

## GLOSSARY:

**Amazon Jungle:** An area in South America; it is mostly rainforest, encompassing five and a half million square kilometers. The majority of the forest is contained within Brazil. The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests and it comprises the largest and most species-rich tract in the world.

**Clay licks:** Exposed areas of clay where animals gather to eat or lick clay. Over 50 different animals use clay licks to obtain clays or salts.

**Decibels:** A unit of measurement of the volume of sounds. The speaking voice of most people ranges from 45 to 75 decibels.

Endangered: Threatened with extinction.

**Ornithologist:** A zoologist who studies birds.

**Neotropical:** Living in one of the eight ecozones dividing the Earth's surface.



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# Show Me Science Biology Animals, Plants & Fungi

## Zoology

# The Magnificent Macaw

K4613DVD

*Advanced Teachers Guide*

## SYNOPSIS:

In this program, Jake Willers goes on an expedition to study endangered macaws and discover environments where the birds snack on clay licks to neutralize toxins in their diets. Macaws are intelligent, social birds that gather in large flocks and are native to Mexico, Central America, and South America.

They are omnivores, feeding on fruits, seeds, nuts, insects, and clay. Macaws are vocal birds and communicate within the flock to mark territory, identify one another, and warn of predators. Because they are very colorful and some species can mimic human speech, they are highly sought after as exotic pets.

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## CURRICULUM UNITS:

- Biology
  - Ecology
  - Environmental science
  - Zoology
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## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Biologist
- Ecologist
- Environmentalist
- Ornithologist
- Zoologist

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

There are a variety of species of macaws and most are very colorful. The scarlet Macaw is one of the largest neotropical parrots and can live up to 75 years in captivity, although a more typical lifespan is 40 to 50 years.

In the Amazon Jungle, Macaws feed on clay licks to neutralize toxins in their diet. The clay licks spread from Peru to Ecuador to Bolivia. Macaws are vocal birds that make loud, high and sometimes low-pitched squawks, designed to carry many miles. Their squawks, used to call for their groups, can register up to 105 decibels.

## ISSUES & CRITICAL THINKING:

1. Research the bird populations in your area. How are they linked to the food web?
2. Discuss different environmental factors that determine where macaws tend to reside.
3. Research the different body parts of a macaw, paying special attention to the beak and how it is suited to their diet.
4. Research different species and identify the reasons for decreasing populations of macaws in the wild. How does the exotic pet industry affect macaw populations?