

PsittaScene



Stop Press! Fuertes's Parrot Rediscovered - page 18!

Supporting parrot conservation in the wild and promoting parrot welfare in captivity.

'psittacine' (pronounced 'sit a sin') meaning 'belonging or allied to the parrots' or 'parrot-like'



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Cover Picture

By Jamie Gilardi and Nick Reynolds.

A Hyacinth Macaw (Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus) enjoying a macadamia nut at Paradise Park - as the largest flighted parrot, these birds are capable of cracking the hardest of nuts, giving them access to the rich and tasty meat inside.

'The Hyacinth Macaw Retires from the WPT 12'.
See page 15.

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Our Scientific Committee

Meet the team

One of the questions sometimes asked by members is: How do we decide which conservation projects to support? The answer is that proposals for funding are examined individually by members of our Scientific Committee. These members are introduced below.

Dr. Roger Wilkinson



Head of Conservation Science and at Chester Zoo, Roger Wilkinson was Curator of Birds there between 1983 and 1999 and until recently General Curator Higher Vertebrates and Research. He

now oversees Chester Zoo's increasing commitment to Conservation and Research programmes. He has a special interest in developing overseas conservation links and in managing budget-supporting conservation and research programmes linked to the zoo.

Chairman of the EAZA Parrot TAG (taxon advisory group) since its inception in 1992, he is also the EEP Species Co-ordinator for the Palm Cockatoo and ESB studbook keeper for the Blue-eyed Cockatoo. He participates in a wide range of zoo breeding programmes for birds and publishes widely on avicultural matters. A council member of the Avicultural Society, he is a regular contributor to the Avicultural Magazine. His positions include Secretary of the West African Ornithological Society, member of the IUCN Pheasant Specialist Group, and co-chair of the EAZA Hornbill TAG. He came into birds through aviculture; he kept and bred Australian parakeets and joined the Parrot Society in its inaugural year.

Previously Roger was Senior Lecturer in Department of Biology Sciences at Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria and is an Honorary Research Fellow of Keele University. He has a BSc in Zoology and a PhD from Southampton University. With considerable field experience, he has written papers for scientific publications in ornithology, bird behaviour and ecology. Roger enjoys seeing birds in the wild, in the UK and abroad and has seen more than 100 parrot species in the wild. In 2001 he achieved his ambition of seeing wild Palm Cockatoos and Blue-eyed Cockatoos while on a birding trip to Papua New Guinea.

Andrew Greenwood

MA, Vet MB, FIBiol, DipECAMS, frcvs



Andrew Greenwood is a founder trustee of the World Parrot Trust. He is a partner in the International Zoo Veterinary Group and has practised full-time wildlife medicine for 30 years, with a particular

interest in birds. Besides holding the normal veterinary qualifications, he is a Diplomate of the European College of Avian Medicine and Surgery, a Fellow of the Institute of Biology and has recently been created a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for contributions to zoological medicine.

Andrew's interest in birds goes back a long way. He kept small aviary birds and owls at home and, at school, became involved in ornithology and bird ringing. He was a keen falconer during his school and university years and so it was natural for him to take an interest in avian medicine. At that time, the main driving force of avian medicine was falconry, and only in the late 1970s did the focus change to parrots, with the rapid rise of parrot aviculture. With the support and encouragement of Rosemary Low, John Stoodley and Mike Reynolds, Andrew introduced surgical sexing and other avian techniques into the UK from the United States, where the discipline was developing rapidly.

In conservation, Andrew has carried out overseas missions on behalf of the Trust to St. Vincent, Paraguay and Mauritius. He also visited New Zealand for the Department of Conservation to review the Kakapo programme. Involvement in Mauritius began in 1994, when WPT supported him to visit the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, which was struggling to rescue the Echo Parakeet. After eight years working with the programme, numbers have increased dramatically, and a disease monitoring programme continues. Involvement with the Echo Parakeet led to stronger links with Mauritius and work with

other species including the Pink Pigeon and Round Island reptiles, culminating in Andrew's appointment to the Council of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation in 2001. He is also a Council member of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and a Board member of the Wildlife Information Network.

Tony Juniper



Tony Juniper has a passion for parrots. Formerly the Parrot Conservation Officer at BirdLife International, Tony has since worked on a wide range of environmental questions,

including deforestation in the tropics - perhaps the most serious threat facing the parrots today. Tony is also the co-author of the award-winning *Parrots - a guide to the parrots of the world*, published by Pica Press and Yale University Press in 1998. In September 2002, Fourth Estate will publish his new book: *Spix's Macaw - the race to save the world's rarest bird*.

As well as maintaining an active interest in parrots, Tony Juniper is the Director Designate at Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland. He is due to take over as the Executive Director in early 2003. In the meantime he leads the Policy and Campaigns team of about 40 campaigners and researchers on the organisation's energy, biodiversity, transport, industrial pollution, food / biotechnology campaigns and sustainable development policy. He is also the Vice Chairman of Friends of the Earth International - the world's largest grassroots environmental network operating in 70 countries worldwide.

He has campaigned to influence the environmental impacts of a number of major companies and coordinates Friends of the Earth's work on the activities of corporations in relation to sustainable development questions. Tony has been closely involved with the international campaigns on globalisation, climate change and GM crops. Tony is also a Director of the Ilisu Dam campaign, which successfully prevailed in persuading Balfour Beatty to withdraw from the controversial Ilisu Dam project in Turkey.

Tony has played a prominent role in several other of the major environmental campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s - both for Friends of the Earth, since 1990 and previously at BirdLife International. He has focussed particularly on policies affecting tropical forests, the effects of debt on the environment in developing countries, road building and transport policy, the protection of Britain's key wildlife areas (he chaired the Wildlife and Countryside Link group of organisations and successfully campaigned for the 2000 Countryside Act) and the international trade in endangered birds.

Dr. Stephen Garnett



Stephen Garnett lives in tropical northern Australia where he works as a conservation biologist for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. His area of expertise is threatened birds,

particularly parrots. Having reviewed the status of all Australian birds in 1992, he and his wife, botanist Gabriel Crowley, began work on the Endangered Golden-shouldered Parrot (*Psephodus chrysopterygius*) (see *PsittaScene* vol 9, no 2). Their study, which began as an investigation into this curious parrot's natural history, has now evolved into a major initiative in land management across an area the size of Great Britain.

They then moved on to the critically endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) on Kangaroo Island. They and their team discovered that the main threat to the subspecies was the loss of eggs and young to predators. The cockatoo population almost immediately began to increase after the island was searched for nests and as many nest trees as possible protected with corrugated iron collars. Now there are nearly twice as many Glossy Black-Cockatoos on Kangaroo Island.

In the meantime, Stephen was instrumental in founding the Birds Australia Parrot Trust, to bring together biologists and enthusiasts with a passion for wild parrots in Australia. The newsletter of this group, *Eclectus*, provides original observations of Australian parrots in the wild from leading researchers.

Stephen became involved with the World Parrot Trust when Mike and Audrey Reynolds visited north Queensland to help initiate a study of Palm Cockatoos. The proposal prepared for Mike by Stephen has resulted in two studies. One by Steve Murphy in Australia is continuing and has been reported in *PsittaScene*. The other was in New Guinea where biologist Paul Igag has recently completed a study of Palm Cockatoos, Eclectus Parrots and Pesquet's Parrot in one of the largest areas of untouched rainforest in that country.

Mike also involved Stephen in reviewing the status of parrots in Australasia for the Parrot Action Plan. Stephen has written accounts of parrots for *Jewels of Nature*, a magnificent two-part work that has the potential to provide funds for international parrot conservation well into the future. Currently the main emphasis of Stephen's work is on the costs and management of threatened species recovery, which he has been reviewing while on sabbatical at Cambridge University.

Charles Munn III PhD



Charles Munn was a Conservation Zoologist with the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, from 1986 until 2000. During this time he became renowned worldwide for his work with macaws in the

Peruvian Amazon. He has helped to create parks that have protected 12 million acres of rainforest, cloud forest, Andean grasslands and lowland savannahs in south-eastern Peru and adjacent Bolivia. The conservation groups he started in Peru and Brazil have purchased more than 20,000 acres of important rainforest areas for wildlife conservation. In 1994 he was named by Time Magazine as one of 100 young leaders for the new millennium. In 1995 he won the Top in Ecology prize from the Brazilian Association of Sales and Marketing, and has been responsible for developing various eco-tourism lodges and opportunities in Peru.

He is currently Chairman of the Board of Tropical Nature Inc.

In 1990 he recorded indigenous knowledge of the locations of 30 major clay licks used by parrots and macaws in the Peruvian Amazon. Prior to this work, only the clay lick in Manu was known to science. In 1999 he co-authored a scientific paper with Dr James Gilardi on the function of clay-eating in parrots. The results suggested that parrots are able to detoxify the food they eat by consuming clay, thus enabling them to exploit a wider variety of food sources.

James Gilardi PhD



James Gilardi has been Director of the World Parrot Trust since November 2000. His work includes developing and implementing field conservation initiatives. Before joining the Trust he was Research Director of The

Oceanic Society, focusing on marine conservation in the Pacific, Caribbean and Central and South America. During 1998 he was the Conservation Science Coordinator for Wildlife Preservation Trust International in Davis, California, working on the scientific aspects of more than 30 conservation projects. Previously he spent 15 months with this organisation leading a study of the conservation of the St. Lucia Parrot and other critically endangered endemic birds. As a graduate at Davis, he studied parrot foraging ecology in south-eastern Peru. James still lives in Davis and is married, with two young children.



Preliminary Field Report on Yellow-faced Parrots in Ethiopia



Marc Boussekey



Cathy Pelsy



Frédéric Pelsy

By MARC BOUSSEKEY, CATHY PELS & FRÉDÉRIC PELS

The Yellow-faced Parrot (*Poicephalus flavifrons*) is an endemic parrot species of Ethiopia, it was poorly studied in the field and is virtually unknown in aviculture. A medium-sized parrot like all the *Poicephalus* species, this bird has a green body plumage and a bright yellow mask. Both sexes are similar although the yellow area might be less bright and less extended on the female. Juveniles have an olive-green mask with or without a few yellow feathers.

So far this "small amazon-like" parrot has been very poorly studied in the wild. The distribution area is still quite uncertain and there are no estimated figures for the whole population.

Moreover information on the bio-ecology of this bird remains very poor. According to the few references we have, this species is a forest dweller, like *Poicephalus robustus*, inhabiting *Juniperus*, *Podocarpus* and *Hagenia* forests as well as gallery-forests with *Ficus* trees. The Yellow-faced Parrot is usually found between 600m and 2,900m of altitude and its main diet consists in fruits and seeds (including grown maize, sorghum and millet). No information on the breeding habits is available.

In order to get more information on this species, a study field project was initiated in February 2002. The World Parrot Trust kindly offered to cover half of the needed funds (US\$6,200).

We decided our itinerary after previous observations made by Marc Boussekey (in 1999, 2000 and 2001) and information given by Yilma Delleghen Abebe, a reputed Ethiopian ornithologist. According to him, the distribution of the Yellow-faced Parrot is divided within three main areas; in the North around Tana Lake, in the western forests of

Ethiopia along the Sudan border, and in the South of Addis Ababa.

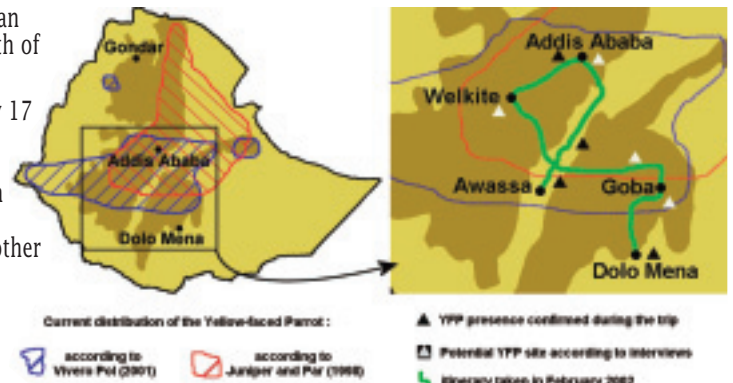
Since our trip was only 17 days and due to the poor road conditions, we decided to focus on the southern area. We are to investigate the other two areas in the near future.

Objectives and methods: direct observations and interviews

Our main goals for this trip were:

- 1 to confirm the occurrence of the species on already known sites
- 2 to look for new potential sites which looked favourable to the bird
- 3 to collect data on the basic biology of the Yellow-faced (habitat, diet, behaviour and breeding).

So, we conducted direct field observations all along our trip. We left Addis for the South



through the Rift Valley and made our first observations around the Langan and Awassa lakes. Afterwards, from Shashemene in the Rift, we climbed on the high-plateau to the Bale Mountain National Park and to Goba. We went on to the South down to Dolo Mena where we camped for a few days. Back to Shashemene, we went west to Welkite. Then we camped in Menagesha forest on the way back to Addis.

We were very pleased to have a four-wheel car driver, Brook Kassa, who was also able to speak several languages (English, Amharic, Oromo...) and was quite knowledgeable and enthusiastic about Ethiopian wildlife. We noted GPS data and altitude of every observation site we visited.

We obtained very useful information about new potential sites from detailed interviews with local people (villagers, park and reserve rangers...) and with local and foreign bird-watchers.

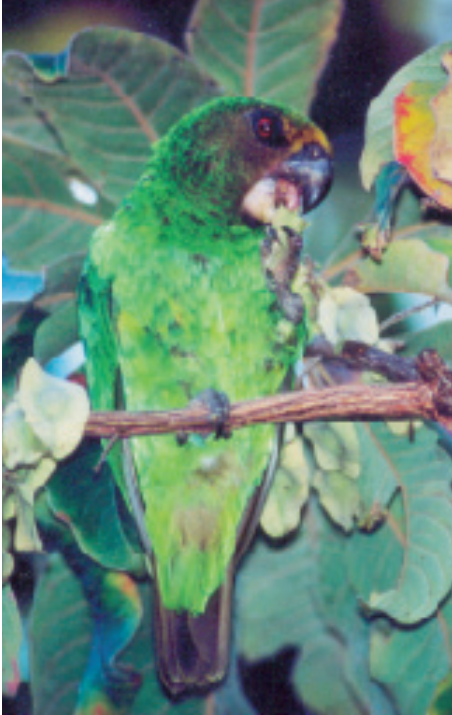
We were able to make observations of the Yellow-faced Parrot on four different sites, so we collected direct information on the biology of the species. It is worthwhile to mention that one of our observation sites, near Dolo Mena in the South, is outside the current distribution given by several authors.

Habitat

Our own observations confirm the bibliographical data that the Yellow-faced is a forest dweller. We found them in highland forests of *Juniperus* and *Podocarpus* trees as high as 2,500m. In lower areas, between 1,200m and 1,500m, several times we observed them foraging in gallery-forests along river banks feeding on *Ficus* trees. We were lucky enough to discover (and this is



Degraded habitat with gallery forest used as feeding site. The main threat to the species survival is habitat loss. All the native forests including the *Juniperus*, *Podocarpus* and *Acacia* forests are destroyed by illegal logging for charcoal and construction material. Photo: Cathy Pelsy



A young bird feeding on *Terminalia* sp. fruits.
Photo: Roland Seitree

probably a "first" to our knowledge) a roosting site, the birds were perching in pairs or small family groups on very tall *Juniperus* trees at 2,400m of altitude.

Diet

We collected samples of all the trees and plants that the Yellow-faced Parrot was observed feeding on. These samples were duly identified by Ethiopian botanists. The parrot was seen to be feeding mainly on fruits, seeds and sometimes buds of trees belonging to six genera at least (*Bersama*, *Cordia*, *Diospyros*, *Ficus*, *Syzygium*, *Terminalia*).

According to several reports, the Yellow-faced also feeds on grown plants like maize (Thomas Arndt took pictures of this) and sorghum, but sometimes on tomatoes, beans and spinach as well.

Behaviour

The daily activities seem very typical for a parrot species: at dawn, on average, flocks of 2 to 6 birds were seen leaving their roosting site in order to reach feeding sites sometimes several kilometres away. Larger flocks (from 20 to 40 individuals) have also been observed by some informants. During these morning flights the parrots are very noisy, producing harsh and high-pitched shrieks, they are therefore very easy to locate. Nevertheless, when they are feeding they keep very quiet, being very difficult to spot especially as most of the time they stay in the tree tops. During the hottest hours of the daytime, they rest in the shadow of the foliage and are then almost impossible to see. By late evening, just before sunset, the same flights occur but the opposite way. The noisy parrots fly back to their roosting site. They continue shrieking when they arrive, moving about in pairs or small family parties, as if they were selecting their sleeping site. The family groups are split up among several trees at a distance up to 100m or so from each other. As far as we could observe, the birds seemed to perch for the night on the branches of the big *Juniperus*.

Breeding

We had the unexpected opportunity of observing a pair visiting a cavity in a tree and were able to hear the sounds of the hatchlings, it was therefore an active nest (another "first" to our knowledge)! The nest was of about 20m high in a tall *Juniperus* located in a mountain forest at 2,401m of altitude. Several times we observed the parents going in and out of the hole both in the evening and in the morning. When one of them entered the cavity, the other was perching around 1m away from the hole for several minutes and sometimes joined the first one inside. Both parents called when in front of the nest hole, sometimes producing not so sharp notes but more rolling and almost tuneful ones. We noticed that the parents did not spend the night in the nest, it is likely that the hatchlings were old enough to stay on their own.

The main threat: habitat loss

It is still too early to define the exact status of the species. Nevertheless, this first study may allow us to say that the Yellow-faced Parrot is only "common" in very specific locations. As a matter of fact, in many places along our trip, the species has never been observed either by the local people, by birdwatchers and / or ornithologists.



Podocarpus and *Juniperus* trees used as roosting and nesting trees.
Photo: Cathy Pelsy



Adult Yellow-faced Parrot. Photo: Roland Seitree

Moreover, most of the people who have been able to observe this parrot mention a steady decrease of the flock sizes within the past years. Nevertheless this bird is not hunted for food nor trapped for the pet trade. The parrots that feed on the crops are usually just chased off and not killed by the farmers.

In fact, the main threat to the species survival (as for many animal species in Ethiopia) is habitat loss. All the native forests including the *Juniperus* and *Podocarpus* forests (and *Acacia* as well) are destroyed by illegal logging for charcoal and construction material.

Conclusion and perspectives

The Yellow-faced Parrot is apparently rather rare and is to be found in sites where there are some forests left and usable as roosting and feeding sites. The species distribution must be quite widespread in Ethiopia but probably very fragmented because of the overall destruction of the natural habitat.

Our trip in the Southern part of the country gave us the opportunity of getting first observations on the roosting and breeding behaviour of this species. We were also able to get more information on the parrot's feeding and general behaviour.

Prospecting the other two areas where the species is apparently still living (the West and the North) seems to be worthwhile if we want to have a clearer idea of the abundance of this species and of its current status.

Moreover, full time observers should be hired in order to get more precise biological data, which is why we are now trying to set up a network of local informants and observers. Consequently, we hope to collect more precise information on the range size, the population trend and number as well as the ecological requirements of the Yellow-faced Parrot.

Donations towards funding future field surveys for the Yellow-faced Parrot will be gratefully received at The World Parrot Trust.



The Canadian World Parrot Trust Lends Major Support for the Conservation of the Imperial Amazon in Dominica

By SANDRA METZGER, Director Canadian World Parrot Trust

In the November 2001 *PsittaScene*, Dr. Paul Reillo, Director of the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation (RSCF), outlined the joint RSCF-Dominican Forestry and Wildlife Division parrot conservation programme. It includes field monitoring of Dominica's two endemic parrot species -- the Imperial Amazon or Sisserou (*Amazona imperialis*) and the Red-necked Amazon or Jaco (*A. arausiaca*) as well as a strategic recovery plan for the Sisserou, the world's largest Amazon parrot and one of the rarest.

Recently this programme has received significant financial support from the Canadian World Parrot Trust (CWPT). In August 2001 the CWPT received a grant of CAN\$90,000 (approximately US\$58,500) from the Donner Canadian Foundation. This grant was given specifically for the Dominican conservation programme with 15% being retained by CWPT. Due to the positive working relationship between CWPT and RSCF and the effectiveness of the grant, CWPT received an additional CAN\$250,000 (approximately US\$162,500) from the Donner Foundation in January of this year.

This grant came into existence in an interesting way. The Donner Canadian Foundation is a private organisation that does not accept applications for funding. They go looking for projects to sponsor and wanted a new charity to donate to in Canada, specifically one that deals with conservation. Mr. Nick Roosevelt, one of the Trustees for the Donner Foundation, lives in Florida near RSCF. He contacted RSCF to learn about their work and was very impressed with the Dominica programme. Since CWPT had previously funded it through RSCF (with a grant from the Highbury Foundation in Vancouver), the Donner Foundation decided to contact CWPT about further funding opportunities. This has proved to be a very effective grant programme as both RSCF and CWPT have very low administrative costs and the vast majority of

funds go directly to the field. In fact, CWPT did not intend to keep 15% of the grant, but wanted to send as much as possible to the project. However, the Donner Foundation insisted that CWPT reserve some funds to cover administrative costs, to fund other projects, and to try to raise even more funds for this and other initiatives.

In the summer of 2001 Wayne Davey (CWPT Trustee) and I visited RSCF while on holiday to discuss our new working relationship. While CWPT had funded RSCF in the past, it was good to meet Dr. Paul Reillo and Karen McGovern (RSCF's Curator) in person and to see how closely their philosophy matches that of the CWPT. RSCF is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving biodiversity through grass-roots conservation programmes rooted in sound science. RSCF employs the "flagship species" concept to identify and conserve high-profile, priority species and the ecosystems they represent. One of the things that Wayne and I liked best about RSCF's philosophy is their practice of co-operating with local



Sandra Metzger

governments to ensure that the projects not only have the backing of the government, but will be more likely to continue into the future with or without RSCF's presence. Since 1997, RSCF and the Dominican government have partnered to research Dominica's parrots and to conserve the Sisserou. Although the Forestry and Wildlife Division has been monitoring the parrots continuously since 1981, efficient methods to quantify the birds' population parameters and spatial distribution were lacking. By working with the Forestry Division, RSCF has been able to help them work out effective monitoring techniques using Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies.

The money that CWPT has donated to the Dominica project has been used in several ways. Funds from the first grant went towards supporting the parrot team to monitor parrots. Grant money was used to engage the team in the



Dominica's Sisserou depends on the rainforest. The rainforest's future depends on you.



New poster.



Photo: Paul Reillo



A portion of the grant money will be used to finish and equip two apartments in the lower level of the new park Visitor Centre. These apartments will be used as a base camp for the parrot team and other researchers when they are doing field work.

Photo: Sandra Metzger

field while team members were on leave from regular civil service. The money from the first grant was also used to purchase a new 4-wheel drive truck for the Forestry Division. Due to the rough roads in Dominica and the steep topography, safe, reliable transportation is crucial for the team to be able to access their study sites. RSCF is using the money from the second grant to add a 10+ acre buffer zone to the edge of the Morne Diablotin National Park. This is an area that is currently used for agriculture, and is also used as a foraging area by both Sisserous (*Amazona imperialis*) and Jacos (*Amazona arausiaca*).

This buffer will provide additional protection to the only park area easily accessed by the public and will dramatically highlight the difference between the quality of the protected land on one side of the road and the agricultural land on the other. The remainder of the second grant will be used to finish and equip two apartments in the lower level of the new park Visitor Centre. These apartments will be used as a base camp for the parrot team and other researchers when they are doing field work, thus eliminating the need for an hour-long drive each way from Forestry headquarters to the Morne Diablotin National Park. Future plans call for a full-time Forester to be stationed in one of the apartments to provide better monitoring of the park and more patrols of the area accessible to the public.

As I mentioned, the Donner Foundation insisted that the CWPT retain 15% of the grant money. Their instruction was to see part of this money used to involve CWPT Trustees actively in the Dominica programme. In October 2001 Wayne Davey spent a week in Dominica with Nick Roosevelt and his family and with Paul Reillo. The purpose of this trip was for Nick to be able to meet a representative of the CWPT, and for both Nick and Wayne to meet the Forestry team and to become familiar with the conservation program. In April of this year I travelled to Dominica with Paul to spend a week in the field with the parrot team. That week in Dominica was one of the most enjoyable and exhausting weeks of my life.

Dominica is a very beautiful, pristine, rugged island. Approximately one-third of Dominica's 289



Dr Reillo prepares the peeper video camera system. The small camera, mounted on the end of the adjustable boom is used to monitor inside nest cavities using the telescoping pole to which it is attached.

square miles is protected either as nature reserve or national park. Mountains cover roughly 75% of the island. The majority of my time on Dominica was spent in and around the Morne Diablotin National Park area. I worked with both Paul and Stephen Durand (the Forestry Division's parrot team leader) monitoring both the Sisserou and the Jaco. While I was in Dominica, Lars Lepperhoff of WPT Switzerland was also there on holiday to see the project first-hand.

We spent the first day in the area of the Syndicate nature trail, the only park area easily accessed by the public and an active area for both Sisserou and Jaco nesting and foraging. During the approximately hour-and-a-half period that we spent at one lookout, we managed to spot about a dozen Jacos and two Sisserous foraging across the Picard River valley. These numbers are typical of what one might expect to see of the two species. Population estimates for the Sisserou put the

population at ~150 birds with local population densities rarely exceeding five birds per 1,000 acres. The Sisserou is a very shy bird and the two birds I saw on my first day were the only Sisserous I managed to see during the whole trip (although I did hear a few others). The Jaco population is estimated at ~800 birds and it is normal to see them foraging in groups of up to 30 at a time. They are a much more adventurous, gregarious species and are more tolerant of human activity.

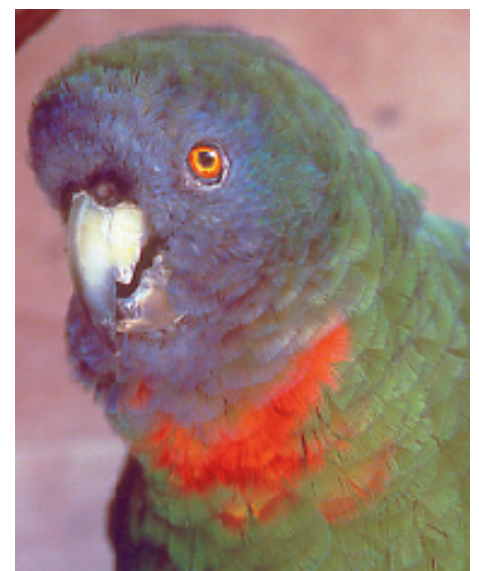
The rest of my week was spent with Paul, Stephen and Lars hiking into different areas of the Morne Diablotin National Park and surrounding areas in an attempt to find and observe active Sisserou and Jaco nests. Hiking in Dominica is not an easy thing to do. The terrain is very steep and rough, and the "trails" were challenging and very muddy (even though it was the beginning of the dry season, we had rain every day). By the end of the week my legs were aching! The parrot team uses a variety of observational techniques. We divided our time between hiking various areas, listening and watching for parrots, and observing trees that had been active in the past to determine if they were being used and by which species.

Paul and Stephen also used the specialized video probe to inspect two nest cavities that had been previously used by Jacos. The team uses certain easy-to-access Jaco nests to determine the timing and success of a given nesting season. From what we observed while I was there it seems that the nesting season this year is late. While we did monitor some activity around nest sites and identify some nests believed to be active, most of the time we observed the birds foraging. This could be due to a combination of a very wet "dry season" this year, abundant rainforest fruits, and an overall vegetation recovery from last year's record drought.

So what does the future hold for the Sisserou and the Dominica project? Hopefully the future is bright. The CWPT is looking forward to a continued funding relationship with both RSCF and the Donner Canadian Foundation, and I am hoping for another chance to spend some time with the highly talented and dedicated parrot team in Dominica.



The Parrot Team, from left Stephen Durand (Parrot team leader), Matthew Maximea, Ronnie Winston and Paul Reillo. A new 4 wheel drive truck has been purchased for the Forestry Division using part of the grant money. Photo: Paul Reillo



Red-necked Amazon, or Jaco. Photo: Paul Reillo

Captive Birds Lead the Way in Conservation!



Joanna Eckles

By JOANNA ECKLES, Administrator USA World Parrot Trust

From amidst a weathered rock backdrop a blur of pink and grey draws gasps from an audience of hundreds. In a flash a spunky Rose-breasted Cockatoo (*Eolophus roseicapillus*) is center stage. 'Floyd', ('Pink Floyd') lives at the Minnesota Zoo, an endearing member of the World of Birds show menagerie. On the trainer's hand he pops upright with crest erect and belts out a greeting - a high pitched fanfare. Asked, "Are you ready?" his whole body nods "yes!" Floyd then takes to the audience to pluck a dollar bill from the outstretched hand of a wide-eyed volunteer. He pauses a moment, a sideways glance at his target, then wings effortlessly to the stage where he enthusiastically stuffs the bill in the Bird Show trainer's pocket.

Good educational bird programs exist to teach the public about birds and other animals, their habitats, and their plight in the wild. Animals in captivity are increasingly helping to connect people with lands and creatures far afield. Natural behaviours like vocalizing, flight and foraging are staged for live audiences to spark interest in birds and conservation.

So, where does a dollar-swiping parrot fit in? This popular behaviour is a 'retrieve' where a bird is trained to pick something up and deposit it elsewhere. It doesn't have to be a dollar bill. In his vast experience at the year-round program at the zoo, Floyd has orchestrated a number of marriage proposals - flawlessly ferrying expensive diamond solitaires to unsuspecting ladies. No matter what the cargo, the routine is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser. Still, the Minnesota Zoo trainers weren't quite satisfied.

Last summer, they refreshed the dollar-bill routine in keeping with the strong conservation tone of the rest of their show. Now, Floyd does the behaviour to the usual fanfare but he has an encore - a quick trip to a donation box shows visitors where to drop their dollars for conservation. The message is passive but the show visitors are inspired to act on it. Over the course of a year the Minnesota Zoo Bird Show raised over \$10,000 for Hyacinth Macaws.

Determining the effectiveness of shows like this can be difficult. Visitor observation, surveys and anecdotes are very positive yet hard to quantify. The audience is diverse and transient. They have varying levels of interest and knowledge and what they have learned or how it has affected them is nearly impossible to measure. Dollars raised for conservation are testimony that good programs like this work.



Ryan Watson, Bird Trainer and Manager of the show at Adelaide Zoo.



Steve Martin at San Diego Wild Animal Park with the amazing singing Amazon 'Groucho', who generously gave his support to WPT's John Cleese Live Parrot Video.

The Minnesota Zoo is not alone. At Paradise Park in the UK where The World Parrot Trust is headquartered, an impassioned crew has always had fundraising as a priority. For years in their free-flight bird of prey program they have encouraged their visitors to donate to conservation. Now, with the addition of a second show featuring a variety of free-flying birds, they have become a small force in raising conservation dollars. A Goffin's Cockatoo (Madge to her friends!) (*Cacatua goffini*) carries 5 x £1 coins one by one to demonstrate that money well spent is good conservation. As she takes each coin, the trainer eloquently explains what £1, £2, £3 or £4 will 'buy' for conservation. They paint a vivid picture of Lear's Macaws, threatened by the overgrazing of introduced livestock. "Five pounds enables us to plant a Licuri Palm Tree seedling and simply fence it off from the cattle and goats, allowing it to grow to maturity." After the Goffin's routine, the audience is invited to queue up to have their pound coins collected by Galahs (*Eolophus roseicapillus*) 'Billie' and 'Rosie' to be deposited in the World Parrot Trust donation box. And queue up they do - as many as 97 per day. That's almost 50 trips each for these two hard-working Rosies. They enthusiastically return to the stream of visitors until the last one leaves. When I spoke to David Woolcock, Paradise Park Curator, the crew was poised to break the £18,000 mark in donations carried by these birds since 1999.

Adelaide Zoo (featured in *PsittaScene* No. 50, February 2002) has raised over US\$10,000 for Great Green Macaws (*Ara ambigua*). They've done this by focusing their show on the conservation of macaws and allowing visitors to feed and take photographs with the show birds for a small

donation.

Some shows have the ability to cast an even wider net. Natural Encounters Inc. (NEI), run by Steve Martin, has been traveling with its own show and helping others to set up shows around the world for almost 3 decades. Along the way, they have banked thousands for conservation. NEI shows, no matter where they are, always have a very strong conservation message conveyed via a fantastic array of birds all performing natural behaviours.

Clearly Natural Encounters audiences are inspired to act based simply on the quality of the show and its message. But, Steve also uses the 'dollar bill routine' directly to raise funds from willing participants who receive a souvenir in return for their \$20 bill (yes, \$20). NEI trainers, like most others, answer audience questions after programs. During this time, 'Indigrover,' a Hyacinth Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) gladly accepts donations. And, apparently, he doesn't take coins! Since 1988, with the help of Indigrover, several Galahs, Pied Crows and others, NEI has tallied in excess of \$200,000 for conservation projects on several continents. Almost \$35,000 has come to the World Parrot Trust for our dedicated funds for African Grey Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*), Hyacinth Macaws, Great Green Macaws, Palm Cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*) and Lear's Macaw (*Anodorhynchus leari*).

You may have seen 'bad' programs with beautiful and intelligent birds performing silly tricks accompanied by empty narration. Unfortunately, these programs do exist. Hopefully, inspiring examples like the Minnesota Zoo, Paradise Park, Natural Encounters and Adelaide Zoo will encourage a new standard. With the help of their trainers, captive birds like Floyd, Madge and Indigrover are taking center stage to help their wild counterparts. They inspire appreciation and interest, empathy and action and their influence is generating very real dollars for conservation.



Fran Le Nepveu pictured front left donated the £1 coin which resulted in the Free Flying Bird Show raising an incredible £20,000 for Parrot Conservation.



World Parrot Trust Highlights 1989 - 2002



Mike Reynolds, founder trustee, chairman



Audrey Reynolds, founder trustee



Andrew Greenwood DVM, founder trustee, scientific committee



David Woolcock, founder trustee



Alison Hales, trustee



Nick Reynolds, trustee

The World Parrot Trust was launched by Paradise Park, Hayle, Cornwall, UK in January 1989. The founding trustees were Mike and Audrey Reynolds, consultant international veterinarian Andrew Greenwood, and curator David Woolcock. Rosemary Low, famed author of many parrot books, agreed to be editor of our magazine *PsittaScene*.



Rosemary Low, editor of the *PsittaScene*

The Trust's stated aims were, and remain:

- *The survival of parrot species in the wild*
- *The welfare of captive birds everywhere*



Jamie Gilardi PhD, director, scientific committee

Paradise Park provided £11,000 funding to start the trust, plus free office space and facilities, and much free work from the park's staff. As the years passed by and the trust's membership grew into the thousands, funding for parrot conservation and welfare work was made available around the world. 12 international trustees pictured here and a distinguished scientific advisory committee guide WPT's activities.

This publication is intended to give a picture of the highlights of the effort to save the parrots, carried out by The World Parrot Trust.



Victoria Ewart, trustee



Cristiana Senni, trustee, campaigns director, rep Italy



Charles Munn PhD, trustee, scientific committee



Steve Martin, trustee



Glenn Reynolds, trustee



Ruud Vonk, trustee, director Benelux

Spix's Macaw

1990 - WPT funds help discover the last bird in the wild

We were asked to help with 40% of the funding needed by ICBP (now BirdLife International) to send an expedition to search for any Spix's Macaws remaining in the wild in Brazil. One last bird was discovered, and team leader Tony Juniper has now written a book about the threatened extinction of this bird, caused by illegal trapping and export of the birds to rich collectors in Switzerland, the Philippines, and Spain.

An official committee for the recovery of Spix's Macaw has recently collapsed. There are no birds left in the wild, but around 60 in private hands. Tragically, these are near all very closely related individuals; many are siblings. The future of the species rests primarily with the owners of the largest group, at Birds International, Manila. The World Parrot Trust has always been willing to contribute all its avicultural, veterinary, and biological expertise to the recovery of this critically threatened species.





The WPT Educational Buses 1992, 1993, 1995 and 1997

The original idea came from Paul Butler of RARE, who asked if we could provide a parrot bus for the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. This bus was to travel all over the island, visiting schools and other locations, telling the story of the endangered St. Lucia parrot (*Amazona versicolor*) and what had to be done to save it from extinction. Our team at Paradise Park, led by



St. Lucia bus.



Paraguay bus.

David Woolcock and Nick Reynolds, bought a used bus and fitted it out with working models, video programmes and other educational facilities, then shipped it out on a banana boat, and handed it over to staff of the island's forestry department. It was a great success, and resulted in similar buses being provided for the neighbouring islands of Dominica and St. Vincent, and also for use in Paraguay.

This remarkable achievement resulted in Paradise Park and the World Parrot Trust being chosen by BBC Wildlife Magazine as winners of the 'Zoo Conservation Award for Excellence'. London Zoo came second.



St. Vincent bus.



Lear's Macaw 1990 to date

Early on in our history we were contacted by Dr. Charles A. Munn III, acknowledged to be the world's leading expert on the macaws. We were able to support his work for Hyacinth Macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*), and then moved on to funding extensive projects for the much more endangered Lear's Macaw (*Anodorhynchus leari*). The habitat of these macaws was unknown until 1978, and remaining numbers in the wild were once thought to be as low as 60. We have consistently funded the work of the BioBrasil Foundation in NE Brazil, and new discoveries of other populations bring the current total to around 250 birds. This year, illegal trapping has been prevented, and no less than 30 chicks fledged at the Serra Branca site.



Dr. Charles Munn.

Survey of Glaucous Macaw Habitat 1999

In 1998 Charlie Munn was asked by Sheikh Al Thani to carry out a survey of the historical territory of the extinct Glaucous Macaw (*Anodorhynchus glaucous*) in Brazil. As well as confirming the loss of the Glaucous, the survey was invaluable in producing expert and original information from PhD ornithologists. This information on habitat loss, trapping for the pet trade, and other issues, will assist the conservation of species such as Lear's, Spix's, Blue-throated and other macaws.



A video has been prepared featuring the conclusions of this survey.



The birds being kept in appalling conditions.

Goffin's Cockatoo 1993

A television crew returned from filming in the Indonesian island of Tanimbar and reported to WPT that about 700 Goffin's Cockatoos (*Cacatua goffini*) were being held in cages by trappers.

This cockatoo had just been added to the CITES Appendix 1 list of threatened species, and we used our contacts in the area to make a payment to the trappers for the release of the birds back into a suitable area of forest. We felt this was a task the World Parrot Trust should undertake.



The cockatoos being released.



Steve Martin (L) and John Cleese filming the WPT video.

Parrot Action Plan



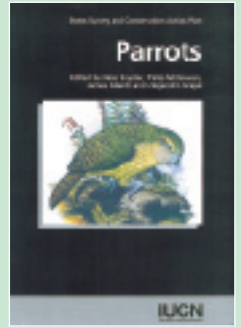
1995 to 2001 - WPT underwrites and co-publishes Action Plan with IUCN

In 1992 a previous attempt to produce a Parrot Action Plan was abandoned, due to disagreement among leading international parrot experts. In 1995 the WPT was offered help from British Airways Assisting Conservation to fly in representatives from the USA, Australia and Europe, for a meeting in London aimed at re-creating a consensus to finalise and publish a new Action Plan.

The meeting was successful, and the World Parrot Trust was asked to take responsibility for coordinating, progressing and funding the work on the plan. This was a considerable and lengthy project, but finally in 2001 the four authors, Noel Snyder, Alejandro Grajal, Phil McGowan and Jamie Gilardi, completed the work and it was published jointly by IUCN (the world conservation union) and World Parrot Trust.

The Parrot Action Plan is now the definitive document listing the 98 threatened species, with recommendations for their conservation over a five year period. It has been consulted by many organisations and individuals, and can be found on the internet at the WPT website www.worldparrottrust.org.

John Cleese helped us with a video to launch the Action Plan, and a great deal of publicity was achieved on tv and press media.



WPT in Australia

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo 1994 to 1997

World famous author Joe Forshaw (see *Parrots of the World* by Forshaw and Cooper) has helped the trust since its early years. He has served on our scientific committee that reviews applications for funding, and in 1994 he suggested that we might provide funding for a project in South Australia to help protect a remnant population of an endangered subspecies of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*).



Mike Reynolds (L) and Joseph Forshaw with fledgling cockatoo.

We funded the recording and guarding of these birds for three years. Then the responsibility was taken over by the State Governments of South Australia and Victoria and continues today.

Palm Cockatoo 1999 to 2002

Working with one of Australia's top parrot experts, Dr. Stephen Garnett, we learned of important field research into the status and biology of the Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*) in Cape York, northern tip of Australia. This was being carried out by Steve Murphy, and more funding was urgently needed. We agreed to provide this for three years, and recently agreed to continue for a fourth year. Previously little was known



about this spectacular bird, but the knowledge now gained will help the species in both Australia and Papua New Guinea.



The Plight of the African Grey 1996 to date

For hundreds of years African Grey Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) have been taken from West Africa to be kept as pets in Europe and elsewhere. They are renowned as the best talking parrots, and in recent years the advent of air transportation has resulted in hundreds of thousands of them being trapped and exported, most of them illegally. The numbers are so great that the World Parrot Trust became interested in studying the species in the wild with a view to assessing the likelihood of them becoming extinct in the wild. This must be a dread possibility, bearing in mind the vast numbers of the Passenger Pigeon and the Carolina Parakeet, both of which went extinct in the USA in a few short years.

We part funded an expedition to the Central African Republic by Diana May of the University of Arizona. This resulted in some of the first sound scientific information about the Grey Parrot and its lifestyle; this has been published in *PsittaScene*, and a new WPT video about this species in captivity and in the wild is available.

The World Parrot Trust is vehemently opposed to the trapping of any parrot in the wild, and is conducting a campaign to ask the European Union to bring in a total ban on the importation of birds into the EU. In 2002 we are also funding work by Dr. Usongo in Cameroon, with the goal of preventing the trapping of 15,000 Grey Parrots a year. WPT will continue to do all it can for this species, and would welcome funding from anyone interested in helping.



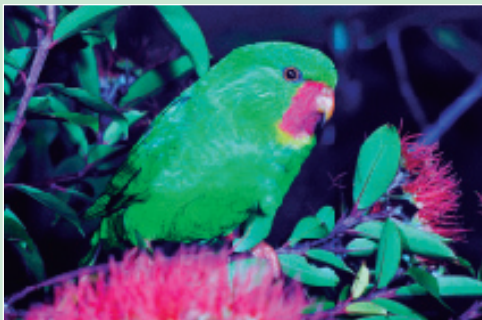
Search for the Red-throated Lorikeet, Fiji

2001 to 2002

In 1998 we were invited by our friend Michael Dibben, then the British High Commissioner in Fiji, to take an interest in the parrots of the islands. Working closely with the National Trust for Fiji, in 2001 we sent Kirsty Swinnerton, previously a member of the Mauritius team, to carry out a preliminary survey. She reported back that a search for the endangered Red-throated Lorikeet (*Charmosyna amabilis*) would be a priority, and that six month project has now been completed. Reports have appeared in *PsittaScene*. Sadly, the rare bird was not seen, but much information was gained, and further surveys are being considered.



In general, with our limited funds, we try to concentrate our efforts on the 'frontiers' of parrot conservation need. In deciding our priorities, we rely on our thirteen years of experience, our director and his staff, our scientific committee, and the recommendations of the Parrot Action Plan.



Financial Facts

US \$700,000 raised this year

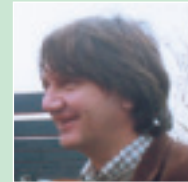
The Trust's ability to save the parrots of the world is based largely on how successful we are at raising funds to support our educational and conservation efforts. To date, that funding has come entirely from the generous support of our members, through legacies and through support from private foundations. Due to an increase in legacies and foundation contributions we've been able to support more effective projects than ever. Combining the resources of all our branches for the fiscal year ending in March 2002, we were able to raise over \$700,000 for the conservation and welfare of parrots worldwide. Although a global economic downturn will make it difficult to sustain this level of funding every year, we are pleased that we've been able to attract these kinds of resources and attention to our mission.

The funds raised and used by WPT since 1989 now total US\$2,000,000.

Echo Parakeet

1990 to date - world's most successful parrot conservation programme

Dr. Carl Jones (L) was presented with the Carolina Medal (R) by WPT for 'outstanding achievement in parrot conservation' in August 1999 during World Parrot Day.



We have always enjoyed a most friendly relationship with the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (now the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust), and in 1990 they invited us to join in the financial support for the Echo Parakeet (*Psittacula eques*) on Mauritius. At that time there were only about 8 of the species left - this would have been an almost unsolvable problem, if it were not for Dr. Carl Jones and his outstanding team from Mauritius, New Zealand, Canada and the UK. We put much of our limited resources towards this project, and to date this totals over £100,000, plus about £30,000 we persuaded other organisations to donate.

With a blend of ingenious scientific and avicultural initiatives and a series of outstanding hand-rearing experts, Carl Jones and his many enthusiastic helpers have now brought the total number of Echo Parakeets to over 150. Most have been released back into the limited forest area on Mauritius, and many of these are now breeding without any assistance apart from some supplementary nest boxes.



A remarkable success story, unique in the world of endangered parrots. WPT intends to continue its support, and invites all to join them in this effort.

The 'Hodge' Parrot Aviary at Paradise Park

2002

The World Parrot Trust has benefited from a number of legacies that have made it possible for us to expand our work and carry it out in a more professional manner. For example, the appointment of our scientifically qualified director Jamie Gilardi PhD has only been made possible by the legacies we have received.



The largest legacy was from the estate of Leonard and Sheila Hodge, residents of St. Agnes, Cornwall, UK. This was for £104,000 (\$150,000). We wanted to create a memorial for the Hodges at Paradise Park, so we have just finished constructing a smart new aviary - The Hodge Aviary - to be reserved for housing unwanted parrots. For thirty years the park has taken in as many of such birds as possible, but its accommodation is fully committed, so a whole new facility is very welcome.

We must take this opportunity to invite all readers to consider the World Parrot Trust in their wills. A legacy to WPT is an excellent way to say thank you for all the pleasure and fulfilment that parrots bring into our lives.

How You Can Help

- Join the World Parrot Trust • Buy WPT merchandise •
- Give a donation or legacy to help the birds •
- Educate friends about the plight of the parrots •

Contact Information

www.worldparrottrust.org

UK Tel: 01736 751026

USA Tel: 651 275 1877

Psitta News

A Sad Day

The Umgeni River Bird Park, South Africa is devastated to announce that an armed robbery took place on Thursday 1st August 2002 and almost thirty rare macaws and cockatoos worth around a million rand were stolen. The birds are mainly endangered species, and for all practical purposes, cannot be replaced. Hyacinth Macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*), Palm Cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*), Great Green Macaws (*Ara ambigua*), Blue-throated Macaws (*Ara glaucogularis*), Leadbeaters Cockatoos (*Cacatua leadbeateri*) and many other species were stolen. Most have closed rings on, and most have Trovan transponders implanted. We are broken.....

Any information anyone could provide would be appreciated.

Dr. M. Penning, Umgeni River Bird Park, PO Box 35205, Northway, 4065, South Africa, Tel: +2731-579-4600, Fax: +2731-579-4574, Email urbpmark@iafrica.com or WPT UK direct

Cockatoo Walkabout inspires and educates once again

In a spectacular setting in Northern California, Chris Shank held her biennial gathering in May that she calls the "Cockatoo Walkabout." This year the speakers included veterinarians, bird trainers, avian behaviourists, and conservationists. Held at her house called Cockatoo Downs in the Sierra Foothills, Chris has tens of free-flying cockatoos circling about the oak savanna, and acting like ... well, cockatoos. As always, the Walkabout inspired a great deal of informed discussion about the lives of cockatoos and other parrots, and all 80 or so attendees went home with a great deal more knowledge and food for thought than they had when they arrived. And due to Chris' generosity, t-shirt sales, and a very



Photo: Courtesy Cockatoo Downs.

productive auction, the Trust went home with over \$4,200 for the Palm Cockatoo Conservation Fund! Many thanks to Chris and all those attending for your much needed support.

The Kakapo have fledged

By DON MERTON

The latest news on the most extraordinary Kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*) breeding season in history is as follows:

- 24 (92%) chicks survived, three of which were hand-raised at the Burwood Bush Rearing Unit. The latter were returned to Whenua Hou on 30 May. They will remain in purpose-built pens until release to free-range in August/September;
 - All 24 chicks have now fledged;
 - The world Kakapo population has increased from 62 to 86 (39% in just one season (the previous record, 6 new birds, was in 1999);
 - 41 of the 86 birds (~48%) are of known age - ie 21 years or less. In Kakapo terms this is young. Most of the unknown age group were adult in the 1980's, and there's been just one adult death in the last 8 years;
 - DNA sexing techniques have confirmed that 15 (62%) of the 24 new chicks are female. Until now there has been a preponderance of males. Manipulation of female weights prior to breeding (to increase the ratio of females at conception) appears to have been effective. There is evidence that heavy females produce mainly male young and that light females produce mainly females. However, if females are too light they are unlikely to breed. Supplementary feeding in previous years may have been a factor in the disproportionate number of males produced (9 of 11 young from supplementary-fed females during the period 1991-1999 were male);
 - The number of females in the population (previously a matter of serious concern) has increased from 26 to 41 (54%);
 - Some females this season bred successfully with little or no supplemental feeding. This indicates that if management ceased then at least some effective reproduction could take place periodically and thus birds there do have a chance of making it on their own. This has been a concern, for until now the Whenua Hou population appeared to be dependent on on-going, intensive management;
 - Transfer of nests with eggs or nestlings up to 4m to safer locations, or to where they can be more safely accessed proved practical and beneficial;
 - Information from dataloggers placed in nest cavities showed that nests are similar to large butter coolers - surrounded by saturated peat they maintain a constant low temperature (~10°C) and 98 -100% humidity (difficult to simulate in an artificial nest-box!);
- Top marks to the island-based Kakapo team. All worked very long hours, often under very unpleasant and difficult conditions. The result - an astonishing 24 new Kakapo - is the

Obituary

Nancy Lewis Cullity

Nancy Lewis Cullity a resident of Segamore, Massachusetts and a lifetime member of WPT with her husband Brian, died Saturday May 25 at her home.

Mrs Cullity was an avid adventure traveller. Her interests spanned from ancient Anazasi cultures to rain forest and parrot conservation. She and her husband hiked, camped and backpacked throughout the Southwest in addition to taking nearly a dozen trips to the jungles of South and Central America. Her last trip was in November to the Mexican state of Chiapas to help with the conservation of the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao cyanoptera*) in the region of the Lacondon jungle. She was also actively involved with the conservation of parrot clay licks in Manu National Park in Peru.

We would like to thank family and friends for their donation, totalling \$2,255, to The World Parrot Trust in memory of Nancy.

culmination of decades of very hard work by a great many people - Richard Henry in the 1890's -1900's, New Zealand Wildlife Service 1950's -1980's, and since then, Department of Conservation Kakapo Programme staff in collaboration with Threatened Species Trust partners Comalco NZ Ltd and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ. And especially, the many volunteers - all in all, an extraordinary level of commitment, dedication, innovation and hard work. No other bird recovery programme in New Zealand, and probably the world, has seen such a determined effort sustained over such a long period.

Smuggling of Indonesian Birds

Recently, KSBK (the Indonesian undercover investigative team) released its report on illegal trapping and sale of birds in Indonesia. Not surprisingly, it is very depressing.

KSBK has started a campaign in Indonesia to publicise this national disgrace; they have asked us to try to spread the word internationally.

To this end, a petition has been created which contains a synopsis of relevant facts and an easy way to sign the petition, which will eventually be delivered to President Megawati Soekarno Putri and the Minister of Forestry.

We are hoping that you would sign the petition yourself as an individual (no affiliation will be asked or shown), include the petition on your website(s) or, better still, contact friends, family, acquaintances directly, and ask them to sign the petition and then cross-post it (not the petition itself; only its location on the web) extensively world wide.

It can be found at www.PetitionOnline.com/cockatoo/petition.html

It takes less than a minute to sign. YOU don't have to forward the petition itself to anyone.

Behaviour issues

Oh, The Abuse!

By STEVE MARTIN

I heard someone say the other day that they had rescued an abused parrot. In the past, these words inspired feelings of sadness and compassion in me. But, today they are met with apathy and reservation. I have not lost my passion for parrots; I still care deeply about their welfare and treatment. But, over time the words "abuse" and "rescue" have lost their significance. Maybe it is because these words are so often tossed around carelessly with little regard for the indictment they suggest.

I can hardly visit a parrot internet list, read an article, or speak to a group of parrot enthusiasts, without hearing the term "abuse" in association with companion parrots. However, I rarely hear the details of the so-called abuse. I know there are many horror stories about parrots being hit, ignored in dark basements, being fed diets sorely lacking in adequate nutrition, etc. These examples of mistreatment, of course, deserve to be included on the list of "parrot abuses." There are worse stories as well, many too painful to consider and beyond the scope of this article. What I am talking about here are the other cases of abuse; the ones where the interpretation of the mistreatment is poorly defined and left to the discretion of the storyteller.

I have never seen a definition of the word "abuse" as it applies to parrots. There are no standards for the care and management of pet parrots. Only the subjective judgment of parrot owners dictates what is best and what is right for companion parrots. One person's idea of proper care or housing for a parrot can easily be another person's idea of abuse. One person's purchase at a pet shop may be another person's "rescue".

My dictionary defines abuse as: the physical or psychological maltreatment of a person or animal. This definition leaves open the question of from whose perspective is the abuse determined? Is only the human perspective important to consider? If so, are all humans qualified to judge the physical and psychological state of a parrot? Or, is it possible to consider the perspective of the parrot when evaluating abuse? Can you really evaluate what an animal is thinking, or feeling? Is it appropriate to consider the bird's perspective or is it enough to justify people's actions with their good intentions? Where is the line drawn? Who draws the line? What is the consequence when a person steps over the line? There are simply too many questions that cannot be answered. Maybe that is why the words "abuse" and "rescue" have become so vague.

Since it is so difficult to define parrot abuse from a human perspective, I suggest abuse be considered from the bird's perspective. A parrot's physical and mental health should be good indicators of abuse. An avian veterinarian is best qualified to determine physical health in parrots. Many parrot owners have also developed observational skills that allow them to spot physical signs of illness and stress in their birds. A bird's body language can provide

great insights into its mental health and current state of mind. Body language can be used to determine levels of stress, anxiety, apathy, fear, etc. High levels of signs, such as stress, may suggest abuse. For instance, if a parrot is growling, screaming, hissing, and frantically trying to flee, abuse is very possibly at work.

I understand this idea is new and will be difficult for some people to accept. For this idea to take root many people will have to change their attitude and practices when working with parrots. Some people will have to adopt new, more positive methods to work with their birds to avoid creating levels of stress in their birds. The result of these positive methods will most likely lead to better relationships with companion parrots. The practice of dominating a parrot will not survive in this new era of positive relationships. Past relationships built on negative interactions will give way to positive reinforcement of good behaviour which will in turn lead to more enjoyable and fulfilling relationships between bird and human.



Steve Martin

Home Alone

If parrots are allowed a voice, people will be forced to evaluate their relationship with their parrot using new criteria. For instance, a woman wrote on an Internet list recently that she had just rescued an abused parrot from a pet shop and would now like to know how to care for it, as this is her first and only parrot. This new parrot owner will be encouraged to evaluate from the parrot's perspective what is more comfortable; life at the pet shop or life in her home? For many people, keeping a parrot alone in a cage while they are at work is normal. For a parrot, this is a very unnatural living environment. A wild parrot is virtually never alone its entire life, unless it is a female sitting on eggs. However, few people would consider this bird "rescued" from the pet shop an abuse case because the intentions of the owner were morally sound. She provided a loving home, a great diet, and companionship...for about four or five hours a day. It's a different perspective when you consider Nature has set the bird up to have all these things 24 hours a day. If you were to consider the situation from the parrot's perspective, it is possible the bird would choose

life in the pet shop with other noisy birds over the daily confinement and isolation in a person's home.

In this new era where parrots are given a say in their care and management, people will be encouraged to evaluate the way they handle and form relationships with their birds. I read on another Internet list of a parrot that loves the woman of the house and dislikes the husband. The husband was seriously bitten by the bird a few times before he finally decided he would quit handling the bird. The people on the list found this unacceptable. They wrote things like: "How can he stop handling the parrot, denying the bird the interaction and companionship it deserves?" Another person wrote,

"This is abusive treatment and you should force your husband to put up with the bites and show the bird how much he cares." One after another they encouraged, no demanded, that the husband work with the bird. No one took into account the parrot's point of view. It occurred to me that the parrot was simply following its natural instincts and reacting as nature had intended. It was probably bonded with the woman and protecting its territory from an intruder ... an intruder who kept trying to force himself on the bird with demands to "step up." From the bird's perspective the man surely must have been an abuser. I suspect the husband may have also felt a bit abused by the relentless pressure to continue to work with the bird, and by the frequent and predictable attacks by the parrot.

In the new, more positive era of companion parrot ownership, people will be more sensitive to their birds' body language. They will not force them to do things they don't want to do or go places they don't want to go. I saw a man at



Most parrots spend their entire day and night in the close company of others, if not piled on top of one another at a clay lick like these Blue-headed Pionus, they are at least with a buddy, a mate, or with their entire family; Little Corellas have been seen in flocks of up to 70,000 birds in Australia!
Photo: ©2002 JG Gilardi, WPT

a parrot club a while back parading a frightened parrot around the room. The bird would occasionally fly part way across the room, crashing to the floor after exhausting its clipped wings. The man would dutifully go pick the bird up and return to his seat. It was obvious to me and many others in the room that this poor bird was scared half to death by all the commotion in this new environment. The repeated attempts at flight and hard crashes to the ground were even more difficult for me to accept when the man made the excuse to the group that the bird is nervous because "he was abused." How true, I thought.

For some, the term "abuse" is little more than an excuse to hide behind. I have heard many people say things like, "my bird doesn't talk, he was abused." Or, "he bites me all the time, he must have been abused." I cannot deny that many parrots have suffered at the hands of humans. Often these people are misinformed, well-meaning people who just don't know any better. Sadly, other times they are people who simply don't care. However, no matter what the past has dealt a parrot, it can still enjoy a comfortable and fulfilling life, provided it receives proper care and treatment. The problem is there are so many opinions as to what is proper and what is not.

The best way I know to decide what strategy is best when working with a parrot is to allow the animal to be part of the decision. Start by learning to recognize the negative signs of stress, fear and anxiety in your bird. Also learn to recognize the positive signs of comfort, happiness, and play in your bird. To choose the best strategy for working with your bird always pull from your bag of positive approaches and avoid the negative approaches. For many people, this may be more difficult than it seems.

Humans have a long history of using negative approaches to get their way. People have grown up using heavy-handed techniques to shape and



This Umbrella Cockatoo is a playful, contented bird, not a human-dominated one.

Photo: Rosemary Low

modify behaviour. This culture is innate to us and difficult to change. To complicate the issue, a negative approach sometimes gives the illusion of success to a parrot owner. Most anyone can force themselves on a parrot, especially one with clipped wings, and realize some level of perceived success. However, the behavioural fall-out from this approach may be far reaching. Sure, the bird can learn to perform dutiful behaviours to avoid negative interactions, but at what price? We may never know the psychological effects negative interactions have on parrots. But, is it really worth the risk? Isn't it better to use positive methods to "allow" birds to perform desirable behaviours rather than force them to comply with demands? Certainly a reward of a favourite treat, a scratch on the head, or verbal praise is better than forcing a parrot to perform an action out of fear or discomfort. Plus, the positive approach creates an environment where the bird wants to perform creates more lasting results, and promotes a better relationship between bird and human. For any behaviour or action you want your bird to perform, positive reinforcement works better than negative approaches. It's as simple as that.

Though it may happen on rare occasions, it is difficult for me to believe that anyone would purposely abuse or mistreat a parrot. The vast majority of parrot owners are responsible, caring people who want only to do what is right for their birds. Too often, they are confused by the myriad of conflicting information available to parrot owners. One source says force your parrot to comply with your commands and don't let him get away with anything, while another says use positive reinforcement to create the best relationship possible with your bird. Both methods produce results. However, positive methods will never be associated with the word "abuse".

Conclusion

The past does not equal the future. A bird's history is important, but not nearly as important as the present. The events of today shape the rest of a bird's life. Today is the perfect day to give your bird a voice through its body language and let it have a say in its care and treatment. Today is the day you can decrease the frustrations and increase the rewards for both you and your companion parrot.



The Hyacinth Macaw Retires from the WPT 12

As the largest of flighted parrots and among the most spectacularly coloured, the Hyacinth Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) has long been the most sought after bird in aviculture. Because of its playful nature and impressive stature, this species has suffered intensive trapping in its home in Brazil, causing alarm among parrot conservationists that it might be driven to extinction in the wild like its



smaller cousin the Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*).

Since 1987, as a result of improved law enforcement in Brazil and work by several NGO's, this alarm has been turned into effective conservation action. For many years we at the Trust have focused on the conservation of this species in the wild by creating the Hyacinth Fund and supporting the study of its biology and encouraging protection through ecotourism. We now feel that the species - which likely numbers about 5,000 individuals in the wild - has recovered sufficiently that we can refocus our resources on more critically threatened species in South America and elsewhere around the globe. The Hyacinth still faces serious threat from widespread habitat conversion for soybean production, and with any slack in enforcement, the trapping will very likely resume. Our hope is that with the ongoing protection, education, ecotourism, and other conservation action, this species will continue to recover and lend its spectacular stature to the conservation of the entire region.

Thus, we are now retiring the Hyacinth Macaw out of our WPT 12 and into our Parrot Portfolio which will remain our way of drawing attention to our growing collection of success stories in parrot conservation. By making this change, we will now have the opportunity to add the more critically threatened Blue-throated Macaw to the WPT 12 which will help us focus more conservation resources on this tiny population in Bolivia, which hovers on the brink of extinction.



Native Culture and Moulded Feathers

By AVRIL BARTON, a long term member and supporter of WPT

After sending moulded feathers to the Northern American Indian tribe in Zuni for almost two years, I recently accepted their invitation to visit them, and travelled six and a half thousand miles to spend the most incredible ten days of my life living with them and learning about their beliefs and lifestyle.

The Zunis are one of nineteen Native American groups of Indians who are located in northwestern New Mexico near the Arizona border and the towns of Gallop and Grants; the nearest town being thirty miles away.

For generations, the Zunis have built their villages close to the Zuni River and to Corn Mountain - a sacred place where their people found safety in earlier times.

Zunis are the descendents of a prehistoric people. They speak their own language and have customs and beliefs which make them unique. Their land is ruled by their Elders and is called a 'Sovereign State'; it borders with lands belonging to the Hopi, Acoma and Navajo Indian Nations.

After much consideration, I decided not to do any research in advance, but to learn about them day by day when I got there. I was collected by Steve Albert the director of the Natural Resources Department, and we travelled one hundred and thirty miles along Route 66; which was wonderful for me as it was my era for music and films. I was taken to Red Rock Canyon where John Wayne made most of his famous cowboy films, and then we were really into desert landscape. For someone who is used to streetlights every twenty yards it is a real culture shock, by now I was expecting to see tee-pees.

My first sight of Zuni was Corn Mountain, a red and golden rock formation which guards the state of Zuni land; so very impressive that you have to wonder how nature could create such a thing from flat landscape.

We then went to the Natural Resources



Avril Barton



Aswani Dancers welcoming me to Zuni.

Department where I met all the staff and learnt how they sort the feathers for the various 'Kiva' (religious groups) members to apply for them. Different feathers are required for different ceremonies at various times of the year, with the Macaw / Parrot being the most revered

birds. All the feathers are used, even to the smallest down feather, which they use to fill in the tiny gaps in the ceremonial dress or to decorate prayer sticks with.

I asked why when the feathers were so scarce didn't they use the costumes again, but was told that they didn't just represent the various Gods, but their belief that they were the various Gods reincarnated, and depending on the ceremony performed the costume had to be either buried or burnt so that the God could go the full natural circle, and come back to life at the next festival.

The 'Aswani' group had arranged to perform a welcome dance for me that night after dinner in the hotel's courtyard, and I was able to meet lots of the Zuni people who came along to meet 'La La Oka' - my Zuni name given to me that night by the Chief Councilman, meaning 'Feather Lady', a derivative of one of their Gods 'The Feather String Girl'.

My time there went far too quickly. A visit to the culture centre to try and learn about their tribal history mixed in with visits to their ancient dwelling places and burial grounds going back to the thirteen hundreds when the Spanish first discovered them blended in with visits to the School to talk to the children



Entrance to Burial Lands.

about Rainforest conservation; a talk to the adults explaining the work of the World Parrot Trust, and arranged that they donated to the USA branch in return for the many feathers they receive from around the world to keep their culture alive - Not forgetting the visit to their hospital, which compared with some of ours is state of the art, and all paid for by the hard work of the Zuni people themselves.

Amongst my most vivid memories are visits to the Eagle Sanctuary where both Golden and Bald Eagles are cared for after road accidents or landing on power lines which can damage their feet making them unable to be released into the wild. I visited it daily and gained the trust of 'Olo' (the Zuni word for golden) a female golden eagle weighing in at over ten pounds. To have her, a wild bird with such power sat on my arm and eating her prey in front of me left me feeling very humble indeed.

Another incredible sight was the ceremonial 'Shalako' night dances. The Shalako are the Zuni courier gods, and they welcome and bid farewell to the season, other Gods and also pray for the rains. Normally Non-Zuni persons are not allowed to see the Zuni ceremonies, but I was taken with the Zuni women to watch through the windows of the seven Kiva dwellings involved in the Spring festival exactly like the tribal women would have done for hundreds of years.

It was very easy to forget the twenty first century when we only had burning torches, drumbeats, rattling of prayer sticks and the sounds of the animal and bird gods that the dancers were portraying. All this combined with minus zero temperatures once it became dark and everyone speaking the Zuni language made you feel that this was very much another world certainly not the USA of Disneyland or New York.

There wasn't a day went by when I didn't marvel at the natural mix of the past and the present. We collected a juvenile golden eagle that had been injured whilst eating its kill on



'Olo' my beautiful Golden Eagle and I.

the roadside, and was no longer able to fly properly. The tribal council asked me to name it in honour of my visit. I called her 'Chancer', because I felt she had got a second chance in life.

On arrival back to Zuni land we were met in the middle of a sunny afternoon by an Elder dressed in full ceremonial robes who blessed the eagle, and cleansing it with ceremonial cornmeal at the side of the road before it could enter Zuni land. Minutes before this we had been discussing the World Cup and betting on who was going to win.

On the final day I was taken to meet the three remaining 'Bow Chiefs' two in their late Eighties, and one who was mid Seventies. It was explained to me that the Zuni was never a warring tribe and that the Bow Chiefs were there to protect them from their enemies, both on earth and as Gods in Heaven.

To become a Bow Chief one had to scalp a sworn enemy, and as this was not the done

thing nowadays, these men were very sad and concerned that this Kiva would no longer be part of the Zuni life, especially as when they had all died, no one could perform these two ceremonies to resurrect their figures in Heaven.

When it was pointed out to me that it was only just over sixty years ago that the youngest of the three would have scalped someone to be initiated into the Bow Chief Kiva that I realised just how close the past and the present really were.

The Zuni have asked me to say 'Elahkwa' (Thank You) for your help so far, and please keep sending the feathers so that conservation and native culture can run side by side.

Please ring Avril on 0113 248 4915 for information where to send your feathers. Or if outside the UK please send them c/o S.K. Albert (Director), Zuni Fish and Wildlife Department, BLDG 2., Route 31 North, PO Box 1473, New Mexico 87372 USA.
Email zfwf@hotmail.com



Zuni Councilman sorting feathers.

STOP PRESS!

"Missing" South American parrot rediscovered after 90 years, photographed for the first time

By MIKE PARR (ABC) and JAMES GILARDI (WPT)

This July 28, researchers with ProAves Colombia, supported by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and the World Parrot Trust (WPT), photographed one of the world's rarest parrots in the high Andes of Colombia confirming the survival of this long lost species. Colombian ornithologists Jorge Velasquez and Alonso Quevedo found a flock of 14 Fuertes's Parrots in a remote area of the central Andes close to Los Nevados National Park.



Ninety one years ago, in August 1911, two bird collectors from the American Museum of Natural History in New York - Leo Miller and Arthur Allen - visited the same volcano as Jorge and Alonso to explore its birdlife. They spent several months in the desolate high Andean wilderness, and discovered a "distinct and interesting" parrot that was previously unknown to science. The birds were described the following year and named *Hapalopsittaca fuertesi*, or Fuertes's Parrot, also called the 'Multicolored Parrot' by local farmers.

Between the original discovery and this July, the continued existence of this intriguing species has remained a mystery with no confirmed sightings of the bird. Last year, ProAves Colombia, a Colombian bird conservation group, decided to mount a determined search for the species to see whether it could be located and protected. The group was supported by Dr. Paul Salaman, an expert in Colombian ornithology from the British Museum of Natural History, and received initial funding from ABC and the WPT. The project, which also studied another rare Andean parrot, the Rusty-faced Parrot, has subsequently attracted additional support from Fundación Natura, Conservation International, The British Natural History Museum, and Instituto de Ciencias Naturales - Universidad Nacional de Colombia, and recently won the Gold Award at this year's prestigious British Petroleum International Conservation Awards.



To date, just 14 Fuertes's Parrots, including 3 juveniles, have been discovered, surviving in just a few dozen hectares of forest. The critical requirements of the species appear to be tall mature trees, where they feed on berries amongst the epiphyte-laden canopy branches and find vital nesting cavities. Jorge Velasquez has stated "my team's task has only just begun, as we must commence the vital job of protecting the species with great urgency." Now the researchers know the specific habitat preferences and diet of the parrot, it is hoped that they can locate and protect other surviving flocks in the region.

"From our experience with the critically endangered Yellow-eared Parrot, another species restricted to the Colombian Andes, we know that conservation efforts for these rare birds can succeed. We now need to gain the support of as many people as possible to help fund and implement a comprehensive conservation effort" said Mike Parr, Vice President for Program Development at ABC, and author of *Parrots: A Guide to Parrots of the World*.

"The re-discovery of the long-lost Fuertes's Parrot is a great achievement for ornithologists and conservationists in Colombia, and underscores the fact that so many parrots linger on the brink of extinction. ProAves' accomplishment will inspire desperately needed conservation work in the Andes, promoting the recovery of this parrot and many other species unique to the region," said James Gilardi, Ph.D., Director of the World Parrot Trust.

For further information, photographs, or to express interest to help, please contact Mike Parr, ABC, 202 452 1535 ext. 204, or James Gilardi, WPT, 530 756 6340

Photos of the rediscovered Fuertes's Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca fuertesi*) By Jorge Velasquez.
© 2002 Fundacion ProAves - Colombia

Trade Ban Petition

Petition Signature Total so far: **10,533**

A Special Thanks to 'Clinic for Birds, Meppel and Dudley & West Midlands Zoological Society, West Midlands' for their support and promotion of this Trade Ban

I SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL TO BAN THE IMPORTATION OF WILD-CAUGHT BIRDS INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Comments

Please complete all sections marked with an * Please tear off and return to: WPT, Glanmor House, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 4HB, UK.
If you would like additional copies of this or the actual Proposal to Ban the Importation of Wild-caught Birds into the European Union (PS Vol 13 No 3) then please do not hesitate to contact me on Tel: 01736 751026

Aims of the Trust



With thousands of members in over 50 countries, our branches work to achieve the stated aims of the World Parrot Trust, which are:

- **The survival of parrot species in the wild**
- **The welfare of captive birds everywhere**

To Achieve these Aims, we:

- Restore and protect populations of wild parrots and their native habitats
- Promote awareness of the threats to all parrots, captive and wild
- Oppose the trade in wild-caught birds
- Educate the public on high standards for the care and breeding of parrots
- Encourage links between conservation and aviculture

Member, Donation or Legacy

If you become a member of our Registered Charity you will receive a new member package, four of these PsittaScene magazines and one free entry to Paradise Park in Cornwall, UK per year with your membership card. You can also join our members only group email list and gain access to many other members for parrot information and support.

Each renewal year you will receive the quarterly magazines and one free entry into Paradise Park (Winner of Good Britain Guide, Family Attraction of the Year, for 2 years).

100% of money donated to designated funds is spent directly on parrot conservation.

Please consider a donation or legacy to the Trust.

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PsittaScene

Parrots in the Wild



Red-bellied Macaw
Orthopsittaca manilata

By © 2002 BILL KING, SANDOVAL PERU

A Red-bellied Macaw watches the shore of Cocha Salvador from its nest in a dead Mauritia palm in southeastern Peru, a palm common to oxbow lakes on which this specialist parrot is largely dependent for food, roosting, and nesting.