

Black-cheeked Lovebirds - Do You Keep Them?



An appeal for information: numbers,
breeding data, and longevity.

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The Black-cheeked Lovebird *Agapornis nigrigenis* originates from south-west Zambia and is classified as an Endangered Species. Large numbers were collected from the wild in the 1920s, reportedly for the South African and European markets. Just how many of these lovebirds, in their pure form, are kept in the United States is unknown – and we'd like to find out.

If you keep Black-cheeked Lovebirds, and believe that they are pure-breds, please contact us with the number of birds you have. If you keep breeding records we're particularly interested in clutch-size, laying times, hatching success and fledging success.

Other questions we are interested in are:

- What is the life-span of these lovebirds?
- Do (would) your lovebirds breed all-year, (all seasons), do they keep in permanent breeding mode if you don't actively rest them?
- Do you ever get chicks with totally dark colored beaks?
- At what age do the chicks eyes open?
- What shape nests do they construct inside the nest box?

Black-cheeked Lovebirds have been studied in their natural habitat since 1998 by Louise Warburton, as part of a Ph.D. programme at the University of

Natal, South Africa. This year the first breeding records were obtained. As expected, the lovebirds bred on a loose colonial basis in natural cavities in Mopane woodland. The average height of the cavity from the ground was 10.4 meters, from a total of 78 nests, with an entrance hole (or two) just wide enough for the lovebirds to move in and out of. We watched the females collect nest material: usually pliable Mopane leaves which were stripped of their leaves before being carried back into the cavity.

As the cavity entrances were mostly too small to see into, our research is relying on clutch-size data from captive records.

In Europe the Black-cheeked Lovebird is uncommon in captivity, and basically restricted to specialist keepers interested in maintaining pure blood-stock. In the UK six zoos are involved in the Black-cheeked Lovebird stud book scheme, and report their breeding results back to the UK Parrot Taxon Advisory Group. These zoos hold a total of over 60 birds – a relatively small number. So what is happening in the USA? How many Black-cheeked Lovebirds are out there?

If you keep Black-cheeked Lovebirds please get in contact, we'd love to hear from you. All data sources will be acknowledged in resulting publications. Thank you for your interest. 