

Red-lored Amazon

Amazona autumnalis Central and South America

Also known as Yellow-cheeked Amazon, Red-fronted Amazon,

Red-lored Amazons are medium sized Amazons with a large range from Mexico to Ecuador. They are stocky green amazons which somewhat resemble Mexican red-headed and Lilac crowned Amazons. The forehead is bright red and the crown is violet-blue. The cheeks are bright green in some subspecies and yellow in others. The upper beak is partially horn colored and the lower beak is black. Nape feathers are tipped in black producing scallowing. Prominent red speculum in wing. Primary and secondary flight feathers are green with blue tips. Tail feathers green with yellowish green tips.

Subspecies

- A. a. *autumnalis* – Mexico to Honduras – Extensive yellow on cheeks, upper beak dark horn color.
- B. a. *salvini* – Honduras or Nicaragua south to Colombia on western slopes. Larger heavier bird. Cheeks bright green and tail red on outer webs.
- C. a. *lilacina* – Western Ecuador. Face yellowish, red lores extend to superciliary stripe. Beak blackish.
- A. a. *diadema* – Amazon basin of Brazil. – Green face, red on lores and feathered cere darker forming spot in front of eye. Cheeks slightly bluish.

Occurs on the gulf coast of Mexico south to northern South America with disjunct populations in the Amazon and Ecuador. Inhabits a variety of wooded and open habitats, including tropical deciduous forests, pine woodlands, oak forests, mangroves, wooded swamps, cultivated areas with tall trees, and scrubby dry forests. Nest in tree cavities or palm stumps. They have a preference for figs (*figus*) but also eat Pine seeds, coffee beans,

palm fruits, pods, and fruits. Occasionally cause crop destruction, especially corn crops.

Length is 12 to 14 inches. Weight is 300-450 grams ??????. Males are generally larger than females and have larger heads and beaks. Eyes of juveniles are brown while eyes of adults are orange-yellow

Red-loreed amazons can probably live up to 50 years or more. Little is known about their life span in captivity. Breeding age is approximately 3-5 years.

Personality - Young Red-loreed amazons tend to be very tame and handelable with moderate speaking ability They are intelligent, inquisitive birds and can be good pets if not treated roughly. Mature birds, especially males may become aggressive. They were relatively common in captivity but are not frequently bred and young birds are not commonly available for pets.

Activities – Red-loreed Amazons should always be provided with toys, blocks of wood or branches that they can chew. In order to ensure safety companion amazons should not be allowed unsupervised freedom in the home as they often encounter toxins or dangerous items. Young amazons should be socialized to many people and exposed to a variety of situations such as new cages, toys, visits to the veterinarian, handling by friends, wing and nail clips, etc. to avoid fear of novel situations. They need to have some space for exercise.

Dietary needs - Amazons should be fed a formulated (pelleted or extruded diet) as a basis for good nutrition. Kaytee Exact is an excellent staple diet for amazons. The diet should be supplemented with fresh fruits and vegetables daily to add variety and psychological enrichment. Feed approximately ¼ cup of Kaytee Exact and 1/4 cup of fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Monitor food intake. Overfeeding leads to pickiness, selective feeding and wasteful throwing of food. Because of their tendency to obesity, Red-loreed Amazons should be fed no sunflower or safflower seeds or seeds should only be given as treats. Vitamin supplements are not needed for birds that are eating a formulated diet.

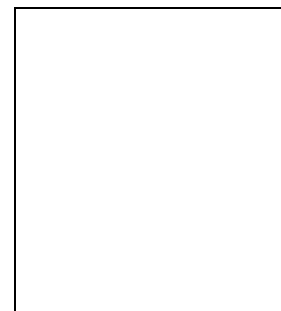
Birds, which are fed only seeds, will need vitamin and mineral supplementation to prevent deficiency diseases. Preferably vitamins should be added to soft food rather than putting in the water as this dilutes the vitamins, water soluble vitamins break down rapidly and water with sweetened and vitamins is a good growth medium for bacteria. Vitamin added to the outside of seeds is usually lost when the bird shells the seeds.

Grooming - Routine bathing or showering is vital to maintaining good plumage and skin condition. Birds can be misted and allowed to dry in a warm room or in the sun, or gently dried with a blow drier. Care should be taken not to clip the wing feathers excessively as amazons often fall and injure themselves. Clip only the primary flight feathers and only enough so the bird will glide to the floor. Red-lored Amazons are heavy bodied and care must be taken not to cut too many feathers. Excessive wing clipping can result in injuries from falling.

Identification - All companion and breeding birds should be individually identified to assist in recovery if lost and assist in maintenance of medical and genealogical records. Many breeders apply closed legs bands when chicks are young. While they present a slight risk of entrapment closed bands are preferable to no identification, especially for breeding birds. Microchips, which can be implanted into the muscle or under the skin, are a reliable means of identification but require electronic readers to verify identification. Tattoos may be used but often fade or become illegible with time. Footprints may have some application in identification.

Sexing Red-lored amazons are monomorphic (sexes are not visually distinct). Surgical sexing or DNA sexing must be used to confirm sex of breeders. Males are usually larger and have larger heads than females.

Housing - Red-lored amazons are very active and should be provided the largest cage that space and budget allows. They should also be supplied with a retreat to guard against insecurity and fear responses. Ideally the cage should provide room for flight. Durable cage construction is not as critical as it is for macaws



and cockatoos. Locks or escape proof latches may be necessary on cages. Ideally the bird will have an outdoor cage as well to allow playtime in the fresh-air and sunlight.

Breeding – Red-lore Amazons are relatively difficult to breed in captivity than most Amazons. They are shy by nature and need privacy. In North America Red-lore Amazons breed predominantly in the spring and have a limited breeding season typically from February or March to June or July. Clutch size is typically 3 to 4 eggs. One inch by one inch by 14 gauge welded wire, or 1” X ½ “ welded wire is a good choice for cage construction. A suggested size is 4 feet wide by 4 feet tall by 8 feet long suspended 4 feet above the ground or floor.

Nest Box - Grandfather style wooden boxes can be used. Size should be approximately 12” x 12” x 24”.

Incubation period is approximately 24-26 days. Chicks will usually fledge at approximately 10 to 12 weeks of age. Red-lore Amazons are relatively easy to hand-rear. Most hand rearing formulas can be used successfully. Kaytee Exact regular hand rearing formula is a good choice.

Aggression

Male Red lore Amazons are occasionally aggressive toward their mates. Clipping the wings of the male prior to the breeding season may be necessary in aggressive individuals to help the female to escape in case the male becomes aggressive. Males in breeding condition can be very aggressive to keepers.

Red lore Amazons can be noisy when in breeding condition. When breeding Amazons, noise and proximity to neighbors must be considered.

Common diseases and disorders

- Feather-picking
- Psittacosis
- Fearful behavior
- Epilepsy
- Poor eating habits
- Bacterial and fungal infections
- Mate aggression

- Toxicity, ingestion of metals
- Toe necrosis

Conservation Status - Stable - Red-lored Amazons are listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The wild population is locally common but declining due to habitat destruction, capture for export and use for pets locally in other areas. In the past large numbers were traded and used locally for pets. The Ecuadorian population is poorly known and threatened. Red-lored amazons were imported in large numbers in the 1970's and 1980's and are fairly common in the United States.