



Buyers Guide

Toucans - Aracarís - Toucanets

Buying a Toucan

What should I get?

Pets

If a pet quality bird is desired, a hand reared youngster is the most suitable. Toucans are as trainable as a parrot and only your imagination will determine the limit of their capabilities. They are affectionate and enjoy contact with humans as much as many parrot species.

Breeding

If breeding toucans is the desired goal, then individuals as close to wild or parent raised birds are preferable, since hand reared birds may have become imprinted on humans, making them less successful breeders. However, it is possible to turn pet birds into breeders at a later date, though males may be aggressive towards the young, which may then have to be removed from the nest for hand rearing.

Weaned vs. Unweaned

When are they ready to leave the breeder?

Your baby will only be ready to go to its new home if it has been weaned. An unweaned bird is still reliant on being hand fed up to 6 times a day with a special formula developed for hand rearing toucans. It is illegal to sell unweaned birds in California and in many places around the world for many reasons, one being unethical to do so, as well as dangerous to the bird. A weaned bird is classified as being able to eat sufficient food on its own to sustain its own body weight for at least two weeks. It takes a trained professional to hand rear toucans and new owners are in no way ready for this task.

Reasons why not to buy an unweaned bird

- The 'It won't be tame unless you hand rear it yourself' myth: Actually, toucans do **not** need to be finished hand rearing by their new owner to stay tame, they do not bond to their owners based on seeing them as their 'parents'.
- Toucans do not have a crop and it is therefore easy to aspirate (get food into the lungs) of a baby toucan when feeding if you are not a trained professional. It is also easy to overfill them or starve them because of this reason.
- Weaning a toucan too early or incorrectly can cause a multitude of long term health problems. Some of these include and are not limited to: malnutrition, metabolic bone disease, splayed legs, immunodeficiency and death.

- Expecting a new owner to finish feeding their new baby can cause a range of short term health issues for the toucan which include but are not limited to: starvation, bloating, aspiration, dehydration, pneumonia, esophageal trauma (punctures, abrasions and bruises) and fungal infections.
- Each toucan species requires a certain amount of food every day to grow and develop, if this carefully calculated amount is not met, then stunting and the above health problems are more likely to occur.
- Some congenital issues such as heart defects take time to cause a chick problems. By the time a bird is weaned, these major issues have usually arisen and by buying weaned birds, breeders can provide a better health guarantee.

To the untrained eye, short term health problems may escalate until it is too late. Infections, aspiration and injuries need urgent critical care by an avian veterinarian. With all medical advice, internet forums should not be the first point of call, and contacting an avian veterinarian is a must.

Long term health problems may go undetected for years until issues may arise. These issues such as stunted growth also affects the organs internally which can only be seen via radiology, CT scan and ultrasound. White or abnormal feathers are caused by a lack of pigment due to nutritional unbalances and indicate that a toucan has not been raised on the correct diet.

Research has shown that Curl-crested Aracaris fledge (leave the nest) around 50 days, they wean at 97 days and on average weigh 187g when they wean. In contrast, although the average day of fledging for Black-necked Aracaris is also 50 days, they do not wean for 120 days and weigh an average of 251g when they wean. For this reason, every species is different and a one-size fits all method for weaning does not work and does not create healthy birds. A breeder should weigh their baby toucans every day to ensure normal growth. They should also be able to provide a record of

Emerald Forest Bird Gardens actively discourages and does not support in any way the practise of selling unweaned birds based on the wide range of reasons it has been proved unethical and actively harmful to both bird and owner

Visit the facility

Check out the breeders operation and their birds

Ask if you can visit the breeder to see their operation. If they decline, it may be because they are a private facility and do not accept visits from the public. In this case, it should be acceptable to ask for photos and/or videos of the parents of the bird in question you are purchasing. You should be allowed to collect your bird when it is ready, usually at the breeder's facility without issues. If a breeder only allows shipping, this could be a red flag. Breeders with high quality operations are proud to show their birds and facilities either through photos, videos or in person. Understandably, some breeders with rare species do not allow public visits but will usually do their best to accommodate you.

this, as well as show that the bird has been successfully eating on their own and maintaining this weight for two weeks.

Veterinary Examination

Getting a health check up for your companion

Ask the breeder if they're willing to have an avian veterinarian examine the bird(s). (Of course you should be willing to pay for any exam), but the breeder's willingness to do so is a telltale sign of confidence in the bird's overall health. If they refuse, then something may be wrong, or may not have a relationship with a vet. It is extremely important that breeding facilities have vets who give routine check-ups to the animals they are raising.

It is also acceptable in some circumstances to require health certificates, especially if you are

Raising Babies

How are the toucans raised by the breeder?

Ask how the birds are raised. Birds raised outdoors are less likely to have health issues, are always healthier and more desirable. Indoor bred birds are often exposed to airborne viruses and other diseases, which become concentrated do to lack of fresh air. No matter how indoor birds are maintained, they simply cannot be as healthy.

Always ask if the birds are close-banded or not. Close-banded bird rings (which go on the leg) are important identifiers of where your bird came from, what year it was born and is a good indicator that it was hatched and raised in captivity (as close-bands cannot be put on adult birds legs and can only be applied to chicks). This ensures that the breeder is honest with where their birds came from and you are not buying a smuggled bird.

concerned about certain avian diseases, or if you live in a different country from where your bird is being raised. Many countries require health certificates prior to import.

Certifications

Recognised breeders

Reviews

Ask around! Do your research and ask people who have purchased from the breeder before of their experiences. Check out their google reviews, the Better Business Bureau and facebook reviews if they have them. Ask the breeder for references from other customers and/or his veterinarian. If they cannot provide references, then most likely there are problems. If the breeder has been serving customers well, they will be proud to share that with you.

Price

Sometimes its too good to be true

Beware of cheap prices, the cheapest bird is not always the best to go for. Some Internet advertisers offer cheap prices - so cheap you should be suspicious. These "cheap" birds are often smuggled, stolen, or simply nonexistent. Internet scammers are becoming highly sophisticated. Again, ask to visit to see the birds. Low prices and denial of visitation is a dead giveaway.

Always be an educated buyer by researching legitimate and recognised breeders. Contributing to the illegal pet trade does not show your love for toucans and their well-being in the wild and captivity.



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More information

Got more questions?

Please contact us via our website
www.emeraldforestbirdgardens.com
or call 760-728-2226