The Green Aracari (Pteroglossus viridis) is perhaps the most attractive and colorful member of the aracaris (genus Pteroglossus), a group of small toucanetines in the family Ramphastidae. Ramphastids are found exclusively in the Western Hemisphere with a distribution extending from central Mexico to southern South America. Comprising six genera and forty-one species, these often comic looking birds inhabit a broad range of environments from hot, humid coastal rain forests to high altitude cool, cloud forests.

The Green Aracari inhabits the south central portion of Venezuela from the lower Rio Caura eastward to the Sierra de Imataca and south to the northern Gran Sabana and adjacent portions of northern Brasil and the Guianas. It prefers the rain forest from sea level to 2,000 feet and occurs alone or in small groups. These birds are quite noisy and inquisitive. They travel through the forest in the upper and middle heights of the foliage in single file making long leaps from branch to branch with wings closed.

Green aracaris are one of the few sexually dimorphic Ramphastids. The male's head and neck are black. Back, wings and tail are olive green; rump crimson. Breast, abdomen and vent are yellow, thighs olive. The bill is approximately 3 1/2" long. The ridge of the upper mandible is orange-yellow with a wedge shaped red mark on the sides; lower mandible is black. Base of bill is dull orange. The skin in front of the eye is blue, whereas behind the eye it is red. The female differs from the male in that her head and neck are a rich brown.

In captivity, green aracaris are active flyers when placed in an open flight unobstructed by trees and shrubs. They are one of the least aggressive members of their family and rarely, if ever, show hostility to their fellows, or other species of birds, even during the breeding season. Initially, two pairs of green aracaris were acquired and placed together in a flight measuring 6'x24'x9'. With the onset of the 1980 breeding season, two of the four birds commenced to nest without any concern for the remaining two green aracaris or the pair of white crested laughing thrushes in the flight. However, once it was positively determined who the breeding aracaris were, the other two were removed to another flight with their own nesting facility.

As is the case with other toucans, green aracaris nest in cavities, and in the wild are known to roost several to a hollow. The easiest facility for nesting would be to provide a box of appropriate dimensions, but unfortunately, toucans prefer logs with a soft interior that they can work with their beaks. The process of
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nest chamber excavation stimulates the
birds sexually and cements the pair bond.
The ideal nest log may be constructed
from the trunks of palm trees. The species
of tree is unimportant, so long as the log is
allowed to dry out before placed in the
flight. Otherwise, the enclosed cavity will
develop a moldy growth inside and may
even produce odor of ammonia, which is
repugnant to birds. Since green aracaris
are relatively small, the ideal length of the
log would be thirty inches with an inner
cavity diameter of 10 inches. The nest
hole entrance should be 2½” in diameter,
4” from the top of the log, and can be
made with a hole saw which is available as an
accessory for electric hand drills. Nest
logs can be cut to length and hollowed out
using a chain saw to depth of not more than
20” for this species. That allows
them 8”-10” of digging before reaching bottom — a feat that will require several
breeding seasons. Once the log has been
hollowed out, it must be covered on top
with wood (since that end is open) and
should be covered on the bottom so that
they don’t tunnel through and mice don’t
come up from the bottom. The log should
be placed on a platform so that it is as high
in the flight as possible.
The first breeding of the green aracari
began when eggs were laid during the first
week of May, 1980. These hatched May
30th with one young male fledging July
14th. The hatching chick was pink in col-
or and was totally lacking in pre-natal
down. The parents recycled immediately
after the first chick fledged. However,
this nest terminated two weeks after those
eggs hatched August 11th when the young
were ejected from the nest.
During the 1981 breeding season, the
original breeding pair returned to the nest
and fledged two young, a male and
female, in August. As of May 26, 1982,
they were feeding at least two more young
approximately four weeks old. In addi-
tion, a second pair had begun to breed,
laying their first eggs around May 15,
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