

# The Loveable Lory

by Bill Parsons and Margaret Wissman, D.V.M.  
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The brilliantly colored bird, lying on his back juggling a toy, rolls over, gallops to his owner, and says, "What are you doing?" Yes, this little ball of fire is a lory.

Unbeknownst to most people, lorries are excellent talkers. They have very pleasing voices, and crystal-clear pronunciation. Most babies will be talking soon after weaning. They are capable of speaking single words, phrases, and whole sentences. Some will develop extensive vocabularies, and unnerve you with their ability to respond to you in context. They will often pick up words that they hear frequently (and not always what they're being taught), so be careful what is said around them, or your lory could reveal your deepest secrets

to household visitors. One baby Chattering Lory, just weaned, fed by Dorothy Parsons at Valley Bird Farm, was already saying, "Hello, lory, lory, lory," in Dorothy's voice, much to our amazement. Unlike most species of birds, lorries will often speak in front of strangers, in pet stores, or even in the veterinary office!

Lories are relatively quiet birds, and their call is more of a whistle than a scream. Lorries are an excellent choice for apartment dwellers and homeowners in subdivisions where the noise level is a consideration.

Lories have an innate curiosity about the world around them. They love to explore everything. Their little brush-tongues taste everything they come in contact with. Objects are picked up in their toes for closer inspection and tasting. They are not shy birds at all. More often they are fearless. Objects within their reach are inspected and almost immediately considered a play toy. Often they will pick up an object, roll over onto their back, and hold it in their feet, turning and scrutinizing and, if possible, disassembling it.

Lories are really hardy birds, and many of the diseases that Amazons, cockatoos, African Greys, and macaws are susceptible to, are not commonly seen in lorries.

There are many misconceptions

concerning lorries as pets. Lorries are the easiest of psittacines to feed, since there are many commercial diets on the market that may be fed dry or mixed with water. They will eat almost any fruit in season and they do have hearty appetites. Nutritional deficiencies and the associated medical problems that are so common in most parrots are almost non-existent in lorries because of the quality of the commercial diets available and the fact that they will eat almost any fruit offered.

The major misconception about lorries is that they are messy birds and their liquidy droppings make them unsuitable as house pets. Balderdash! While it is true that due to their diet, they pass more water (urine) in their droppings, there is less odor and staining than with other psittacine droppings. If absorbent material such as corn cob bedding, under a grating so it is not ingested, is used in the bottom of the cage, and a "splash-zone" is taken into account around the cage, clean-up time for the cage is about the same as for any other parrot.

Lories definitely recognize individuals and, being outgoing, will usually go to anyone even though they may have favorite people. All baby birds are sweet and loving, but by the third or fourth year, when breeding season comes around and the playful nips turn into eye-watering bites, many parrot owners start thinking about either breeding or selling their beloved pet, but the sweet and love-

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Photo by Mary Vanderhoof

Lories, when hand-fed, make excellent pets and bond well to humans as seen with this Yellow-bibbed Lory youngster held by four-year-old Victoria Vanderhoof.


able lory will be as goofy and charming as the day he was weaned. The lory will remain a delightful pet as long as he is handled and loved. They tend to have an even temperament year round.

As a pet, nothing beats a hand-raised lory. Lories are easy to hand feed with a spoon, and they'll often be eating on their own before they're feathered out. There is a huge difference in temperament between hand-fed babies and parent-raised or imported young adult birds. If you want a loving pet, be sure to get a hand-raised baby. Wild lories will tame down, and usually will talk, but they'll never be the pet a hand-raised baby will be, and they will quickly revert to their wild behaviors again if they are not given constant attention.

Lories are very animated birds, with exaggerated movements. They do not walk or run, they hop, and they will often freeze momentarily in an array of adorable poses, head cocked, watching you watch them. We enjoy observing our lories' antics; their clown-like behavior always makes us smile.

Because lories are such active birds, we recommend you house a pet in the largest cage that your living space lets you accommodate. Smaller cages may suffice, if your lory is allowed a lot of supervised outside play-time. Our experience has been that lories all love swings. They will get the swing going by leaning forward and backward, much as a child will start a swing going by using his legs to pump. They do love toys and will play with objects as long as their interest is held. Ladders, knotted rope and swings will serve as the acrobat's equipment. You will be at least as amused watching your lory's antics as he will be playing on his trapeze.

Lories are the most colorful of all the psittacines and there is a wide diversity of sizes from five inches to twelve inches in height. You will never meet a lory you won't love — they all make excellent pets. The more common lories seen in the pet trade are the Green-naped Rainbow, Chattering, Red, Black, Dusky and Blue-streaked. These are just a few of the species of lories yet to be offered by the pet industry. Any of these lories will be a good talker, companion, and certainly a beautiful addition to your family. Moderately priced, lories are an excellent value for your money. You get a lot of bird in a compact package. ●



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