

**Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo – *Calyptorhynchus funereus*.**

There are two recognised sub-species, the *C. f. funereus* and the *C.f. xanthotus*. The pair featured are of the nominate sub-species, *C.f. funereus*. They are approx 65cm long and weigh in at 800g average. Generally, the female is heavier than the male. Juveniles resemble the female until approx 18/24 months of age though young males are not as bright in colour of the ear coverts as the females. They are generally considered to be mature and of breeding age at about 5 years. The birds are markedly sexually dimorphic with the hen having much brighter ear coverts and tail feathers. The male is substantially duller in these markings and has a reddish pink periophthalmic eye ring that gets very intense in colour when excited/agitated and when in courting mode.

They range from SEQ through the east coast of NSW, throughout north eastern Victoria and down to Tasmania. From NE Victoria and across to about Gawler South Australia.

They can be kept in suspended flights of about 4 to 6m and 1200mm square, on-ground flights of similar lengths and widths or a combination of a 2.4m square on-ground with a 4m extended suspended section. Either combination must have an enclosed secure area for placement of nesting log etc. A large log is not a necessity as one of a min of 30cm dia x 60/100cm is satisfactory. We feed ours on a mix of Small/large Parrot mix with a bit of extra grey-striped Sunflower seed. They also get a small variety of nuts in the shell (peanuts and almonds). They are not great consumers of veggies but try them out on corn on the cob, sweet potato, silverbeet. We have been growing a few She/river Oaks for some years in anticipation of getting the Blacks and these are now close to bearing nuts. These will also form part of their diet.

They are fanatic chewers so perches need to be quite chunky to last and the addition of other branches to chew on will extend the life of perches.

Breeding success is not a given and pairs may take many years to bond, settle and breed. They are not a species for the beginner. The hen will generally lay one egg and occasionally a second one about

week or so later. Incubation generally starts with the first egg and is a bout 30 days to hatching. Usually only one chick is reared. The chick will take close to 3 mths to fledge. Reasonably expensive to buy at between \$2800 to \$3500 depending on age and condition (2013). Despite the cost, aviary size and husbandry requirements, they are a very desirable aviary specimen for any native bird keeper.

**Red-tailed Black Cockatoo** – *Calyptorhynchus banksii* (previously called *magnificus*). There are four recognised sub-specie, the *C. b.banksii*), *C. b. macrohynchus*, *C. b. samueli* and *C. b. Naso*. The pair featured are of the *C. b. banksii* sub-specie and are the nominate sub-specie of the Red-tailed Blacks. The *banksii* are the most commonly kept of the Black Cockatoo. They are approx 65cm long and approx 730g in weight. The juveniles resemble the adult female and may take up to 3 years to moult into adult male plumage. As with most of the Cockatoos, not considered to be sexually mature until approx 4/5 years of age. Adult birds are markedly sexually dimorphic, the male being basically black in colour with a black beak and a broad red bar across the tail feathers. The hen is brownish black and has numerous small yellow spots on the head, neck and wings. Tail barring is a pale yellow to light orange. They range across the top from the Kimberly's trough to the cape and down to northern NSW. There are also populations in central Australia and Western Australia. *Banksii* ranges across the top to the bottom the Cape, then down to about Camooweal and southeast to the NSW border. *Macrohynchus* ranges over Northern Australia through to about Broome. *Samueli* has three populations in the more arid regions of Australia. One in the southern area of NT, the far southwest of QLD and the north-eastern area of SA. The *Samueli* also have a population in the south-western region of Victoria.

The *Naso* which is the smallest of the sub-specie have two populations. One in Southeast WA and the other from Perth north to the Murchison River.

They can be kept in suspended flights of about 4 to 6m and 1200mm square, on-ground flights of similar lengths and widths or a combination of a 2.4m square on-ground with a 4m extended suspended section. Either combination must have an enclosed secure area for placement of nesting log etc. A large log is not a necessity as one of a min of 30cm dia x 60/100cm is satisfactory. We feed ours on a mix of Small/large Parrot mix with a bit of extra grey-striped Sunflower seed. They also get a small variety of nuts in the shell (peanuts and almonds). They are not great consumers of veggies but try them out on corn on the cob, sweet potato, silverbeet.

As with the YT's, we have been growing a sea-almond tree for some years and this year we got some pods off it to feed the Red-tails. As with the "wild" flocks that inhabit the coastal areas of Qld and feed off the shore line plantings of sea almonds, the "home grown" almonds will supplement their diet. They will also get the Casuarina nuts to chomp on.

They are chewers though not as voracious as the YT's, so perches need to be quite chunky to last and the addition of other branches to chew on will extend the life of perches.

Breeding success is again, not a given and pairs may take many years to bond, settle and breed. Generally one egg rarely two are laid at a time and take approx 30 days to hatch. Fledging is again about 3 mths from hatching.

A pair will cost between \$2500 to \$3000 for the Banksii and up to \$1000 plus for Samueli/*Naso* and again, they are a desirable aviary specimen.