

# MEET GONZO – THE GREY PARROT

Hello kids, my name is Gonzo. I am a Congo grey parrot. I want to teach you about me and my family.



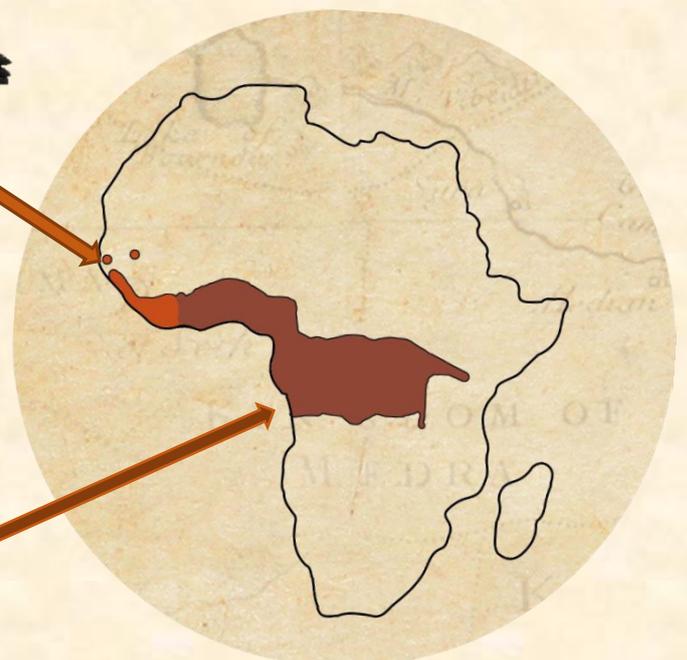
<b>Name</b>	Congo grey parrot ( <i>Psittacus erithacus</i> ) Timneh grey parrot ( <i>Psittacus timneh</i> )
<b>Habitat</b>	mainly tropical rainforests, but also mangroves and savannas
<b>Diet</b>	mostly frugivorous, nuts, seeds, fruits, especially the fruits of the oil palm
<b>Age</b>	On average 35-45, sometimes up to 60 years
<b>Breeding behaviour</b>	breeding in tree holes, lay 2-3 eggs, chicks hatch after 30 days
<b>Threats</b>	habitat loss, poached for pet markets



Timneh grey parrot



Congo grey parrot



Find the following words in the puzzle.

Africa, Grey parrot, frugivorous, poaching, pet markets, deforestation, endangered, cave breeder, intelligent

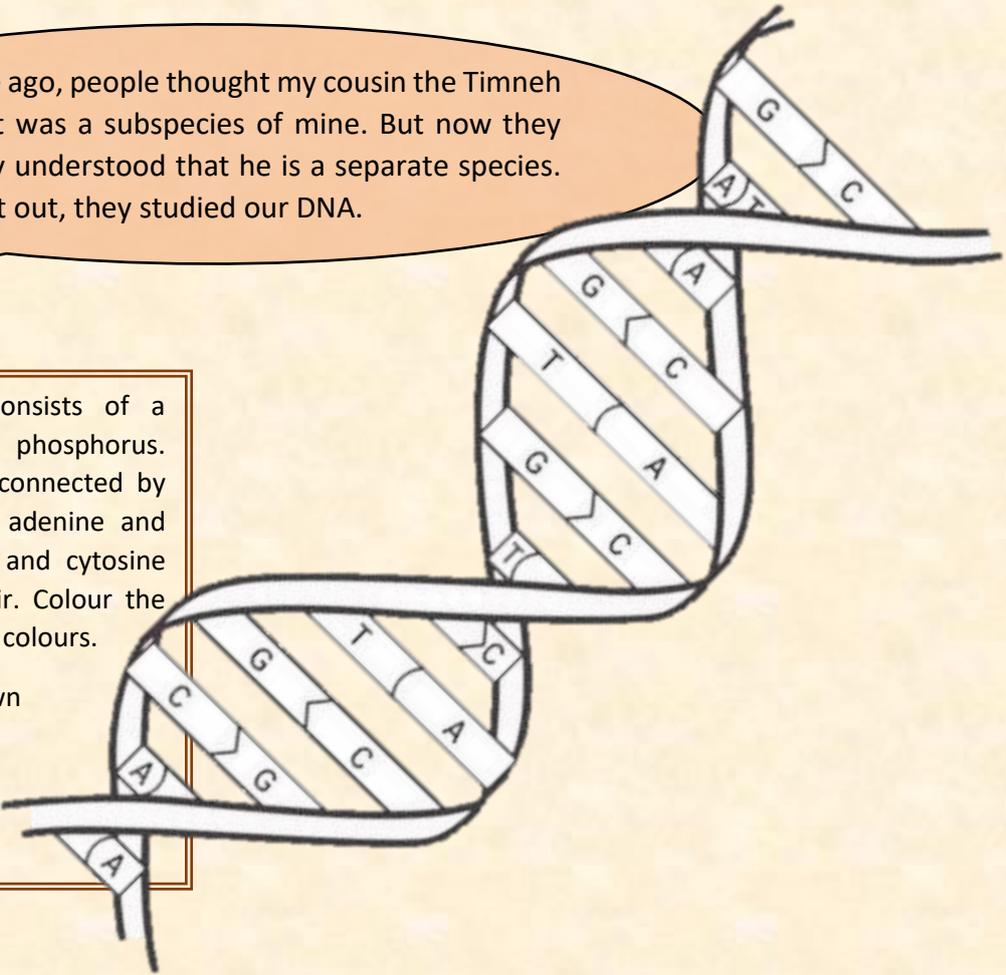
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D	E	B	I	M	N	Y	L	D	C	M	K	W	G	D	L	A	W	O	F	R	C	V	P	T
S	H	U	N	R	W	E	F	B	H	N	E	D	T	J	N	R	E	R	K	T	D	M	E	S
D	F	C	C	A	D	S	O	D	I	A	U	D	S	E	O	M	H	G	L	I	N	F	S	G
Q	R	L	X	K	Z	R	I	L	N	F	B	O	K	L	J	U	S	X	K	S	V	P	B	S

Short while ago, people thought my cousin the Timneh grey parrot was a subspecies of mine. But now they have finally understood that he is a separate species. To find that out, they studied our DNA.



A DNA strand consists of a certain sugar and phosphorus. Both strands are connected by bases. The bases adenine and thymine, guanine and cytosine always form a pair. Colour the DNA in the correct colours.

**DNA strand** = brown  
**Adenine** = red  
**Thymine** = blue  
**Guanine** = green  
**Cytosine** = yellow





Recently you humans found out that we grey parrots can be altruistic. That means, we help friends without having any benefit ourselves. You can watch a video about that on YouTube.



Sarah has read about grey parrots in various books, with different information. Now she can't decide which information is right. Help her to decide for each statement and find out how our grey parrot is called.

1.a) Male and female grey parrots do not look different.

G

1.b) Female grey parrots have red tail feathers, males do not.

I

2.a) Grey parrots build their nests in tree hollows.

O

2.b) Grey parrots build their nests on the ground.

N

3.a) When they eat grey parrots use cutlery.

A

3.b) When they eat, the birds hold their food with the claws.

N

4.a) Grey parrots gnaw wood every day. This keeps their beaks healthy and strong.

Z

4.b) Grey parrots gnaw on wood every day. Like guinea pigs, they have a long appendix to digest the wood better.

P

5.a) On average, a clutch consists of 10 eggs.

S

5.b) On average, a clutch consists of 3 to 4 eggs.

O



Name of the grey parrot: \_\_\_\_\_



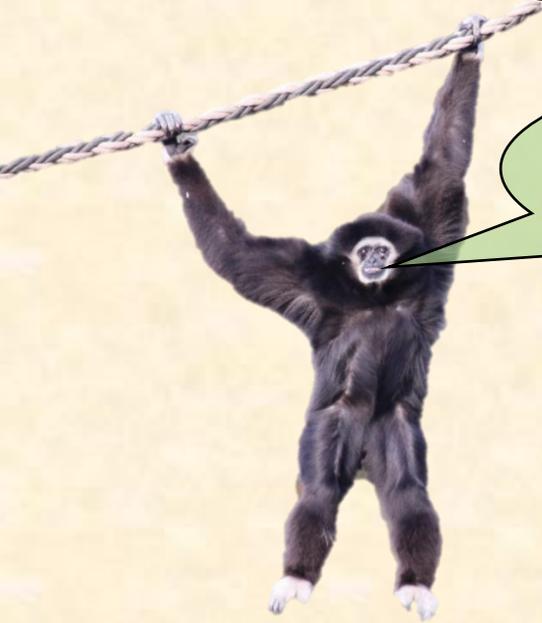
A clutch of grey parrots with hatched offspring. ©Wikipedia



We are very loyal and social birds. Once we have found a partner, we stay together for life. During the night, we form large flocks and gather in one place to sleep. During the day we forage with our partner or in small groups. This is a so called "fission-fusion society". Our favourite food is the fruit of the oil palm.



Not only you grey parrots, also humans like the oil palm. To grow it, they destroy the rainforests of Southeast Asia, where we gibbons and many other animals live.



Lar Gibbon Jörg is right. Every day, large areas of the rainforest in Southeast Asia are deforested to grow palm oil. The oil is used to produce many different products. Help Jörg and the other animals of the Asian rainforest and stop using products with palm oil. Apps like [„Code Check“](#) help to select the right products.

In Africa, however, the oil palm is a plant that belongs to the normal vegetation and the grey parrot depends on the energy-rich fruits of the palm. Help Gonzo and his partner and paint a beautiful rainforest with high diversity but don't forget their favourite food.



Grey parrots are one of the most popular parrot species kept as pets. The reason for this is that we are very intelligent and can even mimic the language of you humans. But it is not so easy to care for us in a species-appropriate way.



The keeping of grey parrots was already widespread in Europe in the 17th century. At that time, they were kept in cages that were far too small and fed incorrectly. They also had to live alone without a partner, and it was a common practice to clip the wings of the animals so that they could be kept in the room without a cage on so-called parrot trees. These birds were unable to fly for the rest of their lives.

The painter Victorine Meurent and a grey parrot on a parrot stand  
Édouard Manet 1866 ©Wikipedia

Thank god my relatives are no longer kept like that. You have already learned a lot about grey parrots and how we live. Think about what a species-appropriate enclosure could look like. Write a little report and tell your friends and family about it.



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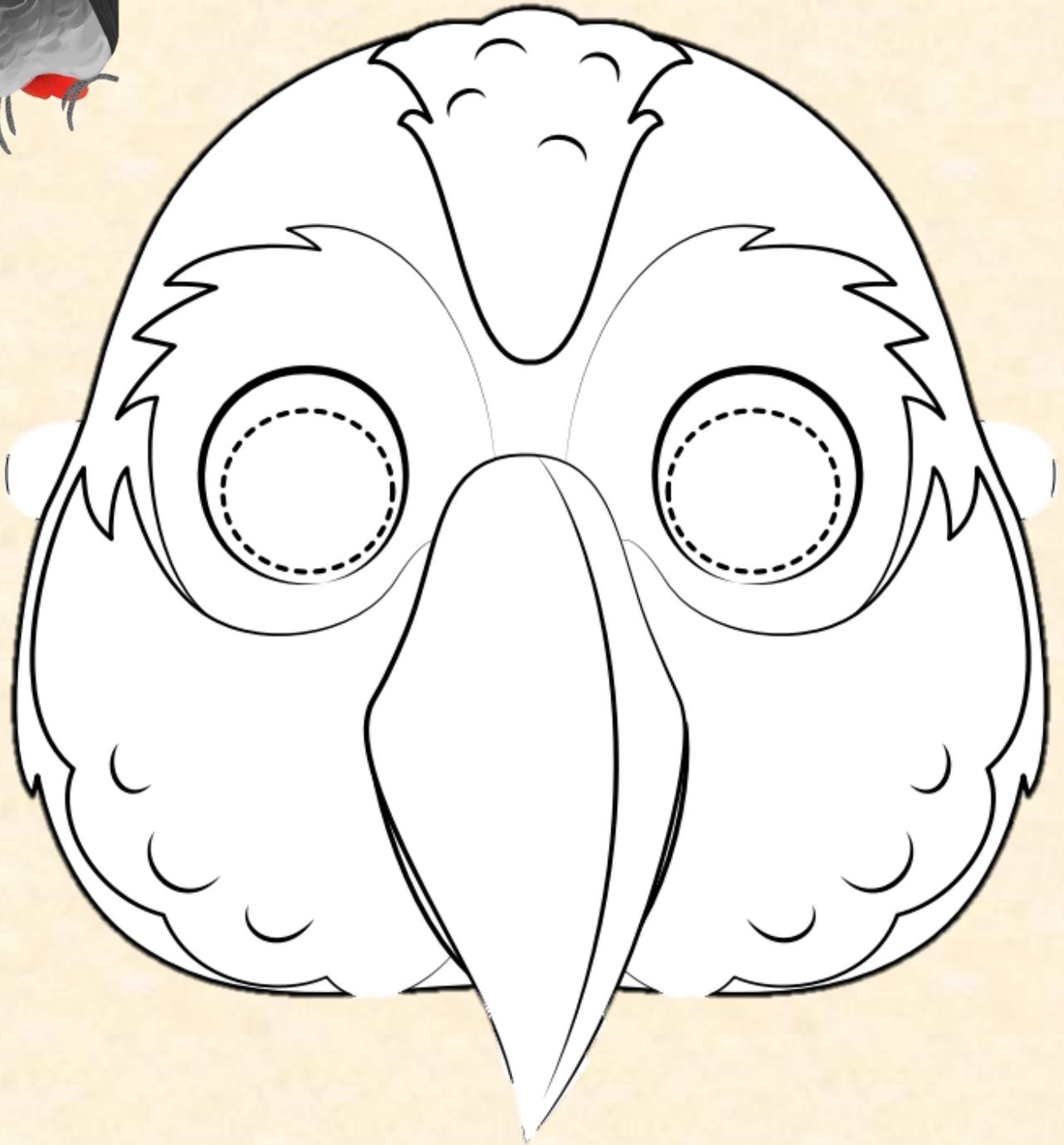
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When you present the report to your family or friends, you can wear my great mask. Then you will feel like a real grey parrot and your family and friends will never forget me and my conspecifics.



People breed grey parrots successfully. So that there is no reason to poach my species in Africa. Nevertheless, more than 1 million grey parrots have been exported from their countries of origin in the last 30 years. During this time, our population has decreased by 79% and the IUCN red list listed us as endangered.



Besides poaching for the pet trade, habitat loss is also a major problem. Large areas of forest are being cleared in Central Africa. Tropical wood is used for furniture making, for example. In addition, rare earths such as bauxite are mined from this area. Bauxite is the raw material for the extraction of aluminium. Many rare minerals are also used for technical devices such as mobile phones and tablets.



Look around the your flat or house and make a list. Can you find a note on your furniture saying what wood it is made of? What aluminium products and what devices do you use? How often do you buy new technical equipment?

Now, think about what you can do to save these resources to protect the rainforest.

**List of products**

**Ideas of solution**

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I am glad that there are many people who help us grey parrots, for example my friends of the Limbe Wildlife Centre.



Limbe Wildlife Centre  
Republic of Cameroon

The Limbe Wildlife Centre was founded in 1993 to protect nature. Besides the grey parrots, they are also involved with primates such as chimpanzees, gorillas and mandrills. In our sanctuary we also take care of other wild animals that need our help.



Grey parrots confiscated from poachers, in the sanctuary and grey parrot released into the wild  
©Limbe Wildlife Centre

Hello, I am Menkam. My team and I confiscate poached grey parrots to be sold illegally. The birds are kept in wooden boxes that are too small, have many injuries and are often debilitated and malnourished. We bring the birds to our Rescue Centre where they are cared for by a team of veterinarians. The parrots will be nursed back to health in our large aviaries. Once the birds are fit again, we release them back into the wild. Between 2003 and 2018, we have already released over 3,300 grey parrots.



WORLD PARROT DAY - May 31<sup>st</sup>

Now it's your turn. Prepare a little roleplay. You are a reporter for a major newspaper, and you want to interview the Manager of the Limbe Wildlife Centre.  
Find a partner. One of you is the reporter and the other one plays the Wildlife Centre manager.  
Be an engaging reporter and think of your own exciting questions. After some questions swap roles, so everyone was the reporter once.

Share my story with your friends on social media and use [#WorldParrotDay](#)



**Question:** When was the Limbe Wildlife Centre founded and what are you working for?

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** Which animal species do you want to protect?

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** Why is the grey parrot particularly threatened?

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Go on with your own questions...**



Now you can write a small article from your collected information. Ask your teachers, if the article can be printed in the school newspapers.

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I was drawn by **Alyssa Rice**. You can follow my mom on [Instagramm](#).

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