

Yellow billed amazon

Amazona collaria Jamaica

Also known as the Jamician amazon, Yellow billed parrot.

Yellow-billed amazons are medium sized amazons. They are stocky green parrots with white foreheads, blue caps, pinkish throats and yellow bills. The undersides of the wings are blue and the tails feathers are yellowish-green with pinkish-red at the base. The beak is yellow horn color.

Yellow-bills Endemic to Jamaica inhabiting remote hilly and mountainous areas and are sympatric with the black-billed amazon. They inhabit arid upland forests and forest edge adjoining cultivated areas. They eat cecropia catkins, pimentia nuts, figs, buds and seeds of trees. Nest in high tree cavities.

Length is 10 to 12 inches. Weight is approximately 300-450 grams. Males are generally larger than females and have larger heads and beaks. Eyes of adults and juveniles are brown.

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

Personality - Yellow-billed amazons are intelligent, inquisitive birds with moderate speaking ability. Mature birds, especially males become aggressive. Due to their relative rarity in captivity, they are unlikely to be available for pets. They are active by nature and have a tendency toward obesity if closely confined.

Activities – Yellow billed 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, Yellow billed 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.

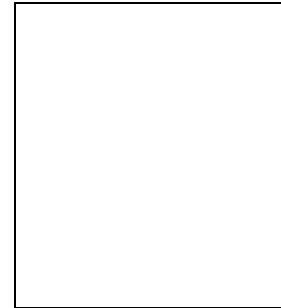
Grooming - Routine bathing or showering is vital to maintaining good plumage and skin condition. Birds can be misted and allowed to dry in a warm room or in the sun, or gently dried with a blow drier. Care should be taken not to clip the wing feathers excessively as amazons often fall and injure themselves. Clip only the primary flight feathers and only enough so the bird will glide to the floor. Yellow billed are heavy bodies 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 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 Yellow billed amazons are monomorphic (no visual difference between sexes) however males tend to have a little more pink-red coloration. Sex of breeders must be confirmed by surgical sexing or DNA sexing.

Housing - Yellow billed 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 play time in the fresh-air and sunlight.



Breeding – Yellow billed amazons are difficult to breed in captivity. In North America Yellow billed 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 - Double entrance boxes may be used to reduce the chance of the male trapping the female in the box. Grand-father 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. Yellow billed amazons are relatively easy to hand-rear. Most hand rearing formulas can be used successfully. Kaytee Regular hand rearing formula is a good choice.

Aggression

Male Yellow billed amazons frequently become aggressive toward their mates. Cage construction and management should take into consideration techniques to reduce mate aggression. Clipping the wings of the male prior

to the breeding season will help the female to escape in case the male becomes aggressive. Aggressive behavior may occur in compatible breeding pairs. Aggression often occurs at the time of human visitation.

Yellow billed amazons are 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
- Bacterial and fungal infections
- Mate aggression
- Toxicity, ingestion of metals
- Toe necrosis

Conservation Status - Near Threatened - Yellow billed Amazons are listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Their populations are declining due to habitat destruction and capture for export and use for pets locally. They are vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes. Yellow billed amazons are uncommon in the United States and difficult to breed.