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Psittacula



Alexandrian

Psittacula

There are at least 32 species and subspecies with this genus, 7 of which are commonly kept as pets. These large elegant parakeets have long tails and vary in colour although most are green. Many have black ring necks and/or mustaches and beak colours vary from striking red to black to yellow. Head and tail colours can be stunning.

Origin

Psittacula are an old family originating in India, Sri Lanka, Ceylon, Burma, Afghanistan, Pakistan, South China, North Vietnam, Hainan and Africa. This broad range accounts for the many geographical variations within each species and the confusion regarding common names.

General Personality

These birds are not known cuddlers and are best hand-raised and interacted with on a daily basis. Favorite activities are chewing, flying and bathing. They can become good talkers and mimics. *P. Krameri manilensis* (Indian or Rose Ring Necked) is the most commonly available bird. *P. cyanocephala* (Plum Headed), *P. himalayana* (Slaty Headed) and *P. roseata* (Blossom Headed) are small birds (approximately 33 cm) with the latter 3 possessing beautifully shaded head colouring, as their name implies. Due to its ability to make loud noises, the Plum Headed Parakeet is not recommended for apartment life and all of these birds possess strong personalities. *P. alexandri* (Moustached) has a delightful personality and is the only rosy breasted Psittacula. *P. derbyana* (Derbyan), (50 cm) possess beautiful lavender blue underparts and are known as voracious chewers. *P. eupatria* (Alexandrian), at 58 cm, is the largest of this genus and has been known since the time of its namesake Alexander the Great.

Food

A basic quality parrot diet with additional fruits, vegetables and fresh water is required. Nuts are appreciated but sunflower seeds, due to their high fat content, should be offered only sparingly. Grit and gravel are not necessary.

Housing

Obviously, the size of the cage varies with the size of the bird. Smaller birds will be happy in cockatiel cages, the larger birds will require parrot-sized enclosures. Wooden branches for both perching and gnawing are a must as are toys for chewing and toys for playing. Clean droppings from perches and cages daily.

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. Most birds love to bath 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. Psittacula should have a bath or shower at least weekly.

THE PARROT CLUB OF MANITOBA meets the 3rd Friday of each month at 7:30 pm at St. Alban's Anglican Church, basement level, Osborne and Rathgar. Check community announcements or contact the club in case of changes. Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have Psittacula 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