



**New Berlin Animal Hospital**  
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## **AFRICAN GREY PARROTS**

### ***General Information***

The African Grey (*Psittacus erithacus*) from central Africa is a highly intelligent bird commonly encountered in captivity. This elegant medium-sized bird is entirely grey with a strikingly red short blunt tail. The African Grey has a charming personality and is recognized as one of the best talkers among all the pet birds. With this extraordinary ability to imitate, some African Greys develop extensive vocabularies of words, songs, verses, whistles, sneezes, coughs and electronic sounds such as telephones



and microwave ovens. Some individuals, especially if wild or improperly socialized, may have unacceptable vocalizations. The sound that a frightened, defensive or timid African Grey will make is a characteristic, loud growl. African Greys bond readily, often with one member of the family or specifically with males or females. This bond occasionally leads to aggression towards others. These handsome, good-natured birds make excellent companions and family pets. Most are generally interactive and affectionate. They will often persistently solicit petting and head scratches. African Greys are very playful and enjoy climbing and chewing. It is important to keep these smart birds busy as boredom can lead to problems such as feather

picking. Providing non-toxic, washed, fresh branches and pet-safe toys will afford many hours of entertainment and exercise for this inquisitive pet.

There are two types of African Grey parrots, the Congo African Grey and the smaller duller colored Timneh African Grey parrot that has a maroon colored tail.

### ***Purchasing an African Grey Parrot***

African Greys may be purchased from a pet store or a reputable breeder. When selecting an African Grey, try to choose a young bird, as it may be easier to tame and train. Older, wild, colony or parent raised birds may prove difficult to tame. Hand raised babies often make better pets since they have been completely socialized with humans. Young birds are easier to tame and adapt readily to new environments and situations. Your new bird should be exposed early to different events (young and old people, males and females, other pets, car trips, visits to the veterinarian, etc.) to help promote a calm, well-adjusted pet. After purchasing your new bird, have it examined by a veterinarian familiar with birds.

## ***Veterinary Care***

African Greys require regular, routine veterinary health check-ups. Your veterinarian can perform a physical examination, grooming (beak, nail or feather trim) and laboratory tests as needed. During these semi-annual check-ups, health, nutritional and maintenance issues can be identified and addressed. Veterinary check-ups help prevent disease and will aid in the maintenance of a long lasting, healthy relationship between you and your bird.

## ***Color***

### **Mature**

- In general the body feathers are light grey, the wing feathers dark grey, and tail feathers red
- Iris (eye) is pale yellow
- Legs grey

### **Immature**

- Tail feathers dark red towards tip
- Iris is grey
- Legs darker grey and smoother

## ***Sexing***

### **Mature**

- Generally no reliable external sex differences
- Experienced breeders recognize subtle size and color variations between sexes

***Weight*** Average 12 - 19 ounces (350 - 550 grams)

***Size*** Average 13.5 inches (33 cm) in length

***Life-span*** 20 - 25 years (maximum 65 years)

***Diet*** Consult your veterinarian.

***Breeding*** Sexual maturity at 3 - 6 years  
Prolific breeders require lots of space

***Brood Size*** 2 - 4 eggs hatch in 17 - 31 days, young leave the nest in 9 - 10 weeks

***Cage*** Minimum 2 ft x 3 ft x 4 ft (60 cm x 90 cm x 120 cm)

