

Do Male Amazons Sit On Eggs?

Is it normal for my blue-fronted Amazon to sit on the eggs?

Q: I have bred birds for years, but nothing larger than a quaker parrot. I have one pair of surgically sexed blue-fronted Amazons. The male is 5 years old and the hen is about 10 months younger. They are only disturbed twice a day for food and water, so no one has seen them mating. She laid three eggs in their first clutch. From what we can tell, the first egg was laid about 14 days ago.

My question is about the incubation. Does the male normally sit on the eggs? Each time we have been to their room, he has been in the box. (Assuming their previous owner was correct when he told me the hen had the larger patch of blue.) The articles I have found don't mention this behavior. I'm curious if I should have any concerns regarding pulling chicks, assuming the eggs are fertile.

I have had males (obviously not Amazons) sit and diligently care for the chicks, only to become very aggressive toward the hen when the chicks were pulled for hand-feeding. One even killed his mate. Would it be wise to pull the chicks one at a time several days apart?

Jean Pattison, also known as "The African Queen," explains:

Males of most species do not normally sit on the eggs. On occasion, when there are a lot of eggs, I have seen males "help" with the sitting. I would consider the one in the box with the eggs as being the hen. You may want to have them re-sexed after egg laying if these prove to be infertile (to see if you, in fact, have two hens). Of course, if they are fertile, then we know the previous owner was possibly mistaken in his description of the sexes.

Amazons, can be very aggressive with eggs or chicks. Some will strike at anything that moves when the nest is being inspected or as chicks are being removed. If the hen is in the way, she gets it. If the chicks are closer, they may get the brunt of his aggression.

In regards to pulling the chicks, the safest thing to do is to take all the chicks at one time. The parents may be so agitated, they could unintentionally do harm to the remaining chicks.