

Scarlet Macaw

Ara macao



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Scarlet macaws have been kept by the Pueblo Indians since 1100 A.D. They are extremely sociable and are popular because of their looks, clear speech, gentle nature and affectionate dedication to their caregiver.



Is a scarlet macaw the right companion animal for you?

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. I have an appropriate and safe space for this bird.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. I know that choosing this bird can be a lifelong commitment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. I will provide daily, supervised time for this bird outside a cage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. The natural sounds of this bird will be acceptable to family members and neighbors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered, "Yes" to these statements, a scarlet macaw may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a scarlet macaw and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Average Size 33 to 37 inches long **Life Span** 40+ years with proper care

Diet Specialized pelleted diets are highly recommended and should consist of 60–70% of the diet; use fortified seeds in moderation as they are higher in fat and less nutritious than pellets

Fresh fruits and vegetables, such as apples, berries, pears, grapes, broccoli, and carrots

Clean, fresh, filtered and chlorine-free water changed daily

Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, alcohol or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems

Feeding If your bird is used to a seed diet, convert to pellets gradually; fresh pellets or seeds and fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should always be available

Fresh fruits and vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours; macaws appreciate quality and variety in their food

Housing Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature change; cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts

A cage approximately 36" W x 36" D x 60" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 1" apart, makes a good home for your macaw; as with all animals, it is best to provide the largest habitat possible; a flight cage is strongly recommended

A variety of appropriate perch sizes, including a parrot perch outside the cage, to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended

A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with cage paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning; to avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches

Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your birds health

Recommended Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Cage and cage cover	<input type="checkbox"/> Grooming spray	<input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin supplements
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cage paper or substrate	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral block	<input type="checkbox"/> Variety of perches and toys
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed	<input type="checkbox"/> Treats	<input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers and styptic gel
	<input type="checkbox"/> Food and water dishes	<input type="checkbox"/> Play gym	<input type="checkbox"/> Book about macaws

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Normal Behavior and Interaction

Social, enjoy human interaction, and need ample time outside of the cage for physical and mental health; macaws bond easily to their primary caregiver

They chew aggressively and need a lot of stimulating toys and wood to chew on

Their natural calls can be quite loud

Habitat Maintenance

Clean and disinfect the cage and perches regularly; replace substrate or cage liner weekly or more often if needed; replace food and water daily

Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly

Ensure that there are no cage parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead and lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird

Grooming and Hygiene

Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing; remove the water when done; as an alternative, mist the bird with water or a grooming spray

Clipping flight feathers is not necessary, but when done correctly it can help prevent injury or escape; consult an avian veterinarian on what is best for your bird

Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird

Signs of a Healthy Bird

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Dry nostrils and bright, dry eyes
- Clean, dry vent
- Eats and drinks throughout the day
- Beak, legs, and feet normal in appearance
- Smooth, well-groomed feathers

Common Health Issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Chlamydiosis	Appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge, green stool.	Seek immediate veterinary attention.
Diarrhea	Fecal portion of dropping is loose, weight loss, ruffled feathers. Variety of causes from diet change to internal parasites.	Seek treatment from veterinarian.
Feather Plucking	Bird plucks own feathers.	Give attention, new toys, or space. Seek veterinary advice.
Proventricular Dilatation Disease	Depression, weight loss, passing undigested food.	Seek immediate veterinary attention.

Red Flags

- Beak swelling or accumulations
- Wheezing or coughing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers
- Runny or discolored stools
- Red or swollen eyes
- Sitting on floor of habitat
- Favoring one foot
- Loss of appetite

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your avian veterinarian.

Sources

Caring for a Parrot: Macaws and More by Loren Spiotta

Macaws – A Complete Pet Owner’s Guide by Roger Sweeney

Parrots: Selection, Care and Training by H.W.S. Russell

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.