

Be Kind Belize Parrot Fact Sheet



Is it OK to own a parrot in Belize?

No, not if it is a Belizean parrot. It is against the law to own *any* species of Belizean wildlife without a special permit. The law protecting wildlife in Belize is called the **Wildlife Protection Act**.

Why shouldn't I keep a parrot as a pet?

Almost all parrots kept as pets in Belize were stolen (or 'poached') from the wild. This is

illegal. Poaching is one of the main reasons our wildlife in Belize is disappearing. When poachers steal parrots often the nest is destroyed, which sometimes kills or hurts the babies and can make it very hard for the parents to have more babies the next

Most people don't know how to care for parrots. They need a special diet - which is expensive, lots of exercise and company all the time. This is why very few parrots in Belize live past the age of 5 although they should live for 50, 60 or even 70 years!

Parrots are very intelligent and get bored easily so, keeping them in a small cage is very cruel. They can also become noisy and destructive.

Why do we have to protect the parrots?

Parrots are becoming rare to see in the wild anymore. Talk to your elders and ask them how many parrots there used to be in Belize. The yellow headed parrot is now endangered, and yet hundreds of chicks are stolen every year in Belize for the pet trade. Blue headed parrots are likely to become endangered soon and many others will be threatened before long if the poaching continues. Poaching, illegal shooting and is the loss of habitat is causing our parrots to disappear. We have to stop chopping down our rainforests and stop stealing wild parrots if we want our children to be able to see parrots in the wild. Wildlife makes money for Belize too - just imagine how much tourism Belize would gain if we had a healthy population of parrots living in our rainforests. People would travel from all over the world to see such a beautiful sight.

What do I do if someone tries to sell me a baby parrot?

Remember what you have learned here. Don't forget that what they are doing is illegal and anyone buying those parrots is breaking the law too.

These parrots are part of Belize. They cannot be replaced and will soon be gone for good.

If you think you can, you could do the right thing and report the person to the Forest Department on 822 1524, or speak to an adult you trust and have them do it for you.

Why do people cut their parrot's wings?

This is to stop the parrot from flying away. Why do you think the parrot might fly away? Wild birds do not want to live in a cage. Cutting a parrot's wings incorrectly can badly hurt or even kill the bird. If you cut the wrong feather, he could bleed to death. Once a bird's wings have been cut, he cannot fly to escape from predators, which includes dogs and cats. If he is in a high tree and he can't fly, he may fall and hurt himself. If you or someone you know needs information on wing-clipping safely, contact Belize Bird Rescue on 610 0400.

What size should a parrot cage be?

People who love parrots and want to see them in the wild believe that every cage is too small and no cage is too big. The size of cage depends on many things: Does the parrot have clipped wings? Does the parrot live indoors or outdoors? How much time does the owner spend with the parrot? What type and size is the bird? How many other birds are in the cage?

A parrot with clipped wings, living indoors that gets lots of attention from its owner every day outside of the cage would need a cage no smaller than 3 feet wide, 3 feet tall and 3 feet deep.

A parrot without clipped wings, living outdoors all of the time would need a cage that allows him to fly, ideally 10 feet wide, 10 feet tall and 10 feet deep to be happy and healthy.

Parrot cages need to be built out of something strong like metal or concrete, because parrots will chew into wood, plastic or bamboo in a few weeks and soon be in danger of escaping, getting stuck trying or being attacked by a predator. Chicken wire is not suitable. , 1/2" mesh Hardware Cloth is best.

A parrot must have access to both shade and sun, fresh water, fresh food and safety from predators at all times. Remember that the person keeping the bird in a cage is responsible for its health and welfare. If you see anyone treating a captive bird or animal badly, tell an adult you trust or call the Forest Department on 822 1524.

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There are 9 resident parrot species in Belize, plus 2 visitors: *A. oratrix* & *A. ochrocephala* (both close relatives of the yellow-head)
 The yellow-head we see is a unique subspecies only found in Belize, which is even more of a reason to protect it

<p>Olive-throated Parakeet (<i>Aratinga nana</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 7 inches Maximum Lifespan: 15- 30 yrs Nesting Success 1-2 chicks per year</p>	<p>White-fronted Amazon (<i>Amazona albifrons</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 10.5 inches Maximum Lifespan: 40-50 years Nesting success: 1-2 chicks per year</p>	<p>Yellow-lored Amazon (<i>Amazona xantholora</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 10 inches Maximum Lifespan: est. 40-50 years Nesting success: unknown</p>
<p>Red-lored Amazon (<i>Amazona autumnalis</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 13.5 inches Maximum Lifespan: 70-80 years Nesting success: 1-2 chicks per year</p>	<p>White-crowned Parrot (<i>Pionus senilis</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 9 inches Maximum Lifespan: 22-25 years Nesting success: unknown</p>	<p>Yellow-head Amazon (<i>Amazona oratrix belizensis</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 16 inches Maximum Lifespan: 60-80 years Nesting success: 0.5 chicks per year</p>
<p>Mealy Amazon (<i>Amazona farinose</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 16 inches Maximum Lifespan: 50-100 years Nesting success: unknown</p>	<p>Scarlet Macaw (<i>Ara macao</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 33 inches Maximum Lifespan: 70-90 years Nesting success: 0.5 chicks per year</p>	<p>Brown-hooded Parrot (<i>Pyrilia haematotis</i>)</p>  <p>Size: 8 inches Maximum Lifespan: 30-35 years Nesting success: unknown</p>