



## Hyacinth Macaw

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Phylum: Chordata  
 Subphylum: Vertebrata  
 Class: Aves  
 Order: Psittaciformes  
 Family: Psittacidae  
 Genus: *Anodorhynchus*  
 Species: *hyacinthinus*



Photo courtesy of Lynne Panebianco

### Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The geographic range of the *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* is from lower Central America to about halfway down the South American continent. The species prefers lightly forested grasslands and avoids heavily forested areas.
- **Exhibit Location:** Social Animals

### Characteristics

- Length: 3-4 feet; Weight: 3-3 ½ pounds; Wingspan: 40-50 inches
- It is the largest species of macaw. The tail makes up half its length.
- Its body feathers appear as a rich and glossy solid blue, similar to indigo.
- The area around the eye and base of the lower mandible are bare with rich yellow skin.
- They have short, sturdy legs with 4 toes. They have zygodactylous feet (2 toes point forward and 2 toes point backward), which are useful for hanging sideways and upside-down in trees.
- The hooked beak is black and used to grasp onto trees when climbing.
- Males and females are nearly indistinguishable, but the female is slightly more slender.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** up to 60 years; **In Captivity** approximately 60 – 70 years

### Behaviors

- Hyacinth macaws are very social animals and fly in pairs or in small groups. They are most active when feeding from morning to mid-afternoon. After feeding, they return home and congregate in places called “dormitories,” which are believed to be areas of communication.
- When disturbed, they screech loudly and circle overhead with their long tails streaming.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** leaves, sticks, tree stumps, pine cones to investigate and play with

### Reproduction

- *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* mature at about 7 years and mate for life.
- They mate once a year during the rainy season, between August and December.
- Nests are built in the hollows of living or dead trees, or on the sides of cliffs.
- A female will bear 1 or 2 eggs. Incubation is about 28 days.
- Young macaws are fragile and vulnerable to insects and predators for their first 6 weeks.
- First flight occurs at 3 months, and fledglings remain with their parents for 6 months.

### Diet

- **In the Wild:** 8 species of palm nuts, small seeds, palm sprouts, snails
- **At the Zoo:** seeds, fruits, nuts

## **Conservation Status**

- **IUCN status:** Endangered; **CITES Appendix:** I.
- The hyacinth macaw is protected under Brazilian law and banned from export in all countries of origin.
- Their numbers have been substantially reduced due to the destruction of their habitat by land development as well as by illegal hunting and trapping by humans.
- Predators: eggs & young – cockroaches, ants, toucans, hawks, jays, coati  
adults - humans

## **Did You Know?/Fun Facts**

- Macaws are playful, inquisitive, highly intelligent and able to mimic human vocalizations.
- They are able to reach flight speeds of up to 35 miles per hour.
- The palm nuts that they eat are rich in fat and nutrients. The nutshells are quite hard so the bird uses its beak to crack the shell and cleanly break it in half. Although most feeding occurs on the ground, they have the ability to pick palm nuts from clusters hanging on trees. They have also been known to eat palm nuts that have passed through the bowels of cattle.

## **Sources:**

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