



African Grey Parrot

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Context

- **RTI responses from 19 States/UTs** revealed that no Forest Department maintains records of **registered breeders or authorised pet shops** dealing in African grey parrots.
- This is despite the species being **easily available in Indian pet markets**, pointing to widespread **illegal and unregulated exotic bird trade**.

About African Grey Parrot

What it is

- The **African grey parrot (Psittacus erithacus)** is a medium-sized, extremely intelligent parrot.
- Often called the "**Einstein of the bird world**" due to its unmatched mimicry and cognitive abilities.

Habitat & Range

- Native to **West and Central Africa**.
- Natural habitats include: Savannas, Mangroves, Forest edges, Woodland and clearings
- Two subspecies: **Congo African Grey (CAG)**, **Timneh African Grey (TAG)**

IUCN Red List

- **Endangered**
- Due to extensive habitat destruction
- Heavy capture for the international pet trade

Key Characteristics

- Exceptional talking ability and contextual comprehension.
- Grey plumage, bright orange eyes, red (CAG) or maroon (TAG) tail.
- Highly social, emotionally sensitive, prone to:
- Anxiety
- Stress-induced feather plucking
- Require:
- Stimulating environments
- Cognitive toys
- Nutrient-rich diets (vitamin D, beta-carotene)

Ecological & Conservation Significance

- One of the **world's most trafficked parrots** due to high pet demand.
- **Important seed dispersers** in African ecosystems.
- Listed under **CITES Appendix I** (highest protection):

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- Prohibits commercial international trade
- Requires strict import/export permits

Status of African Grey Parrot in India

Legal Position

- CITES Appendix I species ? strict import regulations.
- India requires: **Import permits, Registration, Verification of legal origin.**

Ground Reality: Widely sold in Indian exotic bird markets ? indicates **illegal trafficking.**

- **RTI findings:**
- No State/UT maintains records of authorised breeders or traders.
- **Complete data vacuum** on captive populations.

Key Hotspots: Despite Tamil Nadu reporting zero authorised breeders, the State remains a major hub for exotic bird trade along with: Kerala, Karnataka