

Vinaceous amazon

Amazona vinacea South America

Vinaceous amazons are medium sized stocky green amazons with which are named for their vinaceous or purple-maroon belly patch which appears as a suffusion of color on their heavily scalloped chest and abdomen coverts. They have small red patch on the forehead, red lores and red wing speculum. The nape feathers are elongated and tipped in black. The coverts on the chest have black edges resulting in a scalloped appearance on the breast. Beak is unique deep burgundy red color. The flight feathers are green at the base and violet blue distally.

Range is limited to south eastern Brazil, eastern Paraguay and northern Argentina. Inhabit mostly lowland forests but extend up to 2000m. Eat primarily tree seeds including Araucaria, Podocarpus, Eucalyptus and Pilocarpus seeds. Nest in high tree cavities often in small colonies and sometimes in cliffs.

Length is 12 to 13 inches. Weight is 350-450 grams. Males are generally larger than females and have larger heads and beaks. Many males have slightly wider red patch on the forehead. Eyes of juveniles are brown and adults are red-orange.

Vinaceous amazons can probably live up to 50 years judging by life span of similar species. Little is known about their life span in captivity.

Personality - Vinaceous amazons are intelligent, inquisitive birds with moderate speaking ability. They are relatively gentle and easily to tame but are not often available as pets and should be used for breeding. They are uncommon in captivity, and are seldom available for pets.

Activities – Vinaceous 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, Vinaceous Amazons should be given small amounts of sunflower or safflower seeds as treats. Vitamin supplements are not needed for birds that are eating a formulated diet.

Birds that 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. Vinaceous are not as heavy bodied as most amazons and a few more feathers can be clipped. Excessive wing clipping can result in injuries from falling.

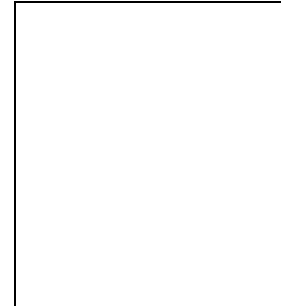
Illustrate wing clip

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 leg 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 Vinaceous amazons are monomorphic (no visual difference between sexes) however males tend to have a little larger red patch on the forehead. Sex of breeders must be confirmed by surgical sexing or DNA sexing.

Housing - Vinaceous 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 – Vinaceous amazons are relatively easy to breed in captivity and sometimes breed as young as 2 years (females). In North America Vinaceous 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. Grandfather style wooden nest 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. Vinaceous 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 Vinaceous amazons occasionally become aggressive toward their mates. Cage construction and management should take into consideration

techniques to reduce mate aggression. Clipping the wings of aggressive males prior to the breeding season will help the female to escape in case the male becomes aggressive.

Vinaceous amazons are quite compared to most Amazons but can still be noisy especially when in breeding condition. When breeding amazons, noise and proximity to neighbors must be considered.

Common diseases and disorders

- Obesity
- Feather-picking
- Psittacosis
- Poor eating habits
- Aspergillosis
- Bacterial and fungal infections
- Mate aggression
- Toxicity, ingestion of metals

Conservation Status - Endangered - Vinaceous Amazons are listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). International trade requires both import and export permits. Large portions of their habitat have been deforested and converted to agriculture or flooded by dams. Their populations are declining primarily due to habitat destruction. Vinaceous amazons are uncommon in the United States but relatively easy to breed.