MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

BLUE-AND-GOLD MACAW

Ara ararauna · *also called blue-and-yellow macaw*

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · **© 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Bird (parrot)
NATIVE REGION	Tropical South America
HABITAT	Forest, palm swamp and savanna edge
DIET	Fruits, nuts, seeds and other plant material
LENGTH	About 34 inches
WEIGHT	About 2.3 to 2.8 lb
LIFESPAN	Can live for many decades
STATUS	Least Concern
OUR MACAWS	Danny and Maggie



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- The lines of tiny feathers on a macaw's white face form a pattern that is different on every bird.
- A macaw's bare face skin can turn pinker when it is excited.
- Macaws have two toes pointing forward and two pointing backward.
- Macaws and other parrots gather at exposed riverbanks called clay licks. The clay may provide minerals.
- Macaws use their strong beaks to crack hard nuts and to help them climb.

Words to know

Zygodactyl: Having two toes forward and two toes back.
Canopy: The top layer of a forest, made of treetops.
Cavity: A hole in a tree where birds can nest.
Flock: A group of birds that live and travel together.

Think about it

1. Why are macaws so loud?
2. How do macaws use their feet when they eat?
3. Why are big, old trees so important to macaws?
4. What is a clay lick, and why might macaws visit one?
5. Why do macaw populations recover slowly when birds or nesting trees are lost?

Draw it

Draw a blue-and-gold macaw. Label its blue back, golden chest, green forehead, white face, hooked beak and its feet with two toes forward and two back.

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS2-1 · 3-LS4-3**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.B · 3.1.3.G**

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/birds/blue-and-gold-macaw/ · **Sources:** World Parrot Trust; Animal Diversity Web; IUCN Red List.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS2-1 (3.1.3.B) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G)
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BLUE-AND-GOLD MACAW

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the blue-and-gold macaw live?

Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?

☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.

☐ Zygodactyl ☐ Canopy ☐ Cavity ☐ Flock

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

_____

_____

4. My question: one thing I want to find out when I see the blue-and-gold macaw.

_____

_____

At the zoo · look closely

Watch for one minute. What is it doing?

☐ resting ☐ eating ☐ moving ☐ watching ☐ with others

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your visit · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Tropical South America. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Fruits, nuts, seeds and other plant material. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.

• How do macaws use their feet when they eat?

_____

• Why are big, old trees so important to macaws?

_____

4. Exit ticket.

One thing I learned: _____

One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT

Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.