

Jardine's Parrot

Poicephalus gulielmi

Also known as red-headed parrot

Jardine's parrots are medium sized stocky parrots with short square tails and red-orange markings on the crown, bend of the wings and legs. They are a vivid green color accented by dark feather barring on the body coverts, darker wing coverts and black flight and tail feathers. Upper beak is horn colored with a black tip. Lower beak is black.

Jardine's parrots have two disjunct ranges in west central Africa. They inhabit montane Juniper and Podocarpus forests (5000 to 9000 feet) in Tanzania and Kenya. In Western Africa they occupy rain forests. Diet of wild birds is fruits, nuts, flowers and seeds and insects. Wild birds are generally found in pairs or small groups and are shy and wary but may forage for food in large flocks.

P.g. *gulielmi* - Known as the black-winged jardines in the United States. (found from Southern Cameroon into Congo, Rwanda, Zaire and Kenya) Fairly large and mainly green with red on head, leading edge of wing and legs.

P.g. *fantiensis* – Known as the lesser Jardines (Upper Guinea rain-forests of West Africa in Liberia, Cote de Ivoire and Ghana)

P.g. *massaicus* – Known as the Greater Jardines in the United States. Found in the Great rift valley, in Kenya and Tanzania.

Subspecies identification can be difficult and hybrids occur in captivity. See the African Parrot Society Web page for photos and discussion of the different subspecies.

Length 11-11.5 inches

Weight – Greater and Black-winged Jardines 250-300 grams.

Lesser Jardines 200-235

Life Span – possibly up to approximately 30 years but more likely approximately 15-20 years. Juvenile birds have dark gray eyes that become orange as adults. Juveniles have less extensive orange coloration.

Age of sexual maturity is 3-4 years.

Personality -. Jardine's parrots are playful outgoing birds that love attention. They can be affectionate but are not generally demanding of attention. They tend to become more independent as they reach sexual maturity and adult males may become aggressive during breeding season. While they are not great talkers, they have some limited mimicking ability.

Young Jardine's adapt readily to new surroundings and should be well adapted to many novel experiences at a young age. Adult birds are less adaptable to unfamiliar environments and dietary changes.

Activities - Jardine's are very playful and energetic. Environmental enrichment is important. They should always be provided with toys, wooden blocks that can be chewed, and branches from non-toxic trees. In order to ensure safety, companion birds should not be allowed unsupervised freedom in the home as they often encounter toxins or dangerous items. Young birds 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.

Dietary needs - African greys and to a lesser extent *Poicephalus* appear to utilize calcium differently than other psittacine species. Birds kept as indoor pets especially tend to develop signs of calcium deficiency that can be a serious health threat. Natural or full spectrum light may also be helpful. African parrots should be fed a formulated (pelleted or extruded diet) as a basis for good nutrition. Kaytee Exact manufactures a special diet from African parrots with a more readily utilizable calcium source to help prevent calcium deficiency. Jardine's should be fed approximately 1 ½ - 2 heaping tablespoons of Kaytee Exact daily. Alternatively they can be fed Kaytee Exact small. Birds will generally waste less of the small sizes product. The diet should be supplemented with approximately the same volume of fresh fruits and vegetables daily to add variety and psychological enrichment. Treats may be given in small amounts especially as rewards for good behavior. Fresh clean water must be provided every day. Vitamin supplements are not needed for birds that are eating a formulated diet.

For birds fed a seed diet, vitamin supplementation is necessary. Vitaminized seeds have vitamins added to the shells that are discarded by the bird when it eats. Preferably vitamins should be added to soft foods rather than water as vitamins and the accompanying sweeteners promote bacterial growth in water.

Poicephalus are very difficult to hand-rear from the egg. Kaytee Exact Macaw Handrearing formula can be used but very young chicks need to be fed very frequently (approximately every 1/12 to 2 hours during the day). It is preferable to allow some parent feeding if possible. Jardines will wean or fledge at approximately 8-10 weeks.

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 dried with a blow drier. Care should be taken not to clip the wing feathers excessively as heavy bodied birds may fall and injure themselves. Clip only enough so the bird will glide to the floor.

Identification - All companion and breeding birds should be individually identified to assist in recovery if lost and assist in maintenance of medical and genealogy 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 - Jardine's parrots show some slight sexual dimorphism (visual difference between the species) however for breeding birds, endoscopic examination or laboratory sexing techniques are needed for accurate sex determination.

Housing - African parrots are very active and should be provided with as large a cage as possible. The cage should have two perches so the birds can move between them. Toys and activities should be provided. Ideally pet birds should have a cage outdoors to allow exposure to sunlight and fresh air in good weather.

Breeding - Jardine's parrots breed fairly well in captivity. They breed mostly in the spring. Clutch size is usually 2-4 eggs.

Nest Box - Jardine's will use a vertical 10" x 10" x 12" or 12" x 12" x 14" or an L shaped box.

Cage size - Cage size should be at least 4' x 4' x 6' or 3' x 3' x 8'.

Common Diseases

- Respiratory Diseases- Aspergillosis
- Bacterial, viral, Fungal Diseases
- Calcium deficiency disorder
- Toxicities
- Chlamydiosis (Psittacosis)
- Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease
- Feather picking

Many common health problems can be prevented by good diet, nutrition and routine health care. Routine veterinary examination (annually) can help you to keep your pet in excellent health and enhance your relationship with your bird.

Conservation Status – Generally Common and Stable in many parts of their range – Jardine's are listed on Appendix II of CITES (Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora) because of the listing of almost all parrots. They are not common in the market place but are being bred more frequently and are increasing in popularity as pets.

