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KAKARIKI: Red Fronted: Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae

Kakarikis are an active fun loving bird hailing from New Zealand. They are only about 11 inches long and are constantly on the move. If you expect a Kakariki to sit still on your shoulder or talk like one of the larger more sedentary types of parrots it won't, it is simply not a part of their behavioral make-up to act that way. Instead, Kakarikis are forever on the move exploring every nook and cranny of their environment.

There are many subspecies of Kakariki with three different species being recognized. The red fronted, yellow fronted and orange fronted. As the names suggest the main differences between the three are the differing colors on the frontal, or forehead, areas of the head. Otherwise, all Kakarikis are mostly green.

Kakarikis can make nice unusual relatively quiet pets. Certainly most people seeing them for the first time will be taken in by their playful antics. This lifestyle requires Kakarikis to be kept in as large a cage as possible. The enclosure needs to have plenty of toys and branches for the birds to run lengthwise along, jump between and explore. These somewhat long-legged birds not only will check out every square inch of anything you put in but will often be seen running upside-down across the cage ceiling as well.

Breeding Kakarikis in captivity can be an enjoyable and possibly profitable venture. Sexes are similar in appearance but can be identified by the larger, more massive head of the cock. Clutches of ten to twelve eggs are common so if you take them to hand feed your hands will be full. The babies grow fast though and will soon be scampering about acting more like squirrels than birds.

Kakarikis can be hard to find. Sometimes you will see them for sale at bird fairs but they are uncommon in your average petshop. They are worth the search for they will provide many years of entertainment.