

African Grey Parrots: A Pet That Calls You By Name

Do you know what an African Grey Parrot is? African Grey Parrots are becoming one of the all time favorites of bird lovers. These strikingly beautiful birds, that can out talk any four year old child, have charmed their way into many a household across the globe.

The African Grey is truly one of Gods' special creatures. The Grey's have the ability to express themselves in human language and emotion. Whatever language you speak, they can learn and communicate with you.

Skeptics argue that parrots can only mimic back what they have heard believing that even the most highly trained parrot doesn't really understand what it is doing or saying. It's possible that may be true for some species of parrots, but if you live with an African Grey you know deep in your heart that this argument is not a true at all. The African Grey, being a highly intelligent, deeply emotional, and hysterically witty bird would challenge even the hard-line skeptic.

Living with an African Grey takes a great commitment. They have a life span much like a human. If you are going to adopt a Grey into your life, you have to commit to it. As with any intelligent and emotional life form, you have to be prepared to except the ups and the downs that go along with it. We have both a male and a female living in our home.

There are times when it is a huge challenge. They can be demanding and insistent. If they don't get what they want, they can be total brats. Their ear-piercing screams and demanding behavior will surly test even the most patient of persons. This is the most negative of their traits. Their positive traits far out weight their negative ones. On their positive side, I can't say enough about them. The Grey knows when you are sad or upset. They will do everything in their power to make you laugh or change your mood. From their class clown antics to all their hugs and kisses, they will completely wash away a bad day.

The African Grey is best known for their talking and reasoning ability. Some are better talkers than others. Some can imitate sounds so real you can't tell the difference between the actual sound and the bird.

My female is the sound maker. She can talk, but not as well as the male. She is a sweet and loving bird. Her sounds are amazing. I can't tell you how many times I have answered a phone that never rang or opened a door when a doorbell never chimed. I have heard my dog bark when she was soundly asleep in her bed. I've heard doors squeak open that were shut, a microwave oven peep that was never turned on, a police siren and a trash truck backup peeper that was never there. These are only a few examples from a long list.

My male is the talker. So far his vocabulary is around one hundred words. He makes up his own sentences from the words he knows. Studies have shown, that Greys can develop a fifteen hundred to three thousand word vocabulary. When the male can't see me but can hear me, he calls out my name and asks, "Carla, You alright?" I answer, "I'm alright," he says, "Ok." Sometimes, when he starts screaming his head off and the female screams back, he tells her, "That's too loud, stop being a brat." He tells me, "Gonna go night night," when he wants to take a nap. He tells me, "I'm hungry," when he wants something to eat, then tells me what he wants to eat. He makes up things I can't understand and laughs hysterically.

My birds have not been officially trained. Everything they do and say is a direct result of living in the same household with my family. They are members of our family, and as with any other family member they need love and understanding. They need quality time inside the family circle, but also some quiet time to themselves. Do not stick them in a room away from the family hub. It will make them feel isolated and lonely. You will be setting the stage for an unhappy bird. Greys are very sensitive and you can easily upset their emotional well being. This can result in behavioral problems in the future.

Greys are full of life and love to play. If you have to be away from home during the day, make sure you supply them with plenty of toys. In the wild they forage for food about eighty percent of their time. Greys get bored easily, so try to keep a verity of toys around so that they can occupy their time alone. Interchange their toys regularly.

In closing, I highly recommend African Grey Parrots as pets. The only thing I would ask of you before going out and bringing one home, is to do some research on their needs. Make sure you have a full understanding of their housing and diet needs. You also need to make sure your house is bird safe. With all of this in mind, if you can provide for their most basic needs, the African Grey Parrot will reward you with a life time of devotion, affection, and love.

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