



## Fascinating Parrot Facts

### 10 TERMS TO HELP YOU LEARN

1. **Ornithology:** the study of birds
2. **Preening:** grooming or cleaning of feathers
3. **Molting:** shedding of feathers
4. **Uropygial Gland:** (preening gland) produces an oil that is spread over the feathers with the beak as part of the preening process
5. **Sexual Dimorphism:** Males and females look different (such as cardinals)
6. **Sexual Monomorphism:** Males and females look the same
7. **Syrinx:** an organ in Parrots which is similar to a human voice box
8. **Crest:** long feathers on the head which can be used as a defense mechanism
9. **Clutch:** group of eggs layed by female parrot
10. **Zygodactyl:** having the toes of each foot arranged in pairs, with two toes in front and two behind

### ABOUT PARROTS



- \* There are over 350 different parrot species.
- \* Characteristic features of parrots include a strong curved bill, an upright stance, strong legs, and clawed zygodactyl feet.
- \* The average life span of a large parrot is 75 years. Most animals live longer in captivity than their wild counterparts. The opposite is true of birds because they are very susceptible to airborne pollution.
- \* The chicks grow incredibly fast and require a great deal of food to fuel the growth. Typically only one or two chicks from a single clutch will survive. The average clutch is about two or three eggs. The length of gestation varies, depending on the size of the bird.

### PARROT TRAITS AND ADAPTATIONS

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| <b>Vision</b>  | The ability to see detail and color is better in parrots than in most mammals  |
| <b>Hearing</b> | The discrimination of sound waves and ability to localize the direction of sound are well developed and similar to that of humans. However, parrots appear less sensitive to higher and lower vocal tones as compared to humans. |
| <b>Smell</b>   | The sense of smell is present, but poorly developed.   |
| <b>Taste</b>   | Birds can taste, but compared to mammals, this sense is poorly developed. Taste buds in birds are found on the roof of the mouth, not the tongue.  |



### PARROT ROLE IN THE ECOSYSTEM

Parrots are prey animals and are hunted by raptors, or birds of prey such as hawks and eagles. Parrots don't hunt, they forage fruits and nuts.

Parrots will spread seeds in their droppings and this helps propagate new trees, which is crucial maintenance for the forest.

It can be very difficult to know when a parrot is sick, as they try to mask illness. This is an important instinct because predators look for sick or injured animals knowing they will be easier to catch.

