**YVCipedia AVIAN**

Meyer's Parrot Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

**Meyer's Parrots** (Poicephalus meyeri) are small to medium-sized African parrots, known for their calm temperament, soft vocalizations, and affectionate nature. Native to sub-Saharan Africa, they belong to the Poicephalus genus, which also includes Senegal and Red-bellied parrots.

At YVC, we find Meyer's to be an excellent choice for those seeking a quieter, less demanding companion parrot. They typically bond closely with their people, enjoy moderate interaction, and tend to be less prone to screaming or destructive behavior compared to larger parrot species. With proper care, they can live 25–30 years.

## **Housing & Environment**

Meyer's Parrots thrive in a calm, well-structured environment. They are not as hyperactive as conures or lovebirds but still benefit from regular out-of-cage time and varied stimulation.

A cage should allow for wing extension and climbing. We recommend a minimum size of 24"x24"x30" with ½-inch bar spacing, though larger is always better. These birds enjoy horizontal bars for climbing, natural wood perches, and quiet areas to retreat when tired or overstimulated.

They are relatively adaptable to temperature and humidity but do best in a space that mimics natural light cycles and has steady airflow. Avoid drafty areas, kitchens, or overly dim spaces. Providing 10–12 hours of uninterrupted darkness nightly helps maintain their hormonal balance and emotional health.

## **Diet & Nutrition**

At YVC, we emphasize a pelleted-based diet for Meyer's Parrots, supported by fresh vegetables and modest fruit intake. These birds are prone to obesity if overfed or under-exercised, so portion control and a consistent routine are key.

### **Daily Diet Breakdown:**

* **Pellets (60–70%)**: We recommend high-quality pellets such as **Mazuri** or **Lafeber Nutri-Berries**. They’re well-balanced and often more appealing to picky eaters.
* **Vegetables (20–30%)**: Leafy greens (kale, dandelion, collards), carrots, sweet potato, bell peppers, and squash can be chopped or offered in foraging toys.
* **Fruits (5–10%)**: Use sparingly—favorites include apple slices, berries, or papaya.
* **Protein/grains (1–2x/week)**: Cooked lentils, quinoa, or a small amount of scrambled egg.
* **Seeds and nuts (<5%)**: These should be offered as treats or for training only.

Fresh, clean water should always be available and changed daily. Avoid seed-based diets as a primary food source—they're too high in fat and deficient in key nutrients.

## **Behavior & Handling**

Meyer's Parrots are typically gentle, observant, and more independent than some of their more demanding cousins. At YVC, we often describe them as the “introverts” of the parrot world—social but not needy, curious but not chaotic.

Consistent handling helps build trust, especially during the first year. They often prefer one or two close human companions and may be wary of unfamiliar people or changes. Positive reinforcement—through food rewards, vocal praise, or play—goes a long way with these birds.

They are generally quiet, but can become vocal when overstimulated or neglected. Like most parrots, they do best with a regular routine, clear boundaries, and consistent interaction.

## **Enrichment**

While not hyperactive, Meyer's still need mental stimulation to stay healthy and happy. Their playful curiosity makes them ideal candidates for **foraging toys**, simple puzzles, and destructible items like cardboard or soft wood.

They often enjoy quiet interaction with their person—riding on a shoulder, playing with foot toys, or observing the room from a perch. Rotate toys regularly to avoid boredom, and offer supervised out-of-cage time each day.

At YVC, we’ve seen that the most well-adjusted Meyer's are those with a daily rhythm that includes interactive time, rest, and independent play.

## **Health & Veterinary Care**

Annual wellness exams are essential for Meyer's Parrots. At YVC, we recommend a physical exam, **fecal testing**, and occasional **bloodwork**, especially in older birds or those with known health issues.

Common concerns include:

* **Obesity**, especially in birds fed a seed-based diet or confined to small cages
* **Vitamin A deficiency**, linked to inadequate fresh food intake
* **Beak or feather abnormalities**, which can be signs of underlying illness
* **Chronic respiratory infections**, especially in birds exposed to poor ventilation or aerosols
* **Bacterial or yeast infections** of the crop or gastrointestinal tract

Subtle changes in droppings, behavior, or vocalization often precede more obvious symptoms. Fluffed posture, reduced appetite, or increased sleepiness should prompt immediate evaluation.

## **Facts & FAQs**

* Meyer's Parrots are among the quieter parrot species, making them a good fit for apartment living
* They are less prone to hormonal aggression than cockatoos or Amazons, but still benefit from environmental stability
* Most can learn simple tricks and enjoy cooperative handling with minimal training
* Their subtle coloration (grey, turquoise, and yellow) sets them apart visually and temperamentally from flashier parrots
* With good care, many live into their late 20s or early 30s

## **Supplies Checklist**

At YVC, we recommend the following for a happy, healthy Meyer's Parrot:

* Spacious cage with horizontal bars and multiple perch types
* Pelleted food and daily fresh vegetables
* Treats like Nutri-Berries or small pieces of fruit
* Food and water dishes cleaned daily
* Safe toys that promote foraging, shredding, and movement
* Bathing options (dish or gentle misting)
* Carrier for transport to veterinary visits
* Access to natural light or full-spectrum UV lighting
* Quiet, stable sleeping area with 10–12 hours of darkness

*Yarmouth Veterinary Center*