

# Macaws (*Ara*, *Anodorhynchus*, *Cyanopsitta*, *Diopsittaca*) Species Profile

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Of the 328 species of parrots, the Macaw represents 17 living and 2 extinct species in 4 genera, including the largest of all parrots, the [Hyacinth Macaw](#). With a natural habitat extending from Mexico to South America, the Macaw has one of the most extensive ranges of all parrots.

Gregarious by nature, individuals are flock oriented. They have a very structured routine that includes foraging and preening during the day followed by moving to carefully selected "sleep trees" at night. A popular place to observe Macaws in the wild is the Tambopata clay lick in Peru - not only the largest of all known clay licks, but the only one that Blue-and-Gold Macaws are known to frequent. In total, 6 species of Macaws have been counted at Tambopata, including the endangered Scarlet Macaw.

The diet of Macaws should be primarily a pelleted diet specific for macaws. Vegetables, fruits and nuts can be used for training and positive reinforcement. Parrots do not require grit in their diet and may form an impaction if it is added. **Avoid** peanuts, lima, navy or fava beans (including the sprouts), chocolate, avocado, caffeine, and rhubarb.

Today's Macaws available for the pet industry come mainly from private breeders, as importation is closely regulated. Of the 17 living Macaw species, 11 are threatened with extinction in the wild.



## Quick Stats: Macaws

**Family:** Psittacidae

**Origin:** Mexico & South America

**Size:** from 12" (Hahn's/Noble Macaw) to 40" (Hyacinth Macaw)

**Coloration:** Most are brightly colored.

**Diet:** See [Basic Nutrition for Psittacines \(Parrot Family\)](#) for more

information. Note that some psittacines, such as the Hyacinth Macaw have special nutritional needs.

**Cage Size:** Minimum of 24" W x 24" H x 18" D for small species (e.g., Red-Shouldered, Yellow-collared); minimum of 5 ft W x 6 ft H x 3½ ft D for larger species (e.g., Blue and Gold, Military, Hyacinth); bar spacing: not more than 4" apart - structural wire at least 3mm thick.

**Vocalization:** Various intonations of a raucous screech, depending on species.

**Playfulness:** Very active and playful; need many toys, large amount of exercise, and mental stimulation.

**Life Span:** 35-80 years, sometimes longer.

**Age at Maturity:** 2 years for smaller species (e.g., Red-Shouldered, Yellow-collared); 5 years for larger species (e.g., Blue and Gold, Military, Hyacinth).

**Nesting Sites in the Wild:** Generally tree hollows or holes in cliffs, but somewhat species dependent.

**Grooming:** Trim 6-7 flight feathers and clip tips of toenails.

**Compatibility/Disposition:** Friendly, curious, and very intelligent.

**Breeding Season:**

February-May, sometimes June

**Sexing:** Unreliable without DNA testing

**Special:** Very intelligent - need to provide adequate interaction & stimulation (enrichment); messy eaters.

**Cost:** \$500 for smaller Macaws, up to \$8,500 for larger and rarer macaws.

**Endangered Status:** 11 of 17 species highly threatened. 6 species regulated for importation.