

Lories and Lorikeets

There are approximately 50 species of Lories and Lorikeets, recognised by their vibrant colours. Lorikeets are not known for their talking but make up for it with their extraordinary personalities and inquisitive natures. They can be fun loving, loud, demanding, fascinating, comical, obnoxious trouble making clowns all in the same day. These mischievously playful birds are well adjusted to captivity and make charming pets in the right environment.

They spend a lot of their day hopping, jumping, hanging upside down, playing and exploring. They need a spacious cage or large play area with various hanging and "grabbing" pet safe toys to accommodate their needs. These birds are easily bored.

The disadvantages of them as pets are: they consume special liquid or high moisture diets, are messy eaters and have rather liquid, often projectile droppings.

Bathing is one of their favourite daily occupations. They are reasonably high maintenance pets. These birds sometimes are not good around other species, as they have been known to gang up and kill them.

Purchasing a Lorie or Lorikeet

Lories or Lorikeets should be purchased from a reputable breeder. When selecting a Lory or Lorikeet, try to choose a young bird. It is often easier to tame and train a young bird and they adapt better to new environments. Older, wild, colony or parent raised birds may prove challenging to tame. We often find birds for adoption once they hit the "terrible teenage" years and owners cannot cope or haven't spent enough time on training, be careful of birds for adoption. Hand raised babies often make better pets since they have been completely socialized with humans. The lively, alert bird that is not easily frightened is more likely a healthy bird. After purchasing your new bird, have it examined by your veterinarian. We recommend isolation/quarantine any new birds away from



others for 2-6 weeks to monitor for signs of illness or parasites.

Colour

Mature: Basic body colour is green or red with combinations of orange, blue, black, yellow and red

Immature: Similar to adults

Sexing

Mature: Generally difficult, there are few external differences, some species have colour differences

Immature: Same as the adult

Weight: Average 35 - 200 grams

Size: Average 13 – 42 cm in length

Life span 10 - 15 years

Diet Wet/dry nectar mix, veg and fruit

Breeding Some species are being bred in captivity

Brood Size 1- 4 eggs (most lay 2 egg) will hatch in 22 - 25 days, leaving the nest between 60 - 90 days

Cage Minimum 60 cm x 90 cm x 90 cm

Housing:

Lorikeets are colony birds and generally do well with cage mates as they are often very playful. It is important to introduce any new cage mates slowly as not all birds will get along well. Lorikeets are generally messy birds so ensure that their cage is regularly cleaned, particularly around their food

and water bowls. We advise a good quality powder coated or stainless-steel cage of an appropriate size. Some painted cages can contain lead or zinc elements, which can be toxic to your bird so please take care when selecting your cage.

Stainless steel or ceramic bowls should generally be used. These materials are generally not porous so cannot harvest bacteria as easily as more porous materials such as plastic.

Perches of various sizes are important for exercise of their toes and feet health. Natural perches from non-toxic trees are ideal as they generally vary in size anyway. We generally advise against calcium and sandpaper perches as they can dry out the bottom of the feet, cause abrasions and can easily harvest bacteria and other pathogens.

Please do not provide string or rope toys, they fray over time and can cause obstruction if swallowed. If you are feeding a balanced diet, then cuttlefish and other supplements are not needed.

Environmental enrichment is highly recommended and encouraged. Simple things such as hiding food in cardboard toilet rolls can provide hours of entertainment (see additional handout).

It is important that your bird gets enough sleep as long-day light exposure can stimulate excessive moulting and increased reproductive activity. We recommend you keep to the natural day length. Cover the cage and place them in a dark quiet room for at least 8 hours.

Veterinary Care

Lorikeets require regular check-ups every 6-12 months as birds are very good at hiding any illnesses. Your veterinarian can perform a physical examination, grooming (beak, nail or feather trim as necessary) and laboratory tests as needed. During these semi-annual check-ups, health, nutritional and maintenance issues can be identified and addressed. Veterinary check-ups help prevent disease and will aid in the maintenance of a long lasting, healthy relationship between you and your bird.



Common diseases:

One of the most common diseases that we see in lorikeets is an upset gastrointestinal tract. They will often present for regurgitation, vomiting or diarrhoea. If you see any of these signs, we recommend a consultation as there are many different causes and if left untreated you may be putting your bird's life at risk.

Upper respiratory tract infection is characterized by sneezing, raspy breathing, tail twitching or ocular/nasal discharge and is common in young birds. Chlamydia infection is common in young birds, this is a serious disease that can be transferred to other birds AND humans.

Lorikeets are generally very curious and sometimes get themselves into trouble with foreign objects. It is quite common for them to eat or chew on items that they shouldn't (jewellery, plastic toys, rope toys, electrical cords etc.).

Reproductive diseases and behavioural problems are also quite common in lorikeets.

If you are at all concerned about your bird please get in touch with us.

Diet:

Lorikeets are nectar and blossom eaters. Their tongues are very different to other parrot species and have bristles on them that allow them to feed in this way.

In general, we recommend the following:

- 30-70% good quality commercial lorikeet diet – wet, dry or combination of both. These products

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should be mixed in small quantities and changed at least twice daily, as they will spoil readily

- 20-30% vegetables (See additional handout)
- 20-50% native vegetation (most NZ blossoms are okay to feed – ensure these are free of wild bird droppings contact) and fruits (melons, strawberries, banana, blue berries, grapes, peaches, pear, apple). Please ensure that all stone fruits and apples are free of their seeds/pits.
- 1-2% snacks for training and as treats (unsalted nuts (macadamia, cashew and walnut), pasta, eggs and brown rice.)

**These are guidelines, each bird will require slightly different dietary requirements – please contact us for more information on what to feed your bird.*



Some suggested food items include:

Apple, cherries (not the pit), pear, apricots, Chinese veg (bok choy), peas, asparagus, coconut, peppers, banana, corn, pineapple, beans, chickpeas, lentils (cooked), cucumber, plum, dandelion leaves, pomegranate, dates, potato (boiled), pumpkin, fig, raisins (soaked overnight), grapes, raspberry, grapefruit, rice (brown), kale, romaine, beet, kiwi, spinach, blueberry, melons, sprouted seeds, broccoli, mango, squash, brussels sprouts, nectarines, strawberry, cabbage, orange, kumara, papaya, tomato, carrot, parsnip, watermelon, peaches, zucchini