

# Goldie's Lorikeet

by John Vanderhoof  
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The Goldie's Lorikeet is a favorite among aviculturists for a variety of reasons. They are striking with their brilliant red cap, plum colored cheeks, and light yellow-green front with dark green vertical stripes. The back, wings and tail are an iridescent forest green. In addition to their beautiful color pattern, these little gems make excellent aviary subjects which may be mixed with other pairs of Goldie's and/or an assortment of finches, doves and some softbills. This is a charming aspect of keeping and breeding Goldie's for the vast majority of *Loriidae* species must be housed each pair separately in order to keep them from fighting and quite possibly killing other aviary occupants.

Originating from New Guinea, this little work of art prefers a tropical environment if possible. However, they are notably hearty. The pairs in my collection reside outdoors year-round. The temperatures may reach



Photo by Nancy Vigran

*The author's daughter, Victoria, finds a couple of young Goldie's gentle and fun companions.*

Photo by Nancy Vigran

Photo by Don Wells / AVICO, Norco, CA



*Victoria demonstrates the best way to feed her young Goldie's. The bird drinks what it wants without slopping nectar all over its feathers. The inexpensive plastic cups can be tossed away after each feeding.*

*The Goldie's Lorikeet*



108° Fahrenheit in the summer and a low of 20° Fahrenheit in the winter. Obviously, they will become acclimated gradually if given the opportunity.

Personally, I handfeed all of the young *Loriidae* produced from any species in the collection. The chicks are parent-fed for 14 to 20 days at which time they are removed for closed banding and handfeeding. I personally do not prefer to feed from day one unless absolutely necessary. If a pair abandons their nest or will not incubate their eggs then fine, but birds that are not given the natural immunities and enzymes, etc., from their parents should not be used as breeders. Another method which I use when required is to foster to another pair and they will feed the youngsters for a couple of weeks.

Goldie's will begin breeding at approximately one year of age. In my opinion, the initial problem in succeeding is the difficulty in acquiring a true pair. Goldie's, as with most *Loriidae*, are essentially monomorphic. This makes it a real guessing game when trying to tell the difference in their sex. They need to be surgically sexed, feather-sexed or DNA-sexed, whichever you prefer. After this has been determined, they will bond and begin to show signs of reproductive interest such as feeding each other and mutual preening.

They will utilize a budgie type nest-box, lovebird size or something of similar size. I prefer to give them an L-shaped box that measures 5" x 5" square by 12" deep and then measures 10' over horizontally for the bottom of the L. The normal clutch size for *Loriidae* is two with a third egg once in a great while. After 24 to 25 days of incubation, if fertile, one or two little white fuzzballs will hatch. By the way, do not always begin counting the days of incubation when you see the first or even the second egg appear. Often times a pair will not commence to incubate until two to four days after they finish laying their eggs. I have found that young pairs will usually lay one or possibly two clutches in a 12 month period. Adult pairs will often give up to five clutches in a year. Keep in mind that with *Loriidae*, the breeding season is year-round. They will produce any month of the year even though hatching takes place predominately during the

spring and summer months.

Goldie's will breed indoors, which is a necessity in most states, but I feel it is best when they are exposed to the natural elements. They dearly love to bathe and will do so several times a day if given the opportunity.

The diet consists of a wide range of foods. They relish fruit of any kind, with some individual likes and dislikes. Nectar is always consumed, especially when feeding young. They will eat the dry lory diet as well as a variety of seeds. They are quite fond of sprouted or germinated seed. I'm sure that many reading this will express surprise when seed is mentioned. The small variety of *Loriidae* including Goldie's, Meyer's, Iris and Musschenbroek's eat seed and should have some available to them at all times.

When feeding youngsters by hand, I use the commercially available lory diet that states it can be used as a nectar, fed dry and used as a handfeeding formula. There are several methods and tools used in feeding the babies. We find, after trying syringes, spoons, etc., that the easiest, fastest and most

sanitary way is to use three ounce plastic cups. In each brooder, which is a small plastic aquarium, there are three or four birds, depending on species. One cup is used for each brooder. The cup can then be discarded or placed in a disinfectant to be used during the next feeding.

Handfed Goldie's make exceptional pets due to their laid-back personality and calm nature. They will quickly become very trusting and, unless mistreated, will continue this bond with humans for years. The average lifespan for Goldie's is approximately 12 years, although there are always exceptions where some individuals in the bird kingdom greatly exceed the average.

In summary, the Goldie's Lorikeet is a quiet, colorful and demure little creature whose antics will amuse for hours. Their small size, similar to a common budgie, and tolerant disposition allows for easy companionship in a community aviary. Since they are so easy to care for and prolific in their breeding, no mixed collection of avian species should be without these lovely parrots. ●



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