

# Macaws

*Ara ararauna* (Blue & Gold), *Ara macao* (Scarlet), *Diopsittaca nobilis* (Hahn's)

## Introduction and Origin

Around the world, Macaws are considered one of the most spectacular parrots. In total there are 17 species of Macaws in the World, ranging in sizes from the smallest at around 30cm - to the largest which is the Hyacinth Macaw. They are found in tropical rainforests in Central and South America.

**Did you know that pre Colombian civilizations considered the Macaw sacred?**

The species commonly found as pets in Australia are the Blue and Gold, Scarlet and Hahn's Macaws.

Macaws are very affectionate and love nothing more than cuddles and scratches. They are considered to be very intelligent and can learn to talk, do tricks and solve puzzles. Due to this intelligence, they need to be constantly stimulated with toys and attention. They can be a destructive bird as they have a very powerful beak which can easily damage objects. For this, toy selection is critical as you need to consider toys that are durable.

## Getting Your Bird Home

Birds travel better in cardboard boxes or cages that provide good ventilation, but restrict visual stress. While travelling in the car, try to place the bird in a position out of direct sunlight, and away from noisy car speakers, which may cause stress.

When you arrive home, ensure that the cage has been thoroughly cleaned with an avian safe disinfectant such as Avi-Safe® and before releasing the bird from the box, place everything it will require such as water, seed, toys etc into the cage. Once the cage is set up, place the bird inside and leave him or her to acclimatise to the new surroundings. At night cover the cage with a sheet or cage cover, to prevent drafts and reduce visual stress.

## Will my Macaw need a Feathered Friend?

Hand raised Macaws bond more closely to their human family members than their own species, so they usually don't seek the company of other birds. By keeping your bird as an only child (bird) it will remain more closely bonded to you, although if you worry it



may be lonely because your away from home a lot, you can house two together, but you should try to obtain them at the same time, preferably from the same clutch or at least two birds of similar age

## Diet & Water

Macaws are predominately fruit & nut eaters. A formulated pellet diet should be provided as their main food source. This will provide them with the appropriate amount of vitamins and minerals in their diet. This should then be supplemented with portions of fresh fruits and vegetables such as diced apple, carrot, beans, peas, corn (kernels or cob), broccoli and leafy greens like spinach. Remember never to feed birds lettuce or avocado. Apples should always have the seeds removed as they are toxic. Various nuts and seed mixes should also be added. Seeds such as sunflower seeds should be kept to a minimum due to their high fat content.

If fresh fruit and vegetables cannot be provided daily a Vitamin supplement such as Soluvet® can be added to the birds water, two or three times a week. This is also essential during the moult. To provide calcium and iodine, Calcivet, cuttle bone and iodine bells

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can also be provided.

All birds should have a fresh supply of water, changed on a daily basis. Used glazed stoneware or terracotta bowls and position in the shade away from perches.

## Health and Quarantine

At Kellyville Pets we try our best to provide customers with healthy, quality hand raised birds. To reinforce this we offer a 90 day health guarantee with all hand raised birds (See conditions on the Guarantee Certificate).

It is recommended that any new bird whether purchased from a pet store or obtained by any other means, be quarantined for a period of no less than 30 days in a dedicated hospital/quarantine cage, which is isolated from all other pet birds. As prevention is always easier than cure, your bird should be sprayed with an insecticide such as Avian Insect Liquidator® every six weeks to kill and prevent mite and lice infestations. Worms can be fatal so treatment and prevention are a must. The

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use of a broad-spectrum wormer such as Worm-out Gel® will kill any worms present in the new arrival. Don't forget to repeat this worming treatment in a fortnight's time and routinely worm your birds every three months.

**If any bird appears unwell during its quarantine period, please seek veterinary advice.**

## Colouration and Sexing

Macaws are sexually dimorphic - which means that both males and females look the same. The only way to tell what sex they are is through DNA or surgical testing.

## Housing and Breeding

Due to the size of Macaws, it is recommended to house them in an appropriately sized aviary, one which will provide them with enough room to spread their wings and turn around comfortably. A suitable sized aviary would be 8 feet in diameter.

## Common Varieties

**Blue and Gold** - Yellow with blue head & wings

**Scarlet** - Red body with yellow and blue wings

**Green Wing** - Red body with green and blue wings

**Further information on diet, hygiene, worming, vitamins, bird stress, licensing, Avian Vets and much more is available from the team at Kellyville Pets.**



At Kellyville Pets, we encourage responsible pet ownership.

Phone 9629 3282 OPEN 7 DAYS  
106B Windsor Rd Kellyville NSW 2155  
[www.kellyvillepets.com.au](http://www.kellyvillepets.com.au)

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