremely intelligent, entertaining and may learn to talk. However, they may not make the perfect “first choice” for a pet bird. The larger macaws in particular should be considered an experienced bird keeper’s bird and one look at their powerful beaks should remind you of their awesome biting capabilities. Macaws are very demanding, loud and raucous, but all of this adds up to personality plus! The mini macaws have much of the same personality as the larger ones without the loud voice.

## **Food**

Their primary food source should be a quality parrot diet which is available at pet stores. This should be offered daily along with clean water, fruits, vegetables pasta, grains, sprouts and occasionally a mix of seeds. Macaws also need a slightly higher fat content in their diet. This can easily be provided by adding nuts to their diet.

## **Housing**

These parrots need a strong, spacious cage to allow for their long tail feathers and large wingspan and remember to protect all woodwork from their powerful bills. Chewing and shredding are a natural part of a macaw’s behaviour so be prepared to replace your perches regularly. Natural tree branches that vary in thickness make good perches inside the cage. Toys are also an important part of a bird’s life as they provide entertainment while inside their cage. Make sure you give your bird a variety of safe toys suited for its size. Clean droppings from the cage bottom and perches daily.

## **Health Care**

Consider wing trimming 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. Most birds love to bathe whether it be in a dish of warm water, spritzed with a pump sprayer, under a dripping faucet or in the shower with its owner. Macaws should have a bath or shower at least weekly.

Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have Macaws as pets and would be able to tell you how these birds are in the home environment.

**The Parrot Club of Manitoba** meets the third Friday of each month at 7:30 pm at St. Alphonsus Hall, 341 Munroe Ave. Check our website ([www.parrotclubofman.ca](http://www.parrotclubofman.ca)) for any changes to the meeting schedule.

Winnipeg veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine are:

- Dr. Andrew Davidson of Corydon Animal Hospital
- Dr. Heather McDonald of Centennial Animal Hospital
- Dr. Lisa Sawka of Animal Ark mobile Veterinary Clinic