

PARROT FUN FACTS

(These facts are adapted from National Wildlife Federation's Ranger Rick® magazine)

KNOW YOUR PARROTS

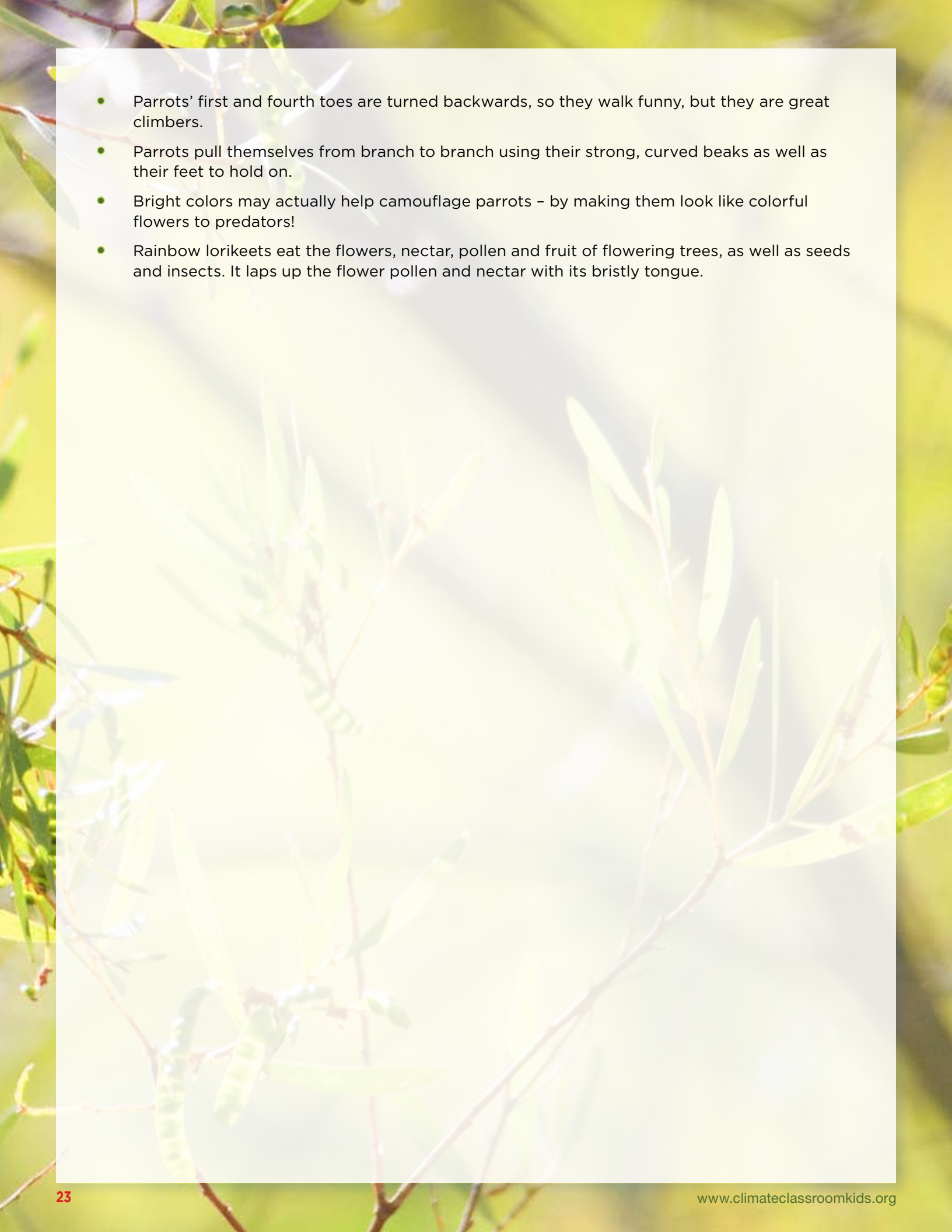
- Most of the 330 species of parrots live in tropical rainforest, but there are species that live in the desert, on the seacoast, and even in cold climates!
- Of the more than 300 species of parrots in the world, nearly 100 are threatened in the wild, due to the illegal pet parrot trade and loss of habitat.
- Cockatoos, macaws, parakeets and lorikeets are all part of the Parrot family.
- Due to their size and the length of their tail feathers, palm cockatoos need extra-large nesting holes. They can't dig the holes out themselves but must find an existing tree-hole.
- Cockatoos have tall crests that are held flat against their back. If a bird is scared or excited, then the crest shoots up into the air!
- Larger parrot species can be very long-lived, up to about 50 years, with most cockatoos living 40 to 60 years. Some can live over 100 years!
- Red-winged parrots eat seeds from trees, usually by hanging upside down from a branch.
- Western corellas eat roots, seeds, and grains from the ground.
- Major Mitchell's cockatoo pairs won't nest close to other pairs, and need more trees and space than other kinds of parrot.
- Macaws are the largest parrots in the world. The hyacinth macaw is the largest macaw and is about 3 feet long from tip to tail.
- The smallest parrot is the buff-faced pygmy-parrot, at a little over 3 inches in length.

PARROT FAMILIES

- A mated pair will choose a nest – most parrots nest in holes in trees. Desert parrots nest in holes in cactuses instead! Monk parakeets weave sticks into nests that can weigh hundreds of pounds, and often several families each have a hole in the nest – a parakeet apartment house!
- Mom lays the egg – up to three – and stays inside with them till they hatch. Dad feeds her during the wait. Even after they're out of the nest and fully feathered, the young parrots are not able to take care of themselves, and stay with their parents till they can – sometimes months later.
- Parrots often gather at water holes to drink and bathe together.
- A mated pair will choose a nest – most parrots nest in holes in trees.
- Even within the flock mates stay near each other. A parrot pair will sit side by side, eat together, and groom, or preen, each other.
- Parrots live in large flocks. A flock of parrots can make a lot of noise squawking and chattering together!

PARROT ADAPTATIONS

- Most parrots have powerful bills built for crushing nuts. They hold the nut up to their beaks and use the edges to saw and chisel away at the shell till they can pry it open and eat the nutmeat.

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- Parrots' first and fourth toes are turned backwards, so they walk funny, but they are great climbers.
 - Parrots pull themselves from branch to branch using their strong, curved beaks as well as their feet to hold on.
 - Bright colors may actually help camouflage parrots - by making them look like colorful flowers to predators!
 - Rainbow lorikeets eat the flowers, nectar, pollen and fruit of flowering trees, as well as seeds and insects. It laps up the flower pollen and nectar with its bristly tongue.