

Orthopsittaca manilatus



Red bellied macaw

Conservation status



Scientific classification

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Psittaciformes

Family: Psittacidae

Genus: *Orthopsittaca* (Ridgway, 1912)

Species: *O. Manilatus*

Binomial Name

Orthopsittaca manilatus

(Boddaert, 1783)

The red-bellied-macaw, is a medium-sized, mostly green parrot, a member of a group of large Neotropical parrots known as macaws. It is the largest of what are commonly called "mini-macaws". The belly has a large maroon patch which gives the species its name.

It is endemic to tropical Amazonian South America (as well as the Caribbean island of Trinidad), from Colombia south to Amazonian Peru and Bolivia, and central Brazil as far as the northwestern cerrado. Its habitat is moriche (or buriti) palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*) swamp forests and sandy savannahs with palm groves. They are critically dependent on the Moriche palm for roosting, feeding and nesting. Although the bird is locally common, in places it has been adversely affected by clearing of the palms for use as posts, or to allow cattle ranching; also by capture for the pet trade.

Not to be confused with the African red-bellied parrot (*Poicephalus rufiventris*), a similarly named smaller parrot.

The red-bellied macaw is medium-sized, about 300 g (11 oz) in weight and about 46 cm (18 in) in length including its long pointed tail. The plumage is mostly green; the cere and much of the face are covered with bare mustard-yellow skin. The forehead is bluish. The chin, throat and upper chest are greyish with some green scalloping, and the lower abdomen ("belly") has a large maroon patch.

Behaviour

Red-bellied macaws make reedy, high-pitched screams. They roost communally in the moriche palms, and large numbers can be seen at the roost sites at dawn and dusk. They choose large stands of these palms that have an overabundance of woodpecker holes as roosting sites.

Breeding

Red-bellied macaws nest in cavities of dead moriche palm trees. There are usually two to four white eggs in a clutch. The female incubates the eggs for about 27 days, and the chicks fledge from the nest about 77 days after hatching. Juveniles reach sexual maturity in 2–3 years.

Food and feeding

Their diet consists almost exclusively of the fruit and seeds of the moriche palm and the Caribbean royal palm (in Trinidad), which are 100% carbohydrate, 0% fat and very high in beta-carotene.³⁶