

African Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*)

Characteristics- African Greys are extremely bright and charming companions. These parrots are often very good talkers. We recommend DNA sexing by three years of age.

Behavior- African Greys can be clowns and quite entertaining. Because of their apparent great intelligence, they need “hobbies.” Feather picking is common in these birds, due to many causes, with behavior high on the list. We recommend our “Good Citizen Program,” to establish flock hierarchy in the home and to reduce stress.

Diet- African Greys are very susceptible to calcium deficiencies, due to their unique physiology. Parrot “mixes” are not balanced diets. These seed blends are loaded with fat, deficient in vitamins, minerals and proteins. Factory enrichment of these seed mixes doesn’t lead to a balanced diet. Recommendation: Feed 80-90% of caloric intake with a formulated diet(pellets, crumbles), such as Harrison’s , Zupreem, Exact, Pretty Bird. Feed 20% of the caloric intake with: scant amount of seed, fresh leafy or orange-colored vegetables,very little starches (rice, bread, pasta, banana), small quantities of people food items(food groups from the kitchen). Emphasize calcium- rich treats including almonds, cheese, kale, collards.

Environment- African Greys enjoy toys; stick to safe, sturdy commercial products. Free flying in the house for exercise is hazardous. Uncaged African Greys should be closely supervised because they can be very destructive to home furnishings. We recommend newspaper or equivalent for cage bottoms. Good room ventilation is very important.

Health- Young African Greys are very susceptible to psittacine circovirus (PBFV). Avoid exposure to other Old World birds, particularly lovebirds. Young and mature African Greys are sometimes susceptible to *Chlamydophila*, bacteria, or fungal infections. African Greys should be closely monitored for proper calcium metabolism, by diet monitoring and testing.



Post-purchase screening- African Grey parrots purchased on the open market should be tested for circovirus (PBFV). *Chlamydophila* screening is always prudent to look for condition that can be transmitted to family members. Depending on physical findings, additional blood and bacterial screening may be recommended.

Periodic screening- A hematology/chemical panel is a good idea for the check up- particularly looking at cell levels and mineral levels, even in the properly fed African Grey.

Mature parrot screening- we recommend a blood panel, x-rays, and bacterial/fungal screen.