

PARROT-WISE

Why is it bad to take baby birds? Belize's tourism industry relies on its abundant wildlife, but parrot numbers are declining every year: soon they will all be gone. Nest-robbers (poachers) are killing our future.

Is it really illegal to keep a parrot? Yes it is. Check with the Forest Department about how to license your parrot.

Do captive parrots in Belize need special care?

Yes! Belizean parrots know that they are parrots. Every day they hear and see their parrot cousins flying free, so they are more difficult to handle than the same bird in the US or UK. They belong in the wild.

Why did my baby bird die? Captive birds die from shock, from not enough food or water, or the wrong kind of food. Baby birds belong with their mothers. PLEASE don't encourage the trade by buying baby parrots from poachers.

How long should Polly live? Wild Belizean parrots can live for 45-90 years, but most captive parrots die within 5 years through poor diet and bad care. Follow this guide and your bird will live much longer.

How smart are parrots? As smart as a 3 year old child! They can think, evaluate, reason and remember. They are emotional, intelligent, wild creatures and it's extremely hard work to make friends with them.

How can I get him to talk more? Parrots vocalise more as they get older, especially if you spend a lot of time with them. Look after your bird and treat him well, then he could live for 50 years or more, but you must look after him.

"I can't cope with Polly any more!"

That's simple: call the Forest Department on 802 1524 or Belize Bird Rescue on 610 0400. Your bird can enter the rehabilitation programme where we will teach him to be wild again and eventually release him.

PLEASE: don't just let him go – he will not survive.

NOT JUST A PRETTY POLLY

A good home for Polly

A parrot cage should be at least 4 feet around so he can stretch, flap and move easily, otherwise he'll become bored and unhealthy. Make the cage from ½" wire mesh so rats, snakes and possums can't get in. He needs a covered area for protection from weather extremes and an open area where he can choose rain or sunshine. Parrots hate to be at ground level: put the cage as high as you can. It's more natural if his cage is under a tree.

Exciting perches: Use different thicknesses and heights for good health and exercise. Perches must be secure and not twist around. Parrots love to chew leaves so give fresh greens every day. Make sure you have enough perch space for everyone and take care if you have two or more birds: fighting can lead to fatal injuries.

Give him a bath: Take him out in the rain or use a gentle spray-bottle of warm water. He will love it, especially in the dry season, and he'll look and feel so much healthier

He needs to play: Parrots are social birds. In the wild they live in large flocks. Boredom makes a parrot aggressive and miserable: he may even pluck out his own feathers. He needs toys and a friend (human or parrot) exactly like human children. Give him lots to do, and love and attention: solitude is torture for a parrot

WAYS TO STOP HIM BITING

1. Free Time: let him roam outside of his cage as often as you can. Parrots are a lot nicer when they're free.

2. Play Time: he needs toys and interesting things to chew on and explore. Bored birds bite.

3. Social Time: sit still and let him climb on you. Don't just try and hold him, let him make the advances.

4. Quiet Time: too much noise and fuss will frighten him and he'll bite. Make sure he gets a full night's sleep.

5. Time Out: sometime's he's just plain grumpy, so leave him alone for a while. You may think you're in charge, but you're not!

YOUR TIME: If you don't have the time, then please don't get a parrot

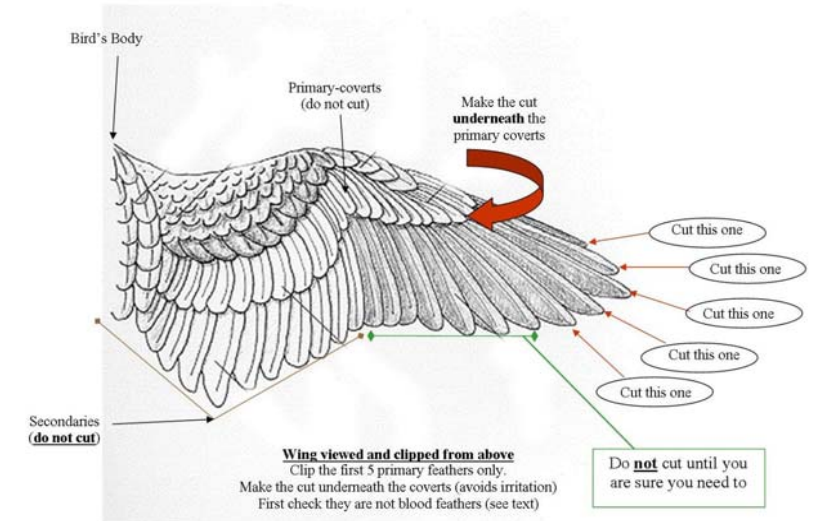
WING CLIPPING

Cutting a bird's wing does not make him tame. That can only be achieved by hard work and dedication.

He needs wings to keep warm and dry, to protect soft body feathers, to exercise his chest muscles and to control landings and avoid injury, so

If you must do it, do it right.

DO NOT cut all of the feathers. See the diagram for the best way to clip a parrots' wings.



Never cut growing feathers: they have nerves and a blood supply: your bird could bleed to death. If the feather has a white sheath and/or the shaft appears darker than others, do not clip it.

Never clip baby parrots: they need at least 3 months with full wings for their muscles to develop properly, whether or not they are permitted to fly.

Use sharp nail clippers to avoid scissor injury.

Clip both wings in the same way. Mismatched wings cause uncontrolled, painful falls.

Do **NOT** cut his tail feathers: that's just ugly.

If you're still not sure, call us – we can help.

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING:

Banana, mango, watermelon, papaya, unsalted cashews, sunflower seeds, sugarcane, figs, oranges, kinop, plums, celery, spinach, pineapple, carrot, okra, craboo, hibiscus flowers, fresh corn, dried yellow corn, green beans, ackee, all apples & plums, grapes, chilli peppers, in fact most fruits and vegetables and even flowers. Note: Too many sunflower seeds will make him fat. Peanuts may carry a fungus that is toxic to birds: experts advise not to give peanuts to your bird.

SICK-MAKING: salt, alcohol, fizzy drinks, sweets, sugary cakes, salty chips etc.

POISONOUS: chocolate, avocado, onion.

ALWAYS: CLEAN, FRESH DRINKING WATER

Play Time

Making toys for your parrot



Join together craft beads & popsicle sticks, wood blocks, small bush sticks, sugar cane, plastic bottle tops, leather strips, leaves, coconut, flowers, pasta pieces, toilet roll inners, clean rags, buttons, nuts, mango pits and baby toys. Connect them with pipe-cleaners, ropes, string, vines and cable ties (which are also excellent for securing branches for perches)



By kind permission: Dan Piraro

Hopefully you now have some ideas to help Polly have a long and happy life

If you would like help working with your parrot, or more advice on his care, please contact us.

If you decide that Polly should be returned to the wild, contact us, or the Forest Department to enter him into the rehabilitation programme.

Report injured, abused or illegally held wildlife

Belize Forest Department, Forest Drive, Belmopan

(+501) 802-2079/1524

e-mail: fd.wildlife@mnrei.gov.bz

www.forestdepartment.gov.bz



Contact us if you would like to receive educational talks on the birds of Belize at your school or workplace.

BELIZE BIRD RESCUE

Bird Sanctuary & Rehabilitation Centre
Cayo District. Belize. (+501) 822 1145 / 610 0400
www.belizebirdrescue.com
belizebirdrescue@gmail.com

CARING FOR YOUR CAPTIVE PARROT



It is illegal to capture parrots from the wild or to hold them in captivity

If you already have a captive parrot, you must contact the Forest Department to obtain a licence

Then follow this guide to giving your licensed bird the care he needs for a long and happy life as a member of your family



Parrots are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, Chapter 220 of the laws of Belize

NOTE: This guide is intended for owners with birds that are already in captivity. Remember it is illegal to take birds from the wild