

# ***Amazon Parrot Diets as well other species***

Research by Royal Bird Company  
10 year diet program



Royal Bird Company owns and operates one of the largest and most successful research and breeding programs of several type and subspecies of yellow naped amazons,

Royal Bird Company also has bred thousands of babies of many species of parrots over the course of 35 years.

Our research has been shared and distributed throughout the world helping many breeders, conservation groups, zoos, private hobbyists

We have contributed to several ongoing research captive breed and release programs in central and south america.

We have huge assets of data on yellow naped amazons and several amazon mutation programs



## Diet and Nutrition Research on Amazon Parrots

research ongoing

Royal Bird Company Avicultural Breeding Research Center

Royal Bird Avicultural Breeding Research original research final  
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For 10 years here are RBC we ran a program of research on nutrition and impacts of nutrition on breeding and over all health on the long term through a range of amazon parrots and amazon parrot subspecies, We have published some surprising and controversial findings when compared to other so called experts of parrot nutrition statements. Over the research and study range we put into several species in the study, below is the species, 10 pairs each if possible, all adults, all breeders, blue fronted amazon, aestiva and yellow wing, 10 pair yellow naped, parvipes and nominate, also included blue mutation yellow naped, 10 pair double yellow head, oratrix and magna and other subspecies, 10 pair mealy amazon, farinosa and other subspecies, 4 pair yellow shouldered, 10 pair red lored all nominate species, 10 pair green cheek (red head) amazons, nominate species, 10 pair lilac crowned, all nominate species.

The birds in the study groups for full 5 years were fed a daily regime complete diet and then after completion of the 5 year period, the same control groups were fed a different diet for another 5 years, this gives us a control calculation for future comparison and reference. Below is the findings:

All birds and all species in the program were fed the same exact diet for 5 years, The daily diet consist of 75 % pellet or formulated granules (tropicana), and the rest of the diet was equal fed amounts of sprouts, cooked peas, 10 type beans, corn, rice, beets, diced fruits, vegetables, and no nuts or pea nuts.

Also NO dry seed or dry grains given at all. The idea from supposed parrot and animal experts and nutritionist has always been amazons and subspecies get fat when on a seed based diet and pellets should be fed as 75% of diet with supplement of fruits and veggies, NO vitamin supplement of any type used.

This diet although some variations had to be used due to seasonal fruits and veggies was fed as sole diet throughout the breeding seasons and through the down seasons as well, the only difference being the pellets were hi pro (high protein) during the breeding season, while the off season we used a lower protein pellet fed to cycle down the hormones and breeder activities due to lower proteins. Blood panels were pulled every month during breeding seasons, calcium, proteins, kidney functions, liver functions and complete panels and more all seemed in line with most of the species,

However the species of blue fronted and yellow shouldered seemed to have panels at not optimal levels and some being out of range, although within a safe range, still seemed odd. With several observations on these species, as the birds were thinner, seemed to eat voraciously as though hungry all the time while food was in front of them at all times. The blue fronted and yellow shouldered just seemed to be unsatisfied, breeding results were off as well from the results that the same birds had produced before the study began and the records showed a slow down and less fertility, fertility dropped average 40% during the study compared to years before the study began. Now the yellow naped, double yellow, mealy, red lored, green cheeks and others seemed to thrive and birds that appeared slightly over weight before the study, now, their weight was lean and great, fertility was about average same as before the study, all blood panels seemed to be well within range and better except the proteins levels spiked and leveled constantly.

Now the next study of 5 years, ALL same birds, but a changed new diet went into play, pellets were fed at a lower percent of total diet daily, 35-40% pellets or formulated granules made up the diet, again using hi pro during breeding seasons and off season, the difference being the amounts fed were a smaller amount of total., we actually weighed the pellets to get the correct amount to each pair of birds, now the overall diet also changed, we incorporated much more sprouted grains and added a higher fat seed to the sprouting mix such as sunflower, safflower, we also would take small dry black oil sunflower and gray sunflower, wash it and then let it soak over night and wash and then drain and then add water and bring to boil, turn off and drain, mix this with same fruits, veggies, beets, corn, cooked beans, lentils, peas and all the same mixture as before except we fed more of it and less pellets, the main change in what we fed was adding the sprouted and cooked

sunflower and sprouted safflower, AND every late afternoon we gave another small amount of washed and then dried sunflower to each pair, about one ounce snack.

However at no time did we ever feed any peanuts in shell at all. Again blood chemistry panels were pulled each month, WOW, we could not believe the difference in the ranges, they were perfect, the over all feathers changed, the feathers seemed to tighten up, the blue fronts and yellow shouldered all seemed to gain weight to absolute optimal levels, the other species, napes, yellow heads, red lored, greencheeks and lilac crowns all showed no changes in weight, but were in perfect shape and seemed to fly more, always climbing and exploring, the over all activity was amazing, the blue fronted amazons changed the most, they seemed most satisfied, and the fertility increased, we had pairs that only the year before the change, had a drop of 40%, now the same birds were at 90%+ fertility rates, one of the pair of blue fronted that had only produced 1 clutch each season before, now had a series of 4 eggs each clutch and had 3 clutches the first year of the change of diets, and the fertility was at amazing amost at 100%.(out of 12 eggs that year we got 12 babies hatched but had only 11 to make it and wean successfully)

Our findings showed that while many people refuse to feed seeds to birds due to the so called experts constantly blaming all the bad stuff on seeds, its just not true, infact the addition of their natural foods (seeds) being fed in the correct context and at the correct amounts and times showed an increase in over all health. Now to be clear, we never fed a seed or parrot mixture out of a bag, we only fed a controlled amount of seeds, sunflower and safflower and we washed them, brought to boil and fed, we sprouted some of the seeds as well, so the problem with most fat birds and over all birds in bad health may be feeding too much or only seed diets as well the amount of cage space also can come into play for over weight birds, as birds are not supposed to sit in little cages in your living room their whole life eating seeds and pellets out of cups placed next to their perches and the foods was from a bag of seed parrot mix you purchased at the pet store. Also our findings showed that certain species benefit more from the addition of higher amounts of sunflower like the blue fronted amazons, In most parrots native lands they eat seeds, as seeds are the natures best way to deliver the high caloric food source they need to fly and breed, but in most cases they will only find seeds that have been swollen germinated, or sprouted in most

cases as in the rain forest it rains, therefore logic dictates that the seeds would not be old and dry like you get in bags of parrot food you buy in stores, but swollen with life as the germ of the seed starts to germinate in a short time due to the temps being high and humid conditions.

Of course over the years we have modified our diets accordingly and changed this or that as we saw fit. I am one to not just take the findings of one person or study and think that's the only way it can be, I think there is still much to be learned. We here at RBC are dedicated to the ongoing struggle to find and give our birds the best possible life and foods they can receive, As we must remember they did not ask to be here sitting in cages compared to their ancestors being free, So, it is my, it is our, it is your, responsibility to give them the best they deserve.  
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