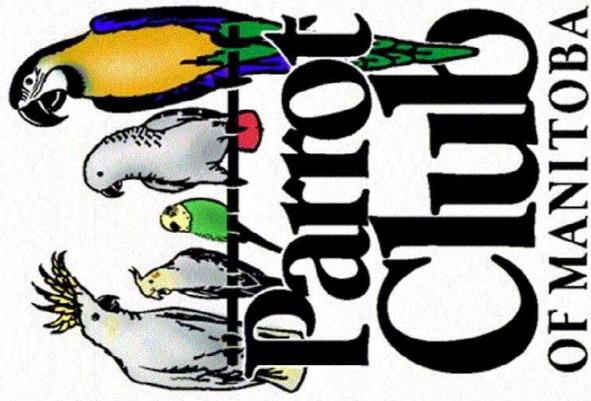


Poicephalus



Senegal



Established 1980

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Poicephalus Family

The genus Poicephalus are small to medium sized, stocky birds with short, squarish tails and proportionately substantial bills. All the Poicephalus are known for their quiet playfulness, their beautiful coloration, and their suitability for apartment living as companion birds. They are not outstanding talkers, but can learn a reasonable vocabulary depending on the individual bird and the owner's willingness to spend time training. The more commonly kept species of this family are the Senegal, the Meyers, the Jardines, and Red Bellied Parrots. Less common are the Brownhead, the Cape, the Ruppells, the Niam-Niam, and the Yellow Faced Parrots.

Origin

Poicephalus parrots originate from Africa. The different species are from different areas spread over the entire continent. The Senegal Parrot has a grey/black hood and wings, green/orange/yellow breast, bright yellow eyes in adults with several sub-species varying in coloration. The Meyers Parrot has a grey/black hood and wings, aqua breast, turquoise back, yellow shoulder flashes and head patch, yellowish-green under parts and orange/red forehead, socks and leading edge of the shoulder/wing and brown eyes in adults. There are several sub-species varying in coloration. The Red-Bellied Parrot, the only true sexually dimorphic Poicephalus, has subtle chest colors gray green with red tinges, dark grey wings and the males have red/orange chests.

General Personality

The Poicephalus are not loud or noisy. Most of their sounds are low-key whistles, chirps, squeaks and assorted chattering. Poicephalus love hanging, swinging and climbing. They love to cuddle, climb into a lap, shoulder sit and tuck their head into a neck. All love head scratching, and will often lie on their back in a hand, totally limp. All of these birds love bathing, and will usually do so on their own a couple of times per week if provided with a bath. Generally the Poicephalus get along well with other companion birds of diverse species, but occasionally individuals can be bullies.

Food

Some Poicephalus may be leery of trying new foods, others won't. Given a second or third look, most will eat virtually anything you set before them. Favorite foods include grapes, peanuts, cherries, cooked pasta, and boiled or sprouted bean and seed mixes. They will prefer fruit to veggies, given half a chance. Zucchini, other squash, corn on the cob, radishes and bell peppers of all colors, jalapenos, yams, apples, oranges and multi-grain breads are all acceptable foods. The important thing is a balanced diet. About ¼ cup of assorted food per day is average for Poicephalus (the larger Jardines will go for ½ cup).

Housing

All but the Cape Parrot can be nicely housed in an 18" X 18" X 24" cage. However, "the bigger the better". The cage should have a floor grate, and should be cleaned every other day at least. Poicephalus seem to like to nibble a bit of food from their bowls then drop it to the floor to save as a "scavenged" snack later, so cage cleanliness is important to prevent them from eating fouled or stale food. Time must be made to allow the bird to play and exercise outside its cage and have regular interaction with you and other members of its "family".

Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have Amazons 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) 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