

Amazon Parrots

Macaws are large parrots found in Central and South America. Their varied colors help them blend in with the green leaves, colorful fruits and shadows found in their forest habitat. Loud squawking helps them communicate with other flock members. Macaws have large, powerful beaks that easily crack seeds and nuts, which, along with fruit, make up the majority of their diet. With two toes facing frontwards and two facing backwards, macaws can easily hang and climb on tree branches as well as grab and hold food items. Several macaw species are endangered; the last wild Spix's macaw was seen in 2000 and it is presumed extinct in the wild.



Blue-headed macaw

Primolius couloni

Range: eastern Peru, western Brazil and Bolivia

Status: vulnerable



Green-winged macaw

Ara chloroptera

Range: northern South America, including the Amazon Basin

Status: least concern



Severe macaw

Ara severa

Range: northern South America around the Amazon Basin

Status: least concern



Vinaceous Amazon

Amazona vinacea

Status: endangered

Diet: seeds, leaves, fruit, berries, flower buds and nuts
Habitat: subtropical and tropical lowland forests, montane forests and plantations
Range: Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay
All vinaceous Amazons have a loud raucous call. This species is threatened by habitat loss and has become quite rare throughout its range. While they are found in some protected reserves and parks, these areas may not be able to provide year-round needs for this endangered species.



Cuban Amazon

Amazona leucocephala

Status: near threatened

Diet: seeds, fruits, berries and nuts, maize and grain in cultivated areas
Habitat: broadleaf and pine woodlands
Range: Cuba, the Bahamas and Cayman Islands
Cuban Amazons are found in flocks but will split up into pairs during breeding season. They nest in tree cavities and in some locations will nest underground in natural limestone holes. These limestone holes insulate chicks and adults from the frequent fires that occur.

BIRDS



Andean tinamou

Nothoprocta pentlandii

Diet: seeds, shoots, buds, small fruits, insect larvae

Habitat: montane scrub and grasslands from 5,000 to 13,000 feet

Range: Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay

Status: least concern

Andean tinamous live in remote areas which are not easily accessible to humans. When threatened, they will hide under vegetation which protects them from predators. Their nests are shallow depressions lined with straw and are found underneath low bushes. A clutch of 5-8 shiny, reddish-brown eggs is laid.



Crested oropendola

Psarocolius decumanus

Diet: large insects, fruit, nectar and small vertebrates

Habitat: tropical lowland forest edges and clearings

Range: Amazon Basin and surrounding areas

Status: least concern

Crested oropendolas are found in small flocks. A dominant male will mate with several females in the flock. Courtship consists of an elaborate bowing display. Females build a hanging nest, high up in the tree canopy. They weave together palm leaves, bromeliad leaves and other types of vegetation to create their nests.



Green jay

Cyanocorax yncas

Diet: various insects, worms, acorns, seeds and a variety of fruits

Habitat: tropical deciduous forests, grasslands and montane forests

Range: Central America and northwestern South America

Status: least concern

There are 13 recognized subspecies of green jays. The northern and southern populations live in different habitats and are slightly different sizes, with the southern populations being a little larger. In some populations, other members of the flock will help a breeding pair with nest construction and will even feed the young birds.



Blue-throated piping guan

Aburria pipile cumanensis

Diet: palm fruit, flowers, figs and snails

Habitat: northern and western regions of the Amazon rainforest

Range: northwestern South America

Status: least concern

Blue-throated piping guans spend nearly all of their time in trees, rarely descending to the ground. Breeding begins in the rainy season and three eggs are laid in a twig nest built inside the dense canopy of the rainforest. The blue-throated piping guan is hunted for food and is losing habitat as forests are chopped down for agricultural use.

Brightly Colored Bills

With their long beaks and bright colors, toucans are one of the most familiar and recognized animals of the South American tropical rainforest. They are found throughout the Amazon Basin, extending north into Mexico and south to Argentina. Their beautiful bills are actually very lightweight, have forward-facing serrations that resemble teeth and are used to grab fruit that other animals can't reach. They will add to their diet by occasionally eating small mammals, lizards, frogs and eggs. Toucans are naturally curious birds and have been hunted for both food and their bright feathers. Protecting their habitat will be vital in preserving these charismatic birds.



Keel-billed toucan

Ramphastos sulfuratus

Diet: fruit, insects, spiders, lizards and snakes

Habitat: wet lowland forest, lower montane subtropical forests, fruit trees in open areas

Range: Central America and northern South America

Status: least concern

These colorful toucans have a large, lightweight bill made of keratin, the same material found in your fingernails. Eggs are laid in tree cavities; both males and females incubate the eggs and feed the young birds fruit and insects. They forage for food in the middle and upper levels of the forest canopy and rarely come down to the ground.



Curl-crested araçari

Pteroglossus beauharnaesii

Diet: fruit

Habitat: forests

Range: Peru and Brazil

Status: least concern

Curl-crested araçari are found in the lowland forests of Amazonia. The glossy, curled feathers on the top of their heads look and feel like plastic. They usually nest in tree hollows previously made by woodpeckers. Males and females will share incubation and chick feeding duties in the nest.



Wading Birds of the Amazon



Roseate spoonbill

Platalea ajaja

Diet: small fish, insects, shrimp, crustaceans and plants

Habitat: coastal areas with salt or brackish water, such as swamps and tidal ponds, inland marshes, rice fields or other wetlands

Range: large areas surrounding the Amazon Basin

Status: least concern

The roseate spoonbill's distinctive bill helps it search for food. The bird swings its head from side to side through the water with the bill open about an inch. Vibration detectors inside the spoon help to detect food. Like flamingos and scarlet ibis, their pink coloring is from their diet of crustaceans such as shrimp.



Scarlet ibis

Eudocimus ruber

Diet: crustaceans and mollusks, also fish, clams or insects

Habitat: wetlands, estuaries, mudflats, marshes, mangrove swamps

Range: northern coasts of South America

Status: least concern

The scarlet ibis gets its striking color from the food that it eats. Males display to attract females, including preening, rocking, and head rubbing. While the males defend the nesting territory, the females build a nest on a platform of sticks. Both parents help to raise the young. Threats to scarlet ibis include hunting, egg and feather collecting, habitat loss and pollution at foraging sites.



White ibis

Eudocimus albus

Diet: crustaceans and mollusks, fish, frogs, insects

Habitat: coastal wetlands, including mangrove swamps

Range: northern South America and coastal Central and North America

Status: least concern

White ibis feed by slowly wading through shallow water, probing with their long beaks. Their beaks are sensitive to movement and can detect prey through mud and water. During the breeding season, their legs, face and beaks turn from pale orange to bright pink. Predators include cats and birds of prey; white ibis stay together in large flocks for safety.



Ruddy duck

Oxyura jamaicensis

Status: least concern

Diet: vegetation and aquatic invertebrates

Habitat: temperate freshwater

Ruddy ducks can sink below the water's surface, allowing them to evade predators. When trying to attract a mate, males will beat their bill against their neck hard enough to create bubbles in the water. Males have purely white faces and a blue bill; females have a black stripe across their mostly white face and a pale blue bill.



Blue-winged teal

Anas discors

Status: not assessed

Diet: seeds and roots of aquatic plants, insects and crustaceans

Habitat: marshes, lakes, swamps; winters on salt water and coastal mangroves

These small ducks are long distance fliers! They spend summers in North America and migrate down to South America for the winter. Blue-winged teals rarely upend like other ducks, instead they feed mostly by dabbing on the surface and dipping their head in shallow waters.