

## BUDGERIGAR

updated March 2017



<b>Range</b>	Original distribution: Australia, except for coastal areas in the far east and far southwest. Have been introduced to environments around the world, including South Africa, Japan, U.S., Puerto Rico, Switzerland, and New Zealand; however, they have only been successfully established in southwest Florida.
<b>Habitat</b>	Semi-arid, sub-humid habitats
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Ground-feeders; prefer seeds of grasses and crop plants, particularly spinifex and tall tussock grasses
<b>Diet (captivity)</b>	Seeds
<b>Description</b>	Length: 7 to 8 inches; weight: 1 ounce. Wild birds are green and yellow with black, scalloped markings on the nape, back, and wings, but have been bred in captivity with coloring in blues, whites, yellows, grays, and even with small crests. There is slight sexual dimorphism: breeding females have a light brown cere (the skin at the base of the bill, covering the nostrils); in non-breeding females and males, it is typically light blue.
<b>Lifespan</b>	Wild: 8–10 years. Captivity: possibly reaching 21 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	Mating can occur during any time of the year, but most frequently when there is an abundance of seed. This results in breeding after heavy rains (grass growth is dependent upon water.) In fact, any good rain will set off breeding, even when they are in the costly process of molting. The females lays an average of 5 eggs per season that take about 18 days to hatch. The female chooses the nest site (a pre-existing cavities in fence posts, logs, and Eucalyptus trees) and incubates the eggs while the male feeds the chicks. Breeding pairs can have several broods per season. The young reach sexual maturity at about 9 months. Budgerigars are monogamous and breed in large colonies throughout their range. Several nests can be found on the same tree branch.
<b>Behavior</b>	Budgerigars aggregate into large flocks and are strongly social. Their grouping allows for greater success in feeding and also helps in protection from predators. There does not seem to be any hierarchy in groups, but females are generally more aggressive than males. Their activity, like most birds, begins just before sunrise with preening, singing, and movement within trees. After sunrise, the birds fly to the forest and feed throughout the day. They do not forage during midday or in extremely hot weather; instead, they take shelter under shade and remain motionless. At the end of the day, they congregate by calling loudly and flying at high speeds around the trees, and return to their roosting site.
<b>Our animals</b>	A variety is exhibited in Wild Birds Down Under
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgerigars, or parakeets, are the most widely known pet bird in the world. Their worldwide population of about 5 million has allowed scientists ample opportunity to study them. In fact, more is known of their biology than of any other parrot.</li> <li>• These birds can consume large number of seeds when in groups and this is concern to farmers.</li> <li>• The species was first recorded in 1805, and today is the third most popular pet in the world, after the dog and cat.</li> <li>• The first budgerigar was brought to Europe by English ornithologist John Gould in 1840, and the first captive breeding began just a decade later during the 1850s.</li> <li>• Budgerigars are the only bird known to use their feet for scratching the sides of the crissum (under tail coverts).</li> <li>• The scattered colors of their plumage are accentuated in ultraviolet light (budgerigar can see in the ultraviolet range), especially the sides of their cheeks, which may play a part in sexual dimorphism.</li> <li>• A possible origin of the name “budgerigar” is the word “budgery,” or “boojery,” an Australian English slang meaning “good.”</li> </ul>

Phylum  
ChordataClass  
AvesOrder  
PsittaciformesFamily  
PsittacidaeGenus  
Melopsittacus,Species  
*M. undulatus*