

ECLECTUS PARROTS. roratus

Have You ever heard the term “sexually dimorphic” (different form)? In most parrots males and females look very much alike so they are “sexual monomorphs”. In eclectus parrots females look so different (or dimorphic) from males that when first discovered some people thought they were different kinds of birds. Hen eclectus are primarily a deep red with varying amounts of blue on the breast. Cock eclectus are a rich deep green with scarlet extending from under the wings into the sides of the breast. Even the beaks are different. Males are horn colored while hens are black.

Of the ten subspecies only four are commonly bred in captivity. These are readily found and can make nice pets. These twelve to fourteen inch long birds easily stand out among other kinds of birds. Not only are their colors brilliant but eclectus parrot feathers look more like fur than normal bird feathers. In addition, they are good talkers. Some can even sing short songs that you might know.

Eclectus parrots are from Indonesia and northern Australia. Like many species from this area the eclectus are not seasonal breeders. A good producing pair of these birds will lay three to four clutches of two to four eggs a year. In fact, the only way to stop them is to take the nestbox away and rest them for four to six months before allowing them to breed again. Because of their prolific production prices are falling. A nice young healthy handfed baby can be had for less than half the price of only a few years ago.

The diet for eclectus must include a lot of vegetables that are high in fiber and vitamins. Fresh brocolli, beans, corn, carrots, peas etc. are relished. For fruit I feed fresh apple, grapes, banana, etc. They also like sweet potato and rice as well. A good quality mix of cockatiel seed rounds out the diet. Pellets can be offered but should not be a sole part of the diet. Eclectus have a longer digestive tract and require higher fiber content than many other parrots to remain fit.

In spite of many articles to the contrary, eclectus parrots can make nice pets. Like all birds though they are individually different. Each bird is unique. Some can be sweet while others might be nippy. A few eclectus may become screamers but many remain quieter than most other medium sized parrots. Be sure and carefully check a bird's disposition before you bring it home as a pet. Also eclectus don't like to be overly handled and will take exception if they are disturbed while eating or napping. If you choose a bird wisely and treat it with respect these birds do make fine long lived pets.