

PARROTS AND PARAKEETS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Common Names: parrots, parakeets, conures, budgeriers, cockateils, macaws

Other Names: numerous, depending on species

Scientific Names: 9 genera represented in species found in South Florida, all species are in the scientific family, Psittacidae

Appearance:

- shape
 - large head with extremely heavy bill
 - sharply curved upper beak fits over lower bill
 - zyodactyl grip, with two toes pointing forward and two backwards
- color
 - usually brightly colored with some green
- distinguishing features:
 - Macaws
 - largest of the Psittacidae family
 - gaudily colored with smooth "bare" patches on cheeks
 - Cockatiels
 - crest on head that can be raised or lowered
 - Parrots
 - ranges from 10 to 17 inches in height
 - predominately green plumage
 - Parakeets
 - smaller than parrots
 - longer tail feathers

Range: - South and Central Florida

Habitat: - urban areas

Diet: - fruits, nuts and other vegetable matter

Reproduction: - nest in unlined holes in trees, termite nests, rocks or banks;
- huge flocks of monk parakeets nest in the branches of trees and on powerlines

Behavior:

- roost and feed together in pairs or flocks
- parrots in the wild are not known for mimicry
- known for gregarious behavior, parrots will utter loud calls and cries to co-ordinate flock behavior
- toe arrangement allows them to manipulate food with feet
- agile climbers among tree branches

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Problems:

- weight of huge colonial nests of monk parakeets built on top of powerline transformers and branches may cause damage
- considered agricultural pests in native countries; if populations increase in South Florida fruit crops might be threatened
- increasing populations may harm native cavity-dwelling birds as competition for nesting space increases

Legal Aspects:

- parrots found in South Florida are non-migratory, non-native birds and therefore are not afforded protection

Printed Material in Appendix:

yes