

Carolina Parakeet

Name _____



Did you know that America was once the home of a kind of parrot known as the Carolina parakeet? These colorful birds were common across much of the eastern and central United States as late as the early 1800s. Unlike most parrots throughout the world, the Carolina parakeet could thrive in non-tropical areas, and may have lived as far north as Canada!

The Carolina parakeet was mostly green. It had a yellow head and red face. It weighed about four ounces, or, about a quarter of a pound. These birds lived in forests and swamps and fed on seeds and fruit. Carolina parakeets were thought to benefit farmers because they ate an agricultural pest known as the cocklebur. For this reason, Carolina parakeets were also thought to be toxic to cats. These birds nested in tree cavities and often congregated in noisy flocks of hundreds of birds. They made easy targets for hunters, who killed them by the dozens.

Hunting and habitat loss played a critical role in the rapid decline of parakeet populations in the mid and late 1800s. Other factors such as disease probably played a large role as well, though scientists still aren't sure how or why the population collapsed so rapidly. By the early 1900s, Carolina parakeets were well on their way to extinction. The last bird, named Incas, died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1918. Coincidentally, it died in the same cage as Martha, the last passenger pigeon, who died four years earlier.

1. How was the Carolina Parakeet different from other parrots?

- A. It had a green body
- B. It had a red face
- C. It lived in non-tropical areas
- D. It fed on seeds

- 2. What probably happened on American farms as populations of Carolina parakeets continued to decline?**
- A. Pests like the cocklebur became more harmful
 - B. Pests like the cocklebur died out
 - C. Carolina parakeets became easier targets for hunters
 - D. Carolina parakeets moved to more tropical locations
- 3. Which is NOT true about Carolina parakeets?**
- A. They weighed less than a pound
 - B. They lived north of Canada
 - C. They could sometimes be found in large, noisy flocks
 - D. They were common in America in the 1700s
- 4. Why did populations of Carolina parakeets decline so rapidly?**
- A. Scientists aren't sure
 - B. Habitat Loss
 - C. Disease
 - D. They were killed by cats
- 5. What do passenger pigeons and Carolina parakeets have in common?**
- A. They are both extinct
 - B. They are both endangered
 - C. They are both toxic to cats
 - D. They were both still common in the late 1800s
- 6. Which of the following is an example of irony?**
- A. Incas was the last Carolina parakeet
 - B. Passenger pigeons and Carolina parakeets were both endangered before they became extinct
 - C. Both Incas and Martha died in the same cage
 - D. Habitat loss played a role in the decline of both species
- 7. Which of the following is true?**
- A. Incas died four years before Martha
 - B. The passenger pigeon became extinct after the Carolina parakeet
 - C. Martha was the last Carolina parakeet
 - D. The Carolina parakeet became extinct after the passenger pigeon