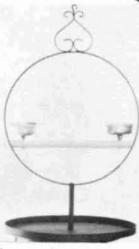


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# THE BLUE FRONTED AMAZON

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One of the most popular of all the parrots is the Blue-fronted Amazon. It has a reputation for being a docile pet and a very good talker.

I can recall as a child reading about the literary pirate Long John Silver who had a parrot named Captain Flint. This bird was undoubtedly an Amazon and I like to think a Blue-fronted. The bird would call out, "pieces of eight, pieces of eight", and swear like a sailor. According to the story, Long John Silver said that Captain Flint was a male two hundred years old and that he had traveled the world around many times.

If you stop to think about it, the Amazon parrot is a stock figure in the old sea stories, along with the hook arm and wooden leg. The possession of the exotic Blue-fronted Amazon was the sailor's documentary prop, so to speak, of the romantic places he had visited.

A pet Blue-fronted Amazon is rather fascinating in its own right; partly for its ability to talk, partly for its longevity, and perhaps partly for the arrangement of its claws which permits the bird to hold its food to its mouth as a child would. Such a bird would make an ideal companion for a lonely sailor or for anyone else for that matter.

Blue-fronted Amazons are native to parts of South America, i.e., Paraguay, northern Argentina, and Brazil. This habitat is covered by perhaps the most prodigious forest in the world. Try to picture in your mind the wonderful size of the trees—some of them so large that fifteen Indians with arms outstretched could only just encircle a single trunk. Overhead are huge leaves of bright green

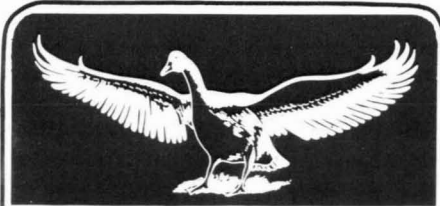
color often splashed with large colorful blossoms. Exotic bromeliads and rare orchids attach to the limbs and trunks of the towering trees—and through this grand and lush profusion of trees and blossoms flies the brilliant Blue-fronted Amazon.

If you'll notice in the various travel and nature films, most of the Indian camps in the Amazon forest have an abundance of pet animals on display. The Indians favor the Blue-fronted Amazon because it seems best suited to training. These birds make delightful pets for the Indians and they are also a good trade item. The Indians bring many species of birds in great numbers to the markets.

When the Blue-fronted Amazon leaves the Indian encampments and finally winds up in an honored place in an American parlor, it should be fed a seed mixture of two parts canary, one part millet, one part oats, one part sunflower, and one part peanuts. It should also have some fruit such as apples, pears, papayas, etc.

Blue-fronted Amazons have been bred in captivity but only rarely. This is not because the birds are not in breeding condition but simply because no one bothers to devote a proper aviary to this large bird. If given the right conditions, they will nest in a large box or a barrel partly filled with shavings or a decayed mulch and peat moss. Pairs of these parrots can become very savage when breeding so if you should have a pair going to nest, be very careful.

Regarding talking ability, longevity (up to 80 years), docility, and humor, the Blue-fronted ranks very high in the Amazon group. It is understandably one of our best loved caged birds ■



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# ANNOUNCING AFA RESEARCH AWARDS



The AFA is now offering two awards to encourage research activities related to captive avian wildlife. The awards, a \$250.00 cash award and a \$100.00 cash award, will be given to the researchers selected by the AFA Sub-committee. Selection criteria will be:

1. Research must be closely related to captive avian wildlife.
2. Research results must be directly applicable to captive avian wildlife.
3. Results must have been submitted for

publication in some technical journal within the past year.

Additional consideration will be given to papers satisfying one or more of the following:

1. significant economic impact of results.
2. broad application.
3. results related directly to breeding success.
4. results can be implemented at low cost.

A first place and a second place paper will be selected by the committee. A

\$250 award will be given for the first place paper and the \$100 award will be given for the second place paper. Papers must be received by the Awards Committee no later than June 30, 1979. Winning papers will be summarized and published in the AFA Watchbird provided there are no copyrights.

As a guide to potential submitters, the following areas are of particular interest:

1. techniques for sexing birds.
2. treatment for disease, both preventative and curative.
3. reliable methods for diagnosing ailments.
4. nutritional requirements particularly as they relate to breeding.

In making the awards available, it is the intent of AFA to encourage more and better research which will benefit its members.

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