BLUE-FRONTED AMAZON CARE GUIDE

Amazona aestiva · Know before you bring one home

ORIGIN	SIZE	WEIGHT	LIFESPAN	NOISE	TALKING
South America	**35–38 cm**	**350–500 g**	**40–60+ years**	**Very loud**	**Excellent**

Personality & behaviour

- Bold, theatrical and outstandingly vocal. Amazons are less clingy than cockatoos and more robust than greys, but from four or five years — especially males — they can become suddenly and seriously aggressive during breeding season.
- Learn Amazon body language, because it is unusually clear and it prevents almost every bite: rapidly dilating ("pinning") eyes, a fanned tail, raised nape feathers and a rigid, upright stance mean back away now. Expect a seasonal personality change; do not take it personally and do not punish it.
- Use positive reinforcement only — never hit, shout at or frighten a bird for biting or vocalising.

Housing & cage setup

- Minimum 100 × 90 × 120 cm, larger by preference. Bar spacing 20–25 mm, with horizontal bars for climbing.
- Natural branch perches of varying diameter (20–30 mm), destructible wood, foraging toys and a bathing dish or regular shower. Stainless steel or bird-safe powder coating only.

Time, company & noise

- 3–4 hours out of the cage daily. Amazons are more independent than cockatoos but still need daily training, foraging and company.
- Very loud, with instinctive dawn and dusk calling sessions of roughly 15–30 minutes. This is normal species behaviour and training will not remove it. Not suited to flats or shared walls.
- Heavy foraging, destructible wood, singing and trick training. A bored Amazon screams and bites.
- Provide 10–12 hours of quiet, uninterrupted darkness on a predictable schedule. Sleep-deprived parrots become irritable, scream more and are more likely to pluck. A full 12-hour night materially reduces hormonal behaviour — do not let this slip in summer.

What to feed

- A complete pellet as roughly 60–70% of intake — Amazons do best on a lower-fat formula.
- A large daily volume of vegetables, especially dark green and orange ones: kale, broccoli, butternut, carrot, red pepper, cooked sweet potato.
- Cooked legumes and whole grains in measured portions.
- Fruit in small portions only — it is sugar, and Amazons gain weight easily.
- Nuts and seeds strictly as training rewards: one or two small pieces a day.
- A cuttlebone and clean fresh water daily.
- An Amazon on a sunflower-based seed mix will become obese and develop fatty-liver disease — this is the classic, predictable and entirely avoidable Amazon outcome. Weigh weekly and adjust food before adjusting anything else.

Do not feed

- Sunflower-based seed mixes as a staple — the direct route to fatty-liver disease.
- Avocado — every part of the plant, including guacamole.
- Chocolate and cocoa.
- Caffeine, alcohol and xylitol (sugar-free sweetener).
- Onion, garlic, chives and leeks.
- Fruit pips and stones: apple, pear, cherry, apricot, peach and plum.
- Raw or dried beans — all legumes must be thoroughly cooked.
- Rhubarb leaves.
- Salty, sugary, fried or processed human food.
- Dairy in more than a trace — birds cannot digest lactose.
- Mouldy or fermenting food, including fruit left in the bowl.
- Anything from your mouth, plate or fork — human saliva carries bacteria that kill birds.
- Grit. Parrots husk their own seed and grit can cause fatal impaction.
- Human medicines or supplements unless prescribed by an avian vet.

HEALTH, SUITABILITY & COMMITMENT

Blue-fronted Amazon · continued

Health & what to watch

- Obesity and fatty-liver disease are the number-one Amazon health problem and are almost always dietary. Also watch for vitamin A deficiency, atherosclerosis, respiratory disease and papillomatosis.
- **Before you buy:** Ask the seller for the hatch date, the closed ring number, a DNA sex certificate and any disease screening already done. A seller who cannot answer those questions, or who will not let you watch the bird eat, is a seller to walk away from. Ask what the bird is currently eating, so you can keep it stable for the first fortnight.
- **Your first month:** Book a wellness examination in the first week, not just when something looks wrong. Quarantine a new bird for 30–45 days away from any birds you already keep, ideally in separate air space. Recommended screening: psittacine beak and feather disease (PBFD), psittacosis (Chlamydia psittaci), polyomavirus and avian bornavirus.
- **Ongoing & human health:** Annual check-ups, moving to twice yearly for larger species over ten. Wing clipping is not routine care — discuss it first, because flight builds fitness, balance and confidence. Psittacosis passes to people as a flu-like illness or pneumonia: if you develop unexplained respiratory symptoms, tell your doctor you keep birds.

Urgent — see an avian vet today

- Difficulty or open-mouth breathing
- Pronounced tail bobbing at rest
- Fluffed, quiet and sitting on the cage floor
- Collapse or severe weakness
- Bleeding that does not stop, including a broken blood feather
- Seizures or loss of balance
- Repeated vomiting or regurgitation
- Not eating, or noticeable weight loss
- Straining, a swollen abdomen, or a hen unable to pass an egg
- Sudden major change in droppings
- Any contact with a cat or dog, even a minor scratch
- Suspected poisoning, fumes or trauma
- Yellow-tinged droppings, lethargy or an overgrown flaky beak — possible liver disease

Who this species suits

- **First-time owners:** Not a first parrot. The seasonal aggression needs an owner who can read body language and stay calm.
- **Experienced owners:** A superb companion for an experienced owner who enjoys a confident, vocal bird.
- **Families & children:** Households with teenagers and older, provided everyone understands that for part of each year the bird may not want to be handled.

Before you decide

- I can accept 15–30 minutes of loud calling twice a day, for decades.
- I can read warning body language and give the bird space in breeding season.
- I can keep this bird lean on vegetables and pellets rather than seed.
- I have a plan for the next forty to sixty years.
- If several answers are “No”, this is not the right bird for you — and walking away is a good outcome.

Recommended avian specialist

- **Bryanston Avian, Exotic & Small Animals Clinic**
- 99 Grosvenor Road, Bryanston, Johannesburg
- 011 706 1381 · WhatsApp 061 533 9950 · info@baesac.co.za
- Not every vet treats birds. Find your nearest avian-experienced practice before you need one.

Read the full online guide
Scan for detailed care information and to support Wings of Kindness.