Scarlet Macaw

Ara macao

Class: *Aves*   **Order:** *Psittaciformes*   **Family:** *Psittacidae*

Characteristics:

Named for their bright red plumage, scarlet macaws also have green and blue primary and flight feathers.   They have bare white skin between their beak and their eye. Typical of parrots, they use their feet to climb, grip and also as a "hand" for feeding and grasping (Blank Park Zoo).

Behavior:

Very social, "talkative" birds which live in flocks of up to 30 birds. They are fast flyers with great maneuverability. Vocalization is important for group communication (Sedgewick County Zoo).

Reproduction:

Similar to other macaws, the female lays 2 to 4 eggs on a nest cavity. The chicks hatch following a 24 to 26 day incubation period. When the chicks hatch, they are blind and featherless. They fledge the nest around 3.5 months old.

Diet:

Wild: Fruits, vegetable matter and nuts. Often found at clay licks around exposed river banks eating soil which may provide them with nutrients and minerals lacking in their diet and neutralize acid in their system.

Zoo: Parrot pellets, seeds, apples, carrots, greens, oranges

Conservation:

Like other parrots, scarlet macaws also are suffering a decline due to habitat loss and the illegal pet trade. While only one out of many birds smuggled into the pet trade will survive, the smugglers think the payoff is worth the loss. A single macaw sold on the black market may be worth thousands of dollars (Rainforest Alliance). However, because they have a larger range than other macaws, they are classified as Least Concern by IUCN.

FYI:

--Macaws are the world's largest parrots and scarlet macaws are one of the larger macaws.

Range & Habitat:
Rainforests, forests bordering rivers, wooded grasslands

Lifespan: up to 60 years in captivity and in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Can eat fruit toxic enough to kill a human. This could be due to the large amounts of clay they ingest which is believed to neutralize plant toxins (Rainforest Alliance).

IUCN Conservation Status:
Least Concern