

# Conures Species Profile: Parrot Diet, Housing, and Size

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There are 8 genera of Conures:

*Aratinga* - 19 species, including the popular Sun and Mitred Conures

*Pyrrhura* - 18 species, including the popular Maroon-bellied, Green-cheeked, and Black-capped Conures

*Nandayus* - 1 species, the Nanday Conure

*Leptosittaca* - 1 species, the Golden-plumed Conure

*Ognorhynchus* - 1 species, the Yellow-eared Conure

*Cyanoliseus* - 1 species, the Patagonian Conure

*Enicognathus* - 2 species, the Austral and the Slender-billed Conure

*Guaruba* - 1 species, *Guaruba guarouba*, the Golden or Queen of Bavaria Conure (formerly *Aratinga guarouba*)

Conures have been imported into the United States since the late 1800's; however, by the early 1980's, importation had almost entirely been replaced by captive breeding programs. This in turn led to birds being sold that were inarguably healthier and better suited emotionally to captivity by virtue of handling and hand-feeding beginning at an early age.

The name Conure is applied to many of the long-tailed parrots of the New World (the Americas). The largest of all the Conures, the Patagonian (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*) is generally 17"-18". The smallest, the Painted Conure (*Pyrrhura picta*) is half that size, 8.5". The most popular group of Conures are of the *Aratinga* genus.

Other notable Conures include the Austral, (*Enicognathus ferrungineus*), with the most southern habitat of any parrot (southern Chile). The Austral, Patagonian, and Slender-billed Conures will spend a good deal of time foraging for food on the cage floor. The Nanday Conure (*Nandayus nenday*) has the habit of falling asleep on its back, feet straight up in the air (rather disconcerting the first time observed €). The Queen of Bavaria Conure (*Aratinga guarouba*) is not recommended for the first-time Conure owner because it requires a great deal of time and attention to avert possible destructive behaviors including [screaming](#), [feather picking](#), and aggression toward other parrots.

Conures, in general, are playful, intelligent, "big parrots in a little parrot body." They also love to snuggle under things, so providing them with a tightly woven wash cloth, soft piece of fabric, or fuzzy toy will be appreciated. Prices range from \$200 for many members of the *Pyrrhura* genus to \$700 or more for larger and rarer genus members.

## Quick Stats: Conures

**Family:** Psittacidae

**Origin:** *Aratinga* - South and Central America, Mexico

*Pyrrhura* - throughout South America

*Nandayus* - south-central regions of South America

*Leptosittaca* - isolated regions of Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru

*Ognorhynchus* - northern Ecuador

*Cyanoliseus* - Chile, Argentina, and perhaps Uruguay

*Enicognathus* - Chile, Argentina, and Tierra del Fuego (Austral); central Chili (Slender-billed)

*Guaruba* - restricted to small range of northeast Brazil

**Size:** 8.5-18 inches

**Coloration:** *Aratinga*: small to medium size; long tail; broad, heavy

**Diet:** 65-80% quality pelleted diet, 15-30% vegetables (e.g., greens, legumes, corn-on-the-cob), 5% fruits, and an occasional nut, mealworm, or cricket. Use many varieties of fruits and vegetables, washed thoroughly. No avocados or fruit pits. See [Basic Nutrition for Psittacines \(Parrot Family\)](#) for more information. In the wild, grass seeds, fruits, cactus, berries, nuts, flowers, insects, and grains.

**Cage Size:** The cage should be a minimum of 18" H x 18" L x 18" W for the smaller species; and up to a minimum of 36" x 36" x 36" for the larger species.

**Grooming:** Trim the beak and nails as necessary; wing trims are also

bill; naked or partially feathered periophthalmic ring; lores and cheeks fully feathered; cere either naked or hidden by feathers with only the nares exposed; general plumage green except for the Sun Conure subspecies, which is predominantly yellow.

*Pyrrhura*: small to medium size; long tail; broad bill with notch in upper mandible; prominent naked cere; general plumage green with the exception of the Maroon-bellied Conure and the Yellow-sided Conure, which show a good deal of brown.

*Nandayus*: medium size; long tail; bill longer than wider with upper mandibular notch; cere partially feathered with nares exposed; general plumage green.

*Leptosittaca*: medium size; long tail; partially feathered cere; conspicuous tuft of feathers extends beyond ear coverts; general plumage green.

*Ognorhynchus*: medium size; large, heavy, bill with upper mandibular notch; elongated ear coverts; general plumage green.

*Cyanoliseus*: large size; long tail; small bill in proportion to size, often partially covered by cheek feathers; feathered cere; general plumage olive brown.

*Enicognathus*: medium size; long tail; disproportionately small bill; feathered cere; characteristic edging to feathers; Slender-billed Conure has remarkable elongated upper mandible; general plumage dull green.

*Guaruba*: medium size; long tail; disproportionately large bill; general plumage a rich yellow; wing coverts dark green; bill tan; legs pink.

recommended for safety.

**Compatibility/Disposition:** Conures are generally compatible with other conures; however, aggression may be a problem during mating season(s). Some differences in degree of aggression exist between genera (notably, *Aratinga* is reportedly more aggressive); however, disposition is generally affectionate, peaceful and playful, especially when socialized and handled at an early age.

**Vocalization:** Conures have a harsh and shrill screech, louder in the *Aratinga* genus while the Patagonian is reported to have the loudest call of all Conures. Will pick up human speech with relative ease, especially when exposed at an early age. Some owners and breeders report the *Aratinga* genus will have better enunciation while the *Pyrrhura* genus will develop larger vocabularies.

**Playfulness:** Highly intelligent and curious; love to cuddle; *Pyrrhura* genus noted to be the consummate escape artist.

**Life Span:** Up to 35 years

**Age at Maturity:** 1-3 years (the smaller Conures mature more quickly).

**Nesting Sites in the Wild:** Holes carved in sandstone cliffs and terminate mounds or in naturally formed tree cavities.

**Breeding Season:** Throughout the year, depending on genus and species.

**Sexing:** Reliable only via DNA or endoscopy.

**Special:** Love to bathe and will use their water bowl if nothing else is available. Also enjoy showers. Clever escape artists and acrobats. Avid chewers (especially the *Aratingas*)

conures (especially the Aratingas) and need to be provided with plenty of toys for this purpose or behavior will become destructive. In general, the *Aratinga* genus is louder, larger and more aggressive, while the *Pyrrhura* genus is preferred as a good "first time" Conure due to its quieter and more peaceful disposition.