

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Psittaciformes  
**Scientific Name:** Nestor notabilis

**Family:** Nestoridae  
**Common Name:** Kea

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male):**



**Photo (Female): Bird on the Left is a Female**



## NATURAL HISTORY:

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other  New Zealand – South Island

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other  [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  Crepuscular  Nocturnal  Other  [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Cold Tolerance:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F   
 To 30° F  To 20° F  Other  Provide heat options below 25F

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other  Provide misters, cooling above 75F

**Diet:** Frugivore  Carnivore  Piscivore  Insectivore   
 Nectivore  Omnivore  Folivore  Other (Add Below)

### Captive Dietary Needs:

Well-balanced formulated parrot food and a variety of vegetables and fruits, with supplementary high protein or high-fat foods (e.g., seeds, nuts, egg, meat) offered year-round and more frequently in colder months for birds held outdoors

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 7-10 years Females: 7-10 years

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: Median LE 8 years Females: Median LE 8 years

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## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 3-4 years Females: 3-4 years

**Courtship Displays:** Female becomes dominant and protective of the nest and may displace or chase the male. Pairs will guard territory from other birds in the area and aggression should be monitored. Male will regurgitate to female. Copulation is often rough and extended.

**Nest Site Description:** A nest box with a 1.5-3m tunnel entrance measuring about 7" in diameter should be provided. This can be on the ground or raised. The box is typically 1mx1mx1m and made of strong wood or cinderblock/concrete. A two chambered box may be especially effective. The female must be able to exclude the male from the box during egg lay and incubation.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** 3-5 eggs. White

**Incubation Period:** 21-28 days

**Fledgling Period:** ~6 weeks

**Parental Care:** Male regurgitates to female at the entrance to the nest during incubation and early chick rearing, and the female in turn regurgitates to the chicks. As the chicks grow the male begins to feed them directly. Some captive females eat on their own so food pans should be placed near the nest entrance.

**Chick Development:** Altricial chicks have white down at hatch, eyes open and gray down grows in ~2 weeks and green feathers grow in ~9 Weeks. Chicks can tolerate lower temperatures than other parrots at an earlier age and may get overheated easily. Hand-rearing protocols are available – contact the SSP.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Pairs are typically monogamous. Juveniles and yearlings form flocks. Adults may flock during non-breeding season but pair off during breeding season to protect a territory and nest site.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Can be kept in pairs or flocks. Male groups or pairs usually do well but female-only groups are not recommended. Adult females will usually not tolerate other females during breeding season so separating breeding pairs from a flock is recommended.

**Minimum Group Size:** 2

**Maximum Group Size:** Can be flocked 10-15 birds with enough space and limited breeding females

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Varies

**Comments:** Juveniles may be placed with other parrots and possibly other species as well, more research is needed.

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**Optimal Habitat Size:** dependent on number of birds, compatibility of birds, and complexity of space; minimum space 270 feet cubed per bird (at least 540 feet cubed to hold a pair); approximately 8' x 8' x 10' for compatible birds and larger for less compatible pairs

**Management Challenges:** Exhibits and holding must be made of solid materials with hidden or strong fasteners.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The kea is the only alpine parrot species in the world and can handle colder temperatures than other parrots. This can be an ideal species for colder-weather zoos with outdoor enclosures.

Kea are extremely curious and intelligent and require a large and varied enrichment program as part of basic husbandry. Social interactions may also be more discordant than typical parrot species – even well-bonded breeding pairs show displacement and chasing as part of courtship and breeding season. Multiple food sites and enrichment items should be provided and care should be taken when choosing enclosures.

## REFERENCES:

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## COMPLETED BY:

Name: Jessica Meehan

Date: 4/13/2017