

PsittaScene



IN THIS ISSUE:

Wild English Parrots?
Golden Conure Review



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Psitta Scene

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------|
| Letter to members from Director | 2 |
| A day in the Gorges with the Echoes | 3-5 |
| Indonesia ends exports of wild-caught birds | 6-7 |
| Rose-ringed Parakeets in the UK | 8-9 |
| Golden Conure research will aid its survival | 10-13 |
| Book reviews | 13 |
| A Dominica project..... | 14-15 |
| Children's T-shirt for sale..... | 15 |
| Report from European WPT Reps | 16-17 |
| PsittaNews | 18 |
| WPT general info | 19 |
| Parrots in the Wild | 20 |



Cover Picture By NICK REYNOLDS

At Paradise Park in Cornwall UK a large flock of Lorikeets can be fed by visitors. Here we see the local Member of Parliament, Andrew George MP, being greeted by enthusiastic birds. Andrew's party, the Liberal Democrats, have just adopted a policy opposing the importation of wild-caught birds into the European Union. The World Parrot Trust will work with them to continue its campaign against imports.

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Letter to members from the Director

Dear WPT Members,

Thank you for your continued support to the Trust and our goals. As you all know, we are a lightly-staffed organisation which strives to focus resources on parrot conservation and welfare as efficiently and effectively as possible. Consequently, we are not able to spend as much time as we'd like working with our members. It is however your dedication and commitment that keeps the Trust strong and growing, and enables us to work in so many places, with so many great people, and of course to save so many magnificent birds.

Over the past year we have been working on several exciting initiatives to help reach out to the general public, expand our presence, and increase our membership. These initiatives include:

- a new membership brochure
- a new Veterinary Membership program to help promote the Trust through avian clinics
- connecting with bird shows around the world to raise awareness about the plight of parrots in the wild and their needs in captivity

We often hear from members that they'd like to help more, volunteering their time to help the Trust. As we grow larger, we intend to fully develop programs that can incorporate this kind of grass-roots support in many ways. Right now you can help, by telling your associates and friends about what we do.

As a Trust member you are one of our greatest assets. Collectively, we reach thousands of bird enthusiasts in our local areas. In your area, you're bound to know one or more people who would make a great new member. Please take the time to sit down with them and fill out the new membership brochure included in this issue of *PsittaScene*. When you are done pop it in the mail; you'll be doing all parrots a huge favour!

Please remember to explain all the terrific benefits of membership:

- the new Members' E-mail List, with friendly insight and discussion of all things parrot from WPT members the world over,
- the quarterly *PsittaScene* packed with articles on wild parrot conservation and captive bird welfare,
- other publications such as the Happy Healthy Parrot leaflet, helping you inform others of parrots' needs,
- and additional benefits like our new Trade Ban sticker, posters, and other parrot-phenalia.

Among other endeavours we're working on is a formal WPT membership drive. Over the next year, we'll be getting to know you better, assessing where our potential growth is likely to come from, and then reaching out to those supporters to grow our membership. If you're keen on helping with this effort or have some good ideas, please contact Michelle Cook at admin@worldparrottrust.org and she'll keep you informed about when and how you can help.

Again, thank you for your continued support and for taking the time to make use of the new membership brochure.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gilardi, Director



A day in the Gorges with the Echoes

By JASON MALHAM

For the four members of the Echo Parakeet Field Team the day begins at Plaine Lievre, one of four field stations used by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) within Black River Gorges National Park. Plaine Lievre is situated on the north-eastern corner of the park and is in the heart of Echo Parakeet (*Psittacula eques*) country. Since 1996/97, fifty-four hand-raised birds have been released there. They have come from several sources. Some were chicks produced by captive birds, others were rescued from wild nests, while others were the result of down-sizing wild broods (a technique used to increase productivity by removing surplus chicks that the adults would be unable to rear). The surplus chicks are fostered in the wild or hand-raised. Last season a record 21 Echoes were released and today there are more than 40 birds coming to the supplementary food hoppers in the Plaine Lievre area.

Echoes are not especially early risers, so when Jason and Gareth wandered into the outside kitchen shelter at 04:30, all was quiet. The Echo team does not usually start this early, but today was to be special! This day would see one chick rescued, one swapped between captivity and a nest and one fostered to another nest. Translocating chicks is a serious undertaking and nothing is left to chance. Most of the equipment needed for the day was prepared the previous night, to enable an earlier start.

Coffee and breakfast finished, a final check was made of everything - brooder, batteries and cables, feeding equipment, cell phone, back-up chick heating and carrying equipment, and diesel in the Landrover, before heading off down the bumpy track. As the team departs, the sound of hopper lids "clapping" and the high pitched "wack wack wack..." in Plaine Lievre clearing, signals the morning's first birds arriving for supplemental food. They all have a penchant for Kaytee Exact pellets! Some of these birds don't have far to travel, "Arantxa" and "Balthazar", for example, are raising two chicks in the "Longdrop" nest box on the edge of the clearing, only



Some of the Plaine Lievre release birds waiting for breakfast at food hopper!

20m from the sleeping quarters!

All the known Echo cavities/nest boxes and birds are named. This makes identification easier. To make things a little more interesting, all the different breeding groups have theme names, usually based on the cavity they use. A breeding group consists of one female and between one and five males. Those readers who are familiar with remote field stations may have already guessed where the Longdrop name came from! This nest-box is situated near the longdrop toilet!

The first stop of the day is reached after only five minutes driving and a few minutes walk from the Landrover. Crumpet is one of the older known Echoes, having been rung as an adult in 1996. She and partner Pancake are only the second fully wild pair to use a nest-box. Last year Noah, a three-year-old, and her partner Shaggy caused much excitement when they used a nest box - the first ever fully wild pair to use one! A number of release birds have also chosen nest-boxes. This season a total of six boxes have been used. Crumpet is also one of the few fully wild birds to take supplementary food. This season several wild juveniles and a couple of adult males have been seen either feeding at hoppers or near them. This is exciting news because it suggests that the large number of release birds are attracting other birds, who will more than likely learn to use the food hoppers. Supplementary feeding is an invaluable tool for increasing productivity, especially in seasons of short food supply (common in Mauritius due to severely degraded forest).

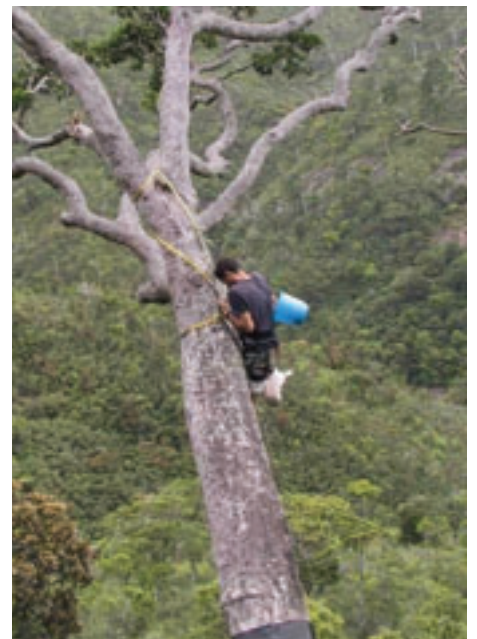
This season Crumpet laid three fertile eggs. Echoes lay one to four eggs, but have never been known to successfully raise more than two chicks. There is not enough food. Since 1998, many Echo broods have been



Male Echo Parakeet.

downsized, with the "surplus" chicks either being fostered to other pairs who have infertile or dead eggs, or taken to the Gerald Durrell Endangered Wildlife Sanctuary (GDEWS) aviaries at Black River. Because females lay on alternate days, the eggs generally hatch at least a day apart. It seems the third and fourth chicks are often smaller and weaker than the first couple. So it proved to be with Crumpet's third chick.

This chick hatched five days after the first, at 7.5g. The average hatch weight for wild chicks is around 8.5g. After two full days in the cavity it had become quite badly



Preparing to place the chicks in the cavity.

dehydrated and had not gained any weight. Meanwhile its siblings were gaining 3-4 grams per day. A chick in this situation will die if left in the nest.

Jason and Gareth are on the ground below the box at 05:20, to see Crumpet go back into the nest just minutes after arriving! They are forced to wait another hour before Crumpet emerges again to be fed by Pancake. The team follows a protocol of minimal disturbance with the wild birds and almost always wait for the female to emerge from the cavity when she is ready. Although this can mean long waits (four hours or more during incubation and early stages of chick brooding) the chance of nest abandonment through human disturbance is virtually eliminated. Several of the females who have been managed for a number of years, seem to leave the cavity just for the team! They almost invariably exit the cavity entrance within minutes of the staff arriving. They obviously have exceptional hearing. There is one wild female who sits on a perch just 1.5m away while the chick is weighed. She "talks" to the chick with soft mewing sounds and shows no sign of distress. These Echoes really are wonderful birds!

So the chick in question is pulled from the box just before 07:00. It is carried for the complete journey in the Curfew portable brooder that the World Parrot Trust kindly donated to the programme a couple of years ago. This brooder is excellent for egg and chick translocations and Jason used a bit of Kiwi ingenuity, setting it up with a portable battery so that it can be carried away from the vehicle (it normally runs off the cigarette lighter plug) and out to nest cavities. At the Landrover a few millilitres of warmed Lactated Ringers Solution with Zoolyte (glucose) added, is fed to the chick. By far the majority of chicks that are translocated these days are given fluids as required (ie when the crop empties), during the journey. It significantly reduces dehydration and ensures the chick arrives at its destination in as healthy a state as possible. This is especially important when fostering to another nest.

The drive down the winding, hilly Chamarel road to Black River takes a little over an hour. The team and precious cargo are met at the GDEWS aviaries by Amanda, one of the three full time hand-rearers on the team. Amanda places the chick in its own brooder to settle, before feeding it more fluids as the re-hydration process continues.

For Gareth and Jason there is no time to dally because Miracle, a seven-day-old chick that was assisted from its egg, is ready to go back to the wild. Amanda has just fed Miracle so there is no need to give fluids en-route. Miracle is to be fostered to



Female Echo Parakeet.

Crumpet's box, in a chick swap. The team arrives at 09:50, and has to wait for 40 minutes before Crumpet leaves the box. This is when the portable brooder is useful; with two 12 volt 18 amp-hour batteries, it can be run continuously for around 12 hours.

Miracle is weighed before being placed in the nest. It is swapped with Crumpet's first chick, which is later named Kaya. Kaya is 1.5 times heavier than Miracle and would probably out-beg and trample Miracle when they are being fed. So the plan is to leave the second chick (who is two-thirds heavier than Miracle), with Miracle and move Kaya to another site called the Woodstock cavity.

Brood upsizing

At Woodstock, Nancy has just one chick, about the same age and size as Kaya. It's a perfect opportunity for an augmentation foster - otherwise known as brood upsizing. The augmenting of broods is one of many intensive techniques used to increase productivity. The team augment broods as the situation arises and judges each potential situation on its risks. It is usually only attempted when the pair is known to be capable and experienced, ie, they should be able to raise two chicks. A technique more commonly used is downsizing -- removing one or two chicks when they are

still healthy so that each pair have only one or sometimes two chicks to rear. The extra chicks are fostered to other wild pairs or hand raised.

The first priority for the Echo team is to maximise egg and chick survival and the second priority for the "wild" team is to maximise the number of chicks that fledge in the wild. The team even fosters aviary-produced chicks in wild nests when the situation arises. Echo chicks can only safely be fostered before they have feather growth (there is a risk the female won't accept a feathered chick, as we have recorded with some captive birds) and the optimum age for fostering is four to eight days.

Kaya has a half-full crop and doesn't require any fluids until arrival at the Parakeet trail car park, about 25 minutes drive from Crumpet's nest box. For all transfers the team carries a kit with the necessary items for keeping a chick healthy during transit. The brooder has a good thermostat and can be run at the optimum temperature. With very young ones it is 36-37 deg C. Kaya is seven days old and is quite comfortable with a temperature around 32 deg C.

Feeding a chick is quite simple and takes a few minutes. Lactated Ringers Solution is warmed in a small glass bowl, in a larger bowl of filtered hot water, to about 40 deg

C. The chick is fed using a plastic pipette, with a small piece of silicon tube as a nozzle. Usually a chick will beg well and take the fluid enthusiastically.

Jason and Gareth have a 20-minute walk down the Parakeet trail, down a long ridge with commanding views down Grande Gorge to the villages of Black River and Tamarin on the coast. But the track is exposed to the hot tropical sun and the almost sheer-sided "South Scarp" face below the Grande Gorge side of the ridge funnels heat up onto the track. This day is a typical scorcher. Kaya is quite happy in the brooder; it is probably cooler inside than out! To get to Woodstock requires a descent down the South Scarp. For this part of the journey Kaya is transferred to a wide-mouthed thermos flask, which will be much easier to manage on the very steep slippery slope.

Gareth takes the lead with the thermos sitting in the top of his pack. Fortunately there are plenty of guava trees to hold on to. The dry, loose soil is like ball-bearings to walk on and one slip could have disastrous consequences for the precious package on Gareth's back. However he moves very cautiously and smoothly, with Jason following, struggling with the brooder amongst the "tight" overhanging guava. They periodically stop so Jason can open the thermos and check the chick. On a couple of occasions it is panting - a sign of overheating. However this is easily fixed by exposing the open thermos to a gentle breeze coming up the hill.

Woodstock is reached after 20 minutes of careful scrambling. A long wait is ahead. Nancy is very dedicated and broods her chick for long periods in between regular feeds by her partner Aztec. During the breeding season the role of a male Echo is to care for the female during the incubation and brooding period. So he comes in every two to five hours and, depending on the pair, will either call the female off the nest and feed her in a nearby tree or, in some cases, feed the female inside the cavity. As the chicks grow, the demand for food increases and both the male and female forage and feed the chicks.

Weighed daily

Kaya is fed three times during the wait for Nancy to exit the cavity. The brooder is holding a constant temperature, and humidity is kept high with a dampened foam insert. At the two-hour mark Gareth leaves to climb back up to Parakeet trail and go to check the chick at the UEA cavity. Until they are 10 days old all chicks are weighed daily and their weights plotted on a graph with maximum, minimum, average and 20% below average weight



Kaya about to be placed in the portable brooder.

lines on it. If a chick is not gaining much weight and the line veers towards or below the 20% line the team will consider removing the bird. Chicks that are on a definite "downward trend" don't recover in the nest and need the specialist care offered by the hand-raising team.

After ten days most chicks are weighed every second day until they reach 150g, when visits are reduced to three times per week. Sometimes their weights will decline even when they are much more than ten days old. In these situations they are checked daily until a definite trend is obvious.

Got to stay awake!

Finally after more than four hours of watching the cavity entrance (which is 10m above the ground), reading and struggling to stay awake (thanks to the early start!), Jason hears the sound he's been waiting for. It's Aztec doing his typical awesome, downward spiral from high up the South Scarp. His wings are semi-folded and he's gliding at a terrific speed, making a single "wack.....wack....wack..." call as he descends. Wings are flared at the last possible moment for a perfect landing in the nearby call tree. A brilliant display of flying skills and one of the many moments that makes the job so enjoyable!

Aztec only has to call twice before Nancy flies out to meet him; she (and her chick) must be hungry! They fly to a nearby tree where Aztec feeds and preens her. While all this happens Jason has carefully placed Kaya in a rigid container, inside his nest kit bag. To reach the cavity he climbs a 10m wire caving ladder (which has aluminium rungs). A climbing harness is worn and at the top Jason clips his karabiner to a webbing sling, which is attached to a rung of the ladder. Now he can safely let go and hang, suspended with hands free. This cavity has a separate access hatch that was

cut in the side of the tree with a chainsaw. By removing the wooden block, the brood can be reached easily. The first job is to remove the chick called Elvis, placing him in a bucket slung around Jason's neck. The wood shavings in the cavity are removed and replaced with fresh ones that have been treated with a fungicide and an insecticide. In the past Echo chicks have died from Aspergillosis caused by inhaling fungi spores, and from nest fly infestations. The larvae of these flies feed on blood in the bird's nostrils. Treated shavings significantly reduce the likelihood of such problems occurring.

Both chicks are weighed and given a quick health check before being placed in the cavity. The whole process takes 15 minutes, before Jason descends the ladder to again wait. Nancy flies straight into the cavity just a few minutes later. Jason only has a wait of about an hour before Aztec returns. Nancy exits again without hesitation. Jason climbs up and checks the chicks. Both have bulging full crops, meaning of course that Kaya has been accepted!

It's with a satisfied feeling of lightness that Jason makes the steep ascent back to the Parakeet trail. A successful mission like today's puts one on a natural high! Jason meets Gareth near the top of South Scarp. He has had success at UEA; Maya is a very good weight for her age and looking very healthy. As they cruise up the track the guys reflect on what has been a long but very successful day. They arrive back at Plaine Lievre at 7pm, in time to share a celebratory gin and tonic (an Echo team tradition!) with the rest of the team, before sitting down to an excellent camp cooked meal!

Huge population increase

In the past two breeding seasons the Echo population has increased by about eighty birds! About half of these birds have fledged in the wild and the rest have been released to the wild. The programme is fully evolved now, with the three facets of management (managing wild nests, captive breeding and handraising) refined almost as much as they can be. At the end of the 2002/2003 season there were an estimated 170 birds in the wild, and a further 21 birds in the captive population at the GDEWS in Mauritius. Based on current population growth we estimate there are only four or five more seasons of intensive management left before we can reduce the management to a less intensive level. At that stage the population should be semi self-sustaining (ie, will still need managing to a degree). The Echo programme relies on outside help for sponsorship or donations. Anyone interested in helping contribute to funding the programme or donating equipment should contact WPT at the usual address.



Indonesia ends exports of wild-caught birds

Text and Photos By ROSEK NURSAHID, ProFauna Indonesia

More than 15,000 parrots are trapped from North Maluku every year. This number is based on a thorough investigation on the parrot trade in Indonesia carried out by ProFauna Indonesia in 2001.

The surveyed areas included North Maluku, Papua, Sumba, Java, Bali and Singapore. Most of the birds caught in North Maluku and Papua are then transported to Java. Monitoring by ProFauna at the five biggest bird markets in Java shows that 47% of traded parrots are listed as protected species. Based on Indonesia Law No. 5/1990, the trade in protected species is prohibited and faces penalty of 5 years jailed and fines of 100 million rupiahs (US\$10,000/ £6,000). Although they have been protected, there are still many endangered parrots traded freely and openly in bird markets such as Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger atterimus*), Moluccan Cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*), Yellow-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*), and others. A Moluccan Cockatoo was offered at 500,000-1,000,000 rupiahs (US\$100 / £60) at Pramuka Bird Market Jakarta. In 2001, the parrot trapping exceeded the trapping quota issued by PHKA (Forest Protection and Nature Conservation) of Forestry Department Republic of Indonesia. For instance, there was no trapping quota at all for white cockatoo in 2001; in fact, ProFauna investigation result shows that more than 364 of the white Cockatoos are trapped in North Maluku to be sent to animal exporters in Jakarta. Some of the exporters are Hasco, CV (Ltd.) Rahmat and CV Arus Fauna.

As close readers of *PsittaScene* are well aware, our efforts to end the trade in wild-caught birds take many forms. These efforts include everything from educating bird owners in range states so that their birds can live a long and healthy life, to encouraging the EU to end the barbaric process of taking these animals from the wild. As we reported in the Nov 2002 *PsittaScene*, we've had recent good news from CITES on how and whether certain threatened parrots can be traded internationally. Those decisions alone will save the lives of thousands of wild parrots. On a national level, countries make decisions about whether to export or import wild-caught birds, and indeed, the following story by Rosek Nursahid of ProFauna Indonesia represents a major accomplishment on behalf of the parrots. That is, despite being one of the world's major exporters of wild-caught parrots, the Indonesian government - with significant prodding and encouragement from Rosek and his colleagues - has reduced their export quotas for wild-caught birds to ZERO. We are extremely pleased with this result and are proud to have been able to support ProFauna on their efforts to educate the Indonesian people about the plight of their unique birds. There will undoubtedly be additional work to be done to address issues like domestic trade in wild-caught parrots within Indonesia and also to confront the potential to export wild-caught birds by calling them "captive-bred," but the fact that the Indonesian government has been willing to take such a pro-parrot stand, we find extremely encouraging.

Campaigning with celebrities

After launching the report "*Flying Without Wings*" which contains the results of ProFauna's investigation into the Indonesian parrot trade, ProFauna is now conducting a series of campaigns to protect parrots in Indonesia. We have distributed posters, brochures, and VCD (Video Compact Disk) to school students and villagers. The brochure is funded by World Parrot Trust, while the VCD is funded by RSPCA (*Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*). To encourage and stimulate youth to protect parrots, on this campaign we have enlisted the help of several Indonesian celebrities. We are excited to report that celebrities such as SLANK, Cokelat Band, and Laluna Band have responded positively to our requests. ProFauna Indonesia then made posters and brochures containing SLANK's statement about parrot protection.



SLANK is 19 years old and the most famous Indonesian rock n' roll band among Indonesian youth. The posters were distributed to schools, universities, NGOs, villagers and the general public. Some fans of the groups were also visiting ProFauna Indonesia Office and asking for further information about the campaign on Indonesian parrot protection. Beforehand ProFauna Indonesia conducted a campaign



ProFauna Indonesia with the aid of these two huge balloons funded by Gibbon Foundation is promoting a massive internal campaign in seven Indonesian cities.



Around 100 villagers, of which 35% are known parrot trappers, crowded next to each other in the house of head of Kosa sub-village to see 'Flying without wings' film.



tour in seven big cities in Java and Bali. During the successful campaign ProFauna members took two giant balloons resembling parrots. At the crowded centre, the members distributed brochures containing parrot protection messages. The campaign tour attracted the media's interest. More than 40 media including a national TV station published the program.

Dialogue with House of Representatives

ProFauna Indonesia considers the public awareness program a vital activity for villagers living in areas near parrot trapping locations. A campaign in these regions was launched by conducting dialogue, on the 14th November 2002, with the House of Representatives, which in Indonesia is called Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD) North Maluku Region. The first dialogue involving five members of ProFauna was not only joined by DPRD members but also by other official government Institutions, such as from Forestry Department and its local office, Tourism Department and other NGOs. On the 28th November 2002, the members of ProFauna again held discussions with DPRD, this time was with DPRD of North Maluku Province. They ran smoothly and achieved positive results. DPRD and also other local governments support ProFauna's recommendation to stop parrot trapping in North Maluku. The government even indicated that they will withdraw the permit of bird suppliers in Ternate-North Maluku. The members of the House of Representatives and the local government agree that protecting parrots in their own habitat will bring long-term benefits especially on the tourism side.

Education for school students

The members of ProFauna Indonesia in Ternate North Maluku also conducted a campaign with school students as the target.

On 12th December 2002, they gathered SMU and SMP (Senior and Junior School) students. Around 450 students were shown the film of "Flying Without Wings" showing the ProFauna's investigation results on parrot trade in Indonesia. The film show got a very warm welcome from the students. They followed the session with questions and answers to a variety of issues. "ProFauna must not be afraid of members of TNI (Indonesian Army) who usually transport Maluku's endemic bird to Java", stated one of the students who felt so furious with the TNI involvement that often takes 'souvenirs' of Maluku's bird after performing duty in North Maluku.

Awareness programme for villagers

During December 2002, the members of ProFauna Indonesia conducted awareness programmes to villagers in five districts in North Maluku Province, they were Obi, Bacan, Oba Selatan, Wasilei and Jailolo Selatan. The distance between each district is very far so they must travel by ship from one island to another. The ship rolls with the great waves of the ocean connecting the islands in North Maluku and made anyone not accustomed to it seasick. One needs to be quite fit and have great stamina to conduct this awareness program! The awareness program was running well, especially when ProFauna showed the "Flying Without Wings" film. Around 100 villagers crowded next to each other in the house of the head of Kosa sub-village in South Oba District to join the film show. Around 35% of villagers of this sub-village are parrot trappers. Most of the trapped birds are sent to a bird supplier in Ternate city, who transports them to several bird exporters in Jakarta.

ProFauna Indonesia has been conducting campaigns continuously on parrot protection in Indonesia, and is also lobbying airlines to stop transporting parrots for commercial

| Parrot Exports Authorised by Indonesia 1997-2001 | Total Wild | Total Capt | Total Birds |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Moluccan King Parrot, <i>Alisterus amboinensis</i> | 196 | 285 | 481 |
| Papuan King Parrot, <i>Alisterus chloropterus</i> | 1,517 | 64 | 1,581 |
| <i>Aprosmictus</i> spp. | 0 | 30 | 30 |
| Red-winged Parrot, <i>Aprosmictus erythropterus</i> | 630 | 30 | 660 |
| Olive-shouldered Parrot, <i>Aprosmictus jonquillaceus</i> | 0 | 112 | 112 |
| Umbrella Cockatoo, <i>Cacatua alba</i> | 1,378 | 512 | 1,890 |
| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, <i>Cacatua galerita</i> | 0 | 99 | 99 |
| Eleonora Cockatoo, <i>Cacatua galerita eleonora</i> | 0 | 802 | 802 |
| Moluccan Cockatoo, <i>Cacatua moluccensis</i> | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Pink Cockatoo, <i>Cacatua leadbeateri</i> | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Little Corella, <i>Cacatua sanguinea</i> | 165 | 45 | 210 |
| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, <i>Cacatua sulphurea</i> | 0 | 369 | 369 |
| Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, <i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i> | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Black Lory, <i>Chalcopsitta atra</i> | 172 | 232 | 404 |
| Brown Lory, <i>Chalcopsitta duivenbodei</i> | 1,070 | 11 | 1,081 |
| Yellow-streaked Lory, <i>Chalcopsitta scintillata</i> | 1,384 | 93 | 1,477 |
| Josephine's Lorikeet, <i>Charmosyna josephinae</i> | 509 | 0 | 509 |
| Striated Lorikeet, <i>Charmosyna multistriata</i> | 160 | 0 | 160 |
| Papuan Lorikeet, <i>Charmosyna papou</i> | 1420 | 82 | 1,502 |
| Red-flanked Lorikeet, <i>Charmosyna placentalis</i> | 1,603 | 14 | 1,617 |
| Fairy Lorikeet, <i>Charmosyna pulchella</i> | 875 | 0 | 875 |
| <i>Cyanoramphus</i> spp. | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| <i>Cyclopsitta</i> spp. | 0 | 32 | 32 |
| Double-eyed Fig Parrot, <i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma</i> | 931 | 451 | 1,382 |
| Double-eyed Fig Parrot, <i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma coxeni</i> | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Orange-breasted Fig Parrot, <i>Cyclopsitta guillemittii</i> | 368 | 30 | 398 |
| <i>Eclectus</i> spp. | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Eclectus</i> , <i>Eclectus roratus</i> | 4 | 1,229 | 1,233 |
| Red Lory, <i>Eos semilarvata</i> | 4,347 | 309 | 4,656 |
| Blue-streaked Lory, <i>Eos reticulata</i> | 0 | 14 | 14 |
| Blue-eared Lory, <i>Eos semilarvata</i> | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Violet-necked Lory, <i>Eos squanata</i> | 1,144 | 88 | 1,232 |
| Red-cheeked Parrot, <i>Geoffroyus geoffroyi</i> | 501 | 24 | 525 |
| Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot, <i>Loriculus aurantiifrons</i> | 173 | 0 | 173 |
| Red-billed Hanging Parrot, <i>Loriculus exilis</i> | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot, <i>Loriculus galgulus</i> | 1,592 | 0 | 1,592 |
| Yellow-throated Hanging Parrot, <i>Loriculus pusillus</i> | 361 | 10 | 371 |
| Sulawesi Hanging Parrot, <i>Loriculus stigmatus</i> | 923 | 95 | 1,018 |
| Purple-naped Lory, <i>Lorius domicella</i> | 0 | 46 | 46 |
| Chattering Lory, <i>Lorius garuloides</i> | 656 | 664 | 1,320 |
| Black-capped Lory, <i>Lorius lory</i> | 0 | 672 | 672 |
| Yellow-billed Lorikeet, <i>Neopsittacus musschenbroekii</i> | 988 | 0 | 988 |
| Plum-faced Lorikeet, <i>Oreopsittacus arfaki</i> | 1,026 | 0 | 1,026 |
| Rosella, <i>Platyercus</i> spp. | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Buru Racquet-tail, <i>Prioniturus mada</i> | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Golden-mantled Racquet-tail, <i>Prioniturus platurus</i> | 510 | 41 | 551 |
| Dusky Lory, <i>Pseudeos fuscata</i> | 1,733 | 85 | 1,818 |
| Red-breasted Parakeet, <i>Psittacula alexandri</i> | 1,377 | 156 | 1,533 |
| Long-tailed Parakeet, <i>Psittacula longicauda</i> | 849 | 0 | 849 |
| Large Fig Parrot, <i>Psittaculirostris desmarestii</i> | 707 | 656 | 1,363 |
| Edwards's Fig Parrot, <i>Psittaculirostris edwardsii</i> | 0 | 133 | 133 |
| Salvadori's Fig Parrot, <i>Psittaculirostris salvadorii</i> | 144 | 189 | 333 |
| Goldie's Lorikeet, <i>Psittoteles goldiei</i> | 0 | 26 | 26 |
| Pesquet's Parrot, <i>Psittichas fulgidus</i> | 0 | 47 | 47 |
| Blue-naped Parrot, <i>Tanygnathus lucionensis</i> | 82 | 0 | 82 |
| Great-billed Parrot, <i>Tanygnathus megalorhynchus</i> | 0 | 77 | 77 |
| Blue-backed Parrot, <i>Tanygnathus sumatranus</i> | 0 | 33 | 33 |
| Yellow-and-green Lorikeet, <i>Trichoglossus flavoviridis</i> | 492 | 16 | 508 |
| Rainbow Lorikeet, <i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i> * cover | 5,902 | 387 | 6,289 |
| Ornate Lorikeet, <i>Trichoglossus ornatus</i> | 0 | 52 | 52 |
| | 35,901 | 8,385 | 44,286 |

CITES trade statistics derived from the UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database, UNEP - World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK

purpose. In addition, ProFauna Indonesia actively encourages the rangers of Forestry Department to conduct confiscation programmes to stop illegal trade of protected parrots. Many of the protected parrots are confiscated, but it ends up with the problem of finding a place for the confiscated birds. In fact, there are no rehabilitation centres for parrots in Indonesia.

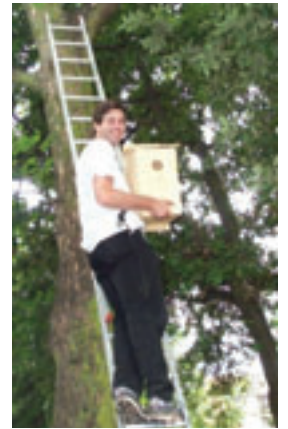
Government pledges to stop parrot export

ProFauna Indonesia also encourages the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation of Forestry Department asking the government to stop trapping and prohibit the export of parrots taken directly from the wild. On the dialogue with ProFauna Indonesia, Mr Adi Susminato from PHKA stated that he agreed with ProFauna's recommendation. The Indonesian Government has pledged to prohibit export of parrots taken directly from the wild and to prohibit also the trapping of parrots in the wild.

Rose-ringed Parakeets in the UK

By CHRIS BUTLER

During autumn 2000, I began a Ph.D on the population biology of Rose-ringed Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) in the UK. When I began my doctoral study, very little had been published on the biology of this species in Great Britain. It was known that they began breeding in 1969 at Southfleet, Kent and that the population slowly grew to 500 individuals by 1983 when it was accepted by the British Ornithologists' Union as an established exotic species. A survey of their roosts in 1996 found that the population had continued to increase to 1,500 individuals. A small paper on Rose-ringed Parakeet breeding biology was also published, suggesting that they had low reproductive success and could only fledge 0.8 young per nest in the UK. Finally, there have been a couple of papers published demonstrating that the UK birds are a mixture of the two Indian races, *P. k. manillensis* (from southern India and Sri Lanka) and *P. k. borealis* (from northern India and Nepal).

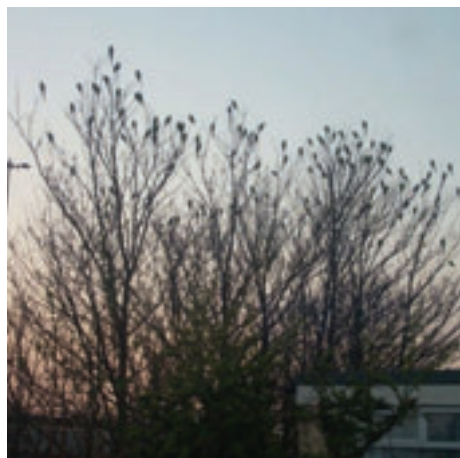


Chris Butler.

Rose-ringed Parakeets are serious crop pests on the Indian subcontinent, and there is concern that if the population continues to increase they could become a crop pest in the UK as well. In addition, they begin breeding in early March, considerably earlier than native cavity nesters, and so could potentially outcompete native species for cavities. Consequently, I thought that it would be worthwhile to further explore their biology to see if the population would continue to increase and if they might have a detrimental effect on native species and/or crops.

As I began my research, I decided that the first thing to do was to map out the distribution of Rose-ringed Parakeets in the UK. I posted a request for sightings on some local email lists, and received a number of responses. A reporter for *The Evening Standard* contacted me and offered to do a story about the parakeets, requesting that people send their sightings to me. I agreed, not knowing that this was a major newspaper in the UK. On the evening that the article was run, I was overwhelmed with phone calls and had to rush out and buy an answering machine for my office. When I came back the next day, I discovered that the cassette tape had been completely filled!

Putting together the sightings that people submitted to me, coupled with the reports from County Bird Recorders, I soon



Parakeets at a regular roosting spot.

concluded that the range of the Rose-ringed Parakeets was considerably larger than had previously been reported. Not only were they present in the Greater London area, but also they had spread out into the surrounding countryside and were breeding only 8 miles from Oxfordshire. In addition, there was a significant population at the Isle of Thanet (Kent), as well as a small population in Brighton (Sussex) and Studland (Dorset).

The roost at Esher

The next phase was to start counting the parakeets. I visited the most well known roost (at Esher Rugby Club in the Greater London area) and discovered that the population had increased considerably since 1996. There were approximately 3,000 parakeets at this one roost alone during the winter of 2000-01! Altogether, the total population during the late autumn and winter of 2000 contained 4,500 birds - three times the number that had been present in 1996. The population seemed to be increasing at a rate of about 25% per year. This was borne out in following years - there were 6,000 birds in autumn and winter of 2001 and 7,500+ birds by 2002 (see Figure 1).

So what was driving this exponential increase? During 2001-02, I monitored 70 nests of Rose-ringed Parakeets in the Greater London area, the Isle of Thanet (Kent), and Studland (Dorset). Breeding success over this period was considerably higher than had been previously reported; the parakeets fledged an average of 1.6 ± 0.3 young per nest. This reproductive rate is similar to that reported in India and Pakistan.

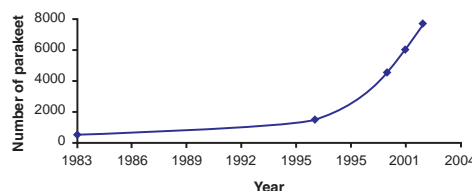


Figure 1: The number of Rose-ringed Parakeets in the UK from 1983 to 2002.

Coupled with their long lifespan (up to 34 years in captivity) and the lack of predators (neither Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*) nor Eurasian Hobbies (*Falco subbuteo*) have been able to catch these parakeets, although they have been observed trying), this reproductive rate seems to ensure that Rose-ringed Parakeets will continue to increase in the near future. However, some populations are increasing more rapidly than others. While the Greater London population is rapidly increasing, the isolated population at the Isle of Thanet (Kent) is increasing more slowly. In 1996, there were 299 parakeets counted at the roost in Ramsgate (on the Isle of Thanet). By the winter of 2001-02, this population had increased to 540 birds. This population is growing at a rate of only about 13% per year, compared to the Greater London population, which is growing at double that rate.

One possible reason for this may be that some of the chicks are being illegally harvested each year. When I began my study on this species, I was rather surprised to see that several trees on the Isle of Thanet had notches cut into them. When I talked to the Parks Manager, he confirmed that these notches had been cut into parakeet nests in order to remove the nestlings, but that the police had never caught the person(s) responsible. It was a



A Parakeet nest that has had notches cut into it to create easy access for the poachers who steal the nestlings.



Parakeets could potentially cause problems for native cavity-nesting species like the Green Woodpecker.

bit startling to discover that nest robbing occurs not only in tropical countries but also in England!

Despite this, both the populations at the Isle of Thanet (Kent) and the Greater London area are continuing to grow. In theory, they could potentially cause problems for native cavity-nesting species, including Common Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*), European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Stock Doves (*Columba oenas*), Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*), and Green Woodpeckers (*Picus viridis*) (which typically reuse 20% of their old nest cavities). However, parakeets are still too few in number to track changes in their population using the Breeding Bird Surveys according to the British Trust for Ornithology. This means that any observed variations in the aforementioned species populations cannot be due to the increase in the parakeet population.

Potential for negative impact

As the population continues to grow, there is certainly the potential for the parakeets to have a negative impact on native cavity-nesting species. However, I suspect that their impact will be minimal, as Rose-



A chick temporarily removed from the nest for observations.



The female adult does not have the colourful rings around its neck.

ringed Parakeets actively defend only their nest cavity, rather than the entire tree. This means that you can have parakeets nesting only a couple feet away from a European Starling nest or a Jackdaw nest. In addition, each of the native species can use a type of nest cavity that Rose-ringed Parakeets are reluctant to use. Starlings will nest in buildings, for instance (which parakeets in the UK appear to avoid). Kestrels, Stock Doves and Jackdaws will all occupy cavities that are too large for parakeets to accept, and the majority of Green Woodpeckers excavate new nests each year.

In addition to their possible detrimental effects on native species, Rose-ringed Parakeets could also potentially become crop pests. There are hints that this may be a genuine cause for concern in the UK. *The Kingston Guardian* reported in October 2002 that parakeets had decimated a vineyard at Painshill Park (Surrey). Instead of their traditional 3,000 bottles of rosé wine, the staff at Painshill Park was able to produce only 500 bottles as the parakeets had eaten a large quantity of the grape crops.

But will they spread into the surrounding countryside? It is commonly supposed that these parakeets are dependent upon bird feeders in order to survive in the UK. However, that may not necessarily be the case. The birds in Brighton (Sussex) for example, supposedly survived for eight years in the wild before they learned to use bird feeders. When parakeets moved into the Upper Norwood Grove area of Greater London, it took them nearly 16 months before they learned to use bird feeders. It appears therefore, that while bird feeders may be helpful, they may not necessarily be required in order for parakeets to survive. Indeed, parakeets are now frequently seen in rural areas of Berkshire and Surrey where bird feeders are relatively scarce.

In conclusion, it appears that Rose-ringed Parakeets will continue to increase in



The Parakeets actively defend only their nest cavity, rather than the entire tree.

numbers and expand their range in southern England. They have a reproductive rate similar to that in their native range, and they have no natural predators. Although they will frequent bird feeders, it does not appear that the bird feeders are necessary for them to survive in England's relatively mild climate.

The public like them!

It is likely that Rose-ringed Parakeets will cause further crop damage as they continue to increase. However, the general public seems to have an overall favourable impression of this introduced exotic. Approximately 8 out of 10 people who responded to the *The Evening Standard* said that they enjoyed seeing these bright green, tropical-looking birds in their local parks and gardens. Rose-ringed Parakeets are here to stay in the UK, and most people are delighted about it.

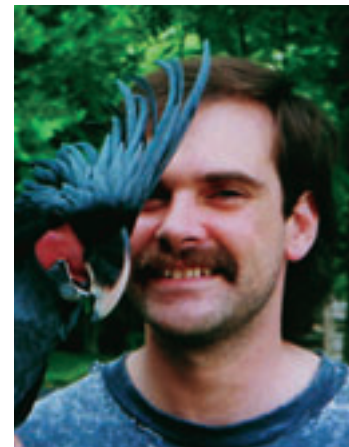


An adult male.

Golden Conure research will aid its survival

By GLENN REYNOLDS

We have long been concerned about this Brazilian species, which has suffered from tremendous loss of its rainforest habitat and being highly sought after for the illicit bird-trade; therefore, in May of 1999 we launched the WPT-USA 'Golden Conure Survival Fund'. We contacted Carlos Yamashita, Brazil's leading parrot biologist, who had previously conducted research into the Golden Conure and its needs. He indicated he was anxious to do more to help its preservation. We published a detailed proposal from Dr. Charles Munn III in the August 1999 *PsittaScene*.



Glenn Reynolds.

History

The Golden Conure (*Guaruba guarouba*) is also known as the Queen of Bavaria's Conure. Although it has been considered endangered since the mid 1940s it has never been formally studied as its range was considered to be so remote that it was out of harm's way. In the early 1970s construction began on the Tucuruí dam, which on completion flooded 888 square miles of rainforest. The dam evoked the construction of two major highways and a proliferation of human colonization around its borders. Along the TransAmazon highway the resettlement process consumed 100,675 hectares. Bordering another road that parallels the right side of the reservoir another 311,025 hectares were deforested for relocation of displaced forest colonists. Seventy one percent of the total deforestation occurring in Brazil since 1977 has taken place in the northeastern regions where the Golden Conures reside, all but 13% has occurred since 1988. It has resulted in a total loss of more than 37 million acres of rainforest.

The most obvious threat is dramatic deforestation. Prior to the construction of the Tucuruí dam, the wildlife in the lower Tocantins basin was considered to be among the richest and most diversified in the world. It was estimated that 294 species of indigenous birds were also displaced.

The resulting reservoir flooded 2,875 square kilometers of rainforest. Sixteen hundred islands were formed by existing hilltops once the area was flooded, which have all been heavily deforested.

Local people readily lease or sell their property to logging companies, who selectively log the land, and often completely clear it to the ground after logging by burning the remaining trees and brush. Selective logging destroys nesting trees or leaves them unprotected increasing the chances for trappers; furthermore, unprotected nesting trees are easily blown over during high winds. The areas are burned to 'clean' the land for planting. The



The Golden Conure: famed among aviculturists for its beauty and personality. Photos By Rosemary Low

land that is naturally nutrient-deficient for planting is temporarily made nutrient-rich by the burning process, but it will only yield crops for a few years before again becoming deficient. The farmers are then forced back into the same destructive cycle of relocation and deforestation.

Only 5% of the land was properly cleared prior to the completion of the Tucuruí dam and the flooding of the reservoir. The decomposing of the rainforest below the water's surface has resulted in the release of methane gasses and carbon dioxide, which has spoiled the areas surrounding the reservoir. The quality of the water is almost unusable and has seeped into the ground water tainting wells for miles around. The water in the reservoir has an average turnaround of 51 days, while the Caraipe branch has a turnaround of seven years. The decomposition also resulted in the surface of the water being covered with aquatic macrophytes immediately after the initial flooding. Aquatic macrophytes are known as a primary medium for mosquitoes. The area has been so infested with mosquitoes for more than a decade that it has become mostly uninhabitable for humans or animals.

The town of Paragominas, at the heart of the region, is now surrounded by a devastated landscape. Over the past several years, two thirds of the town's lumber mills have ceased to operate, indicating an exhaustion of local wood sources. This means the forests that provide food for the local fauna are likely to be razed in the very near future. The rural social conditions spawned this boom-bust cycle of timber, presenting a further obstacle in the Golden Conure's struggle to survive.

Description

The Golden Conure is a rich yellow with dark green primary, secondary and outer coverts. The plumage of the adolescent is similar but with random streaks of dark green that are most often on the back of the head, the nape, and the chest but can be found most anywhere on a given individual.

Their call can be best described as a lengthy repetitive *keek, keek, keek, keek*. I would describe their captive personalities as a cross between a Hyacinth Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) and that of a Sun Conure (*Aratinga solstitialis*). They are very playful and clownish.



Grey-green streaking on the head is characteristic of immature birds.

Initial study period

A group of Golden Conures was recently encountered near a community of "sem-terras", landless peasants, who receive plots to farm through a controversial government



At nine months old their beauty is apparent.

agrarian reform program. Completely isolated and neglected, the hygienic conditions were so dreadful that malaria had permeated the community. It was simply good fortune that none of Yamashita's team contracted any grave illnesses. During the initial period of study, Carlos located 13 active nesting sites within a 90-kilometer radius of Paragominas, all of them in cleared areas at a maximum of 3 kilometers from intact rainforest patches. This doesn't mean that cleared areas are not able to sustain populations of Golden Conures; merely that many of the forest patches nearby have been selectively logged and therefore lack snags large enough to support the birds. As previously stated these snags in open areas are much more vulnerable to winds and often will topple, causing the birds to seek other suitable nesting sites and exposing the flocks to further dangers. In addition, the fact that these snags are not within the protective labyrinth of the forest, further facilitates the work of the local trappers.

Trapping

The local people have never been compensated for their loss of land other than mentioned above. They have never recovered financially or socially and are willing to do most anything to afford survival. Some of them have become parrot trappers to support their families.

Because poverty is rampant in this region it is understandable that poaching for the illicit bird trade is rampant too. Golden Conures bring a high price in the market and remain in high demand. Their bright colours make them easy to spot from miles away and follow, while their clanging behaviours make trapping numerous birds in one attempt almost certain.

The Golden Conure's future in the wild is at best precarious; it will require courageous and innovative conservation efforts to ensure that at least some clans are able to continue to live and prosper in their natural habitat.

Protecting nesting trees

Carlos has suggested the use of artificial nest boxes and paid guards to protect the known nesting sites from further trapping. Both suggestions are viable options and could be easily and affordably implemented in a short amount of time as compared to an eco-tourism camp.

Eco-tourism and land acquisitions

Eco-tourism is a conservation tool with proven effectiveness, when properly applied. In the case of the Golden Conures, its rarity and aesthetic beauty is appreciated by a wide range of serious bird watchers and nature enthusiasts. Indeed, despite the extensive destruction of primary forests, the secondary forest re-growth still harbours impressive bio-diversity. A mere 40 kilometers from Paragominas, and over a period of two hours, BioBrasil researcher, Richard Hartley, saw four types of parrots, including a group of five Golden Conures, a pair of Hawk-headed Parrots (*Derophtus accipitrinus*), pairs of Green-winged (*Ara chloroptera*) and Scarlet Macaws (*Ara macao*) as well as three King Vultures, all in a degraded forest patch.

There are a series of indigenous reserves within the region. While wood extraction is taking place in some areas, other tribes leave their forests intact. Carlos believes the best conservation strategy, therefore, would be to buy forested land that hosts some birds and abuts the reserves where wood extraction is absent or minimal. In theory this project will be modeled after the very successful eco-tourism site that BioBrasil has established to protect a large flock of Hyacinth Macaws in Piaui. On June 15, 1999 BioBrasil purchased 2,000 hectares (5,000 acres) of dry tropical rainforest to protect the Hyacinths. They were then able to later purchase another 2,000 hectares from profits. From May 1, 1999 through August 15, 1999 the BioBrasil preserve hosted numerous scientific researchers, photographers, and a TV crew from the Fox-Family Channel. The gross receipts from this camp were about \$14,000 of which half were profit.

This same strategy should work with the Golden Conure in areas identified as feasible and purchased by WPT and BioBrasil Foundation. The most viable sites for tourism-financed protection of Golden Conure nests would be those that can be reached easily by conventional road or river transport from airports. In practice, Belem and Santarem are probably the two cities most likely to serve as jetports for visitors who wish to predictably see protected Golden Conures.

The initial objectives of this project were to search for and survey the species and locate



View inside an L-shaped nest-box.

roosting and nesting trees in the area of the Cupim River south of Belem. This search has pinpointed the best roost trees in accessible sites, which should allow BioBrasil to unlock earmarked funds that currently are restricted to two activities: One is habitat purchase around the nests of this species and two is implementation of an eco-tourism infrastructure. For each dollar that WPT contributes to the search for roost trees, BioBrasil should be able to access as many as 5-15 dollars of matching funds for purchase of forest tracts, and for the installation of permanent guards and a rustic eco-tourism site. The matching funds are rigidly restricted to forest purchases and protection of the purchased habitat and cannot be used for the initial research. To unlock this funding, the nest tree search must be successful.

The potential for WPT support to unlock five to 15 times as much funding should make this project especially attractive, because it greatly increases the chances that the initial seed money will produce an ongoing, self-funding conservation effort for this amazing but unknown species.

Income from eco-tourism should eventually support year round protection of the mapped out nesting and roosting sites.

Range and wild population

Golden Conures are distributed in pockets strewn across northeastern Brazil, south of the Amazon River, in eastern Pará and northern Maranhão to the western edge of Tapajós. Their range has been reduced by as much as 30% in the past two to three decades. Although our field project has not yet included a comprehensive population survey, Carlos has estimated as few as 2,000 birds left in the wild, and cautions that their numbers will most certainly not exceed 3,000.

The range of Golden Conures extends far westward into the Amazon basin reaching all the way to the right bank of the Madeira

Rio in Amazonas state; the bird reaches as far east as the Gurupi in Maranhão state. It is found in much higher density (almost ten times) within the confines of the current study area. This coincides almost directly with the heaviest deforestation zones.

Diet of wild birds

In our current research area the most predominately eaten substance by Golden Conures is the seed of the *Croton matouensis*, which is in the castor bean family. The fruit is similar in size and appearance to a green blueberry, and contains three or four seeds. These seeds are commonly eaten by all of the larger parrots in the region. The outer fruit is tough and requires a strong beak to tear it open and get to the seeds. This tree is in abundance and is not one usually cut for its wood; therefore, food sources are not a real concern in this particular area. Carlos states that a flock of Golden Conures will stay at one tree until all of the fruit is gone, which takes about three days.

In Tapajós Gil Serique reports them feeding on Muruci fruit (*Byrsonima crispera*), a berry-like fruit very much appreciated by humans. He has also observed Golden Conures feeding at Mango trees, which are



Golden Conures at Paradise Park receive a varied diet.

widespread in Brazil. Açai (pronounced assai), an Indian name meaning “weeping tree” is also in their main diet list, and he describes them just like the Muruci, but it belongs to the palm genus *Euterpe*. This plant species has been heavily exploited for palm heart and for the last 10 years for its iron-rich fruit-pulp as well, which is heavily sold all over Brazil. Eating these palm hearts has become a fad over the last 2 years. It is exploited by the communities in the estuary area, and the seeds are commonly used as fertilizer in vegetables crops.

Breeding behaviour of Golden Conures

Carlos has stated that wild Golden Conures are very nervous around the nesting tree particularly when the size of the family clan is larger than seven to nine birds. He notes a great deal of aggression between the older birds, which may indicate that this is the time that the older birds may leave the family to form their own clan. He noted that there are a lot of broken eggs in the nesting cavities and suggests that it may be beneficial for captive breeders to pass their eggs off to other similar species with better nesting habits, if possible.

DNA results

The first phase of our study, which was based out of Paragominas, Pará, was to try to locate active, productive nesting sites and observe them biologically. Furthermore, we wanted to analyze blood samples to determine the degree of relatedness among members of clans (small multi-generational flocks of related birds) identified in specific sites and then to determine the relatedness from clan to clan. In the first six months of the study Carlos located thirteen active sites.

The last time that I had corresponded with Carlos, he had trapped 22 adult birds for sampling. There is no question that we need to trap and sample many more. So far the DNA tests are revealing that the birds within a clan are almost all of one multigenerational family, and that most of the birds trapped from various clans are very closely related. Carlos has stated that the degree of relatedness is much closer than what would usually be expected in a geographically dispersed group such as the one that he has tested. This could indicate real trouble for this species if action is not

taken immediately. Interestingly, he is also finding what seems to be an unrelated young female “helper” within the family clan.

The results of the genetic testing, so far, suggest that all of the birds within a given group are closely related with the exception of a young unrelated female. This completely changes the way that aviculturists should be looking at Golden Conures. What was previously misconstrued as flock-breeding behaviours in wild Golden Conures was falsely interpreted. These are not flocks of unrelated birds producing concurrent clutches of offspring in a common area. These are multigenerational family clans of related birds, which share a nesting cavity, the duties of protecting the nest, and possibly assisting in the raising of subsequent clutches of young from the adult pair. Nesting cavities are being found that are twelve to eighteen inches in diameter and as deep as fifteen feet.

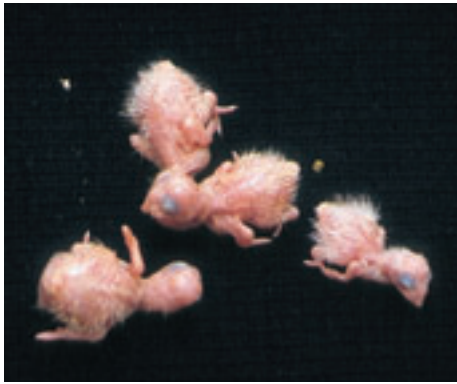
Captive breeding

I have surveyed several large Golden Conure breeders from around the world and have found that the average age for first successful breeding in captivity is between six to eight years. This seems to be a much more reasonable age to expect captive Golden Conures to breed, than the two to three years that so many breeders in the US claim, when trying to sell their offspring.

Our research into this region of Brazil has uncovered a dramatic decline in primary rainforests, which has affected hundreds of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish. To help the Golden Conures, which we have chosen as the flagship species for this area, is to help all of these species affected. Furthermore, helping the Golden Conures may boost the economy in this area, which in turn may reduce the incidence of birds poached for the illicit bird trade and the destruction of rainforests.

Traditionally the best-known way to keep track of a captive population is through a studbook. There is a Golden Conure Studbook in existence, but it has not been published since January 1998. This most recent issue of the studbook lists 804 Golden Conures in captivity worldwide, with some facilities housing as many as 50 individuals. As a general rule I would consider there to be at least one bird not listed for every one that is; therefore, the captive population could easily be as many as 1,600 birds.

Golden Conures seem to be prolific once they get started breeding. On average they lay four eggs and as many as three consecutive clutches per year. My pair produced their first clutch at the age of four. They laid three consecutive clutches



A brood of recently hatched chicks.

of six eggs, but none were fertile. I find them to be very nervous and protective of the nest even though they were domestically raised and are very familiar with me. In my observations the female will avoid eating and drinking, if necessary, in order to protect her eggs. They will bolt into the nest box, when I enter the room. Because of this they tend to crack or break eggs. I found that my pair broke all of the eggs in their first few clutches. I used an egg from the third clutch to make a plaster mould and subsequently produce fired ceramic eggs. Moreover, I designed a nest-box that would prevent them from jumping directly on the eggs.

Wild Golden Conures use much deeper nesting cavities, but this size box seems to work well with my pair.

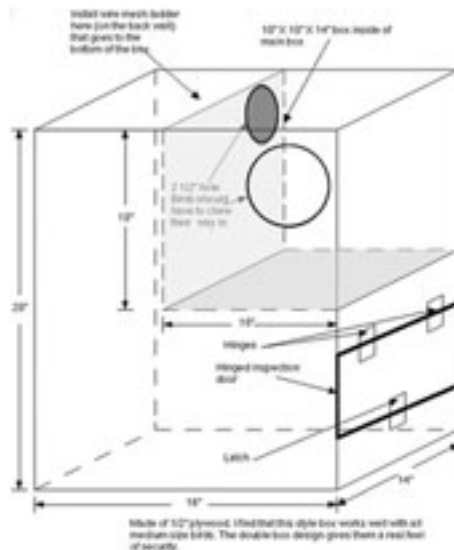
I replaced their next few clutches with ceramic eggs. The following year they sat their eggs without breaking any. I have noticed a visible loss of weight in the female while she is incubating.

Carlos suggests that captive breeding of

Golden Conures may prove to be more fruitful if adolescent birds are left with the adults for several years to simulate these instinctive behaviours. It might prove beneficial to try and simulate this behaviour after the first few years by adding a young unrelated female.

How you can help

Dr. Charles Munn III has predicted that it may take as much as \$15,000 to \$20,000 (£9,000-£12,000) per year for the next several years to save this species and its natural habitat. So far we are doing well, but we will need continued support from groups and individuals. BioBrasil is interested in eco-tourism in this area. The money that we put into the mapping of nesting trees stands a good chance of unlocking matching BioBrasil funds; therefore, any amount large or small will be very helpful.



Speak with your local bird club

If you would like to help and can't do so as an individual; speak with your local bird club. If your club contributes to conservation projects put the WPT-USA Golden Conure Survival Fund on the list for their next contribution.

Purchase T-shirts

The Golden Conure T-shirt has been a big seller and has resulted in quite a bit of income for our fund. Purchasing a T-shirt is a way that you can help with only a small investment.

Purchase a print

'Golden Conures' by the world-renowned wildlife artist, Grant Hacking, has become the icon of the WPT-USA Golden Conure Survival fund. His giclee prints on canvas are spectacular. We have been offering prints for over a year now, which have provided a steady flow of income for our fund. We have plenty of prints left and have just released 20 enhanced artist's proofs. All proceeds from the prints and the artist's proofs go directly to the fund.

You may order Golden Conure merchandise or make donations to:

World Parrot Trust-USA, P.O. Box 353, Stillwater, MN 55082, Phone (1) 651-275-1877, Fax (1) 651-275-1891

World Parrot Trust-UK, Glanmor House, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4HB, Phone (44) 01736 751026, Fax (44) 01736 751028 www.worldparrottrust.org



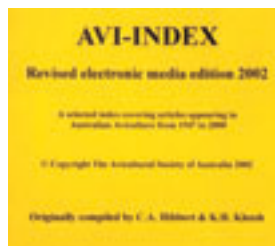
Reviews:

Australian Avi-Index on CD-ROM

Australian Aviculture is a monthly magazine with, not surprisingly, the emphasis on Australian species. Throughout the period of more than 50 years since publication commenced in 1947, countless interesting articles on Australian parrots have been published. These could now be at your fingertips even although you have never seen a copy of the magazine. Last year a CD-ROM was made indexing all the articles published.

The Index is in the form of 36 chapters such as Aviaries, Breeding results, Diseases and Equipment. Each chapter has six headings: Subject, Article, Author, Issue and Page. The sixth column is for ordering a photocopy of the article. An A4 sheet (two pages of the magazine) costs 20 cents, plus AUD\$2 for airmail postage.

Although other magazines have issued an index, I believe that this is the first avicultural magazine to do so in the form of a CD-ROM. It will prove invaluable to aviculturists and researchers all over the world, and can be obtained from Ian Grant, 242 Civic Parade, Altona 3018, Victoria, Australia, price only AUD\$13 including airmail postage.



The Birdie Cookbook

Making nutritious foods enjoyable for our parrots was the aim of Ellen Gyberg when she published The Birdie Cookbook earlier this year. This 12-page booklet is full of interesting ideas for varying their diet in an enticing way. The recipes are quick and easy - and very American. For example, you can bake "Quick Birdie Bread" using a packet each of cornbread mix, squash (the vegetable, that is) and "Southwest mix" (frozen corn, beans and bell peppers). You simply mix the items together, pour the mixture into an 8in (20cm) square pan and bake for 25 minutes.

This little booklet also tells you how to bake sweet potato and pellet muffins, spaghetti for the birds, birdie French toast, oatmeal pellet treat, pasta salad - and more. You can also make a toy using pellets and Cheerio cereals.

The booklet starts with some information on feeding your pet bird and the dangers of an all-seed diet. It warns that grit is "actually toxic for birds and should never be offered" as it contains lead. I don't agree - and neither do the wild parrots in Australia, for example, that risk their lives to take grit from the roads. The popular myth that macaws live to 80 is repeated. The truth is that few have lived beyond 60 years. - RL

You can buy the cookbook (suggested price \$4) from Ellen Gyberg, 5116 Tehachapi Way, Antioch, Ca 95531, USA, or order it by e-mail at Birdiecookbook@hotmail.com.



The Dominica project

By LARS LEPPERHOFF, Switzerland

In April 2002 I had the opportunity to visit the Windward Island of Dominica in the Caribbean. This island of volcanic origin is unique in many respects. To parrot people it is very well known for its two endemic Amazon species, the Jaco or Red-necked Amazon (*Amazona arausiaca*) and the Sisserou or Imperial Amazon (*Amazona imperialis*).

It was possible for me to join the Dominica field team with Stephen Durand and his people and with Dr. Paul Reillo on their daily excursions into the unique habitat of these two rare Amazons. The Dominica project has been accompanied and supported by Dr. Paul Reillo, Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, for some years. He put me in touch with the Forestry and Wildlife Division at the Botanical Gardens of Roseau who finally gave me permission to join the field team. WPT Canada is strongly supporting the Dominica project. Dr. Reillo has already described this and Sandra Metzger from WPT Canada also wrote about it in previous "PsittaScene's". Therefore I will just give a few impressions.

I had wonderful opportunities to observe both species. Every morning we went by car from Roseau to Morne Diablotin in the north of the island. The vegetation suddenly changed when we drove up the mountain from the west coast where it was dryer and the plants had a more Mediterranean character. On Morne Diablotin in the habitat of the Amazons there was a unique primary forest with fern trees, huge trees like the Chatanier

(*Sloanea caribaea*) and Gommier (*Dacryodes excelsa*), both normally covered with epiphytic plants like orchids, Anthurium, Guzmania and Bromeliad, as well as epiphytic ferns. These enormous, incredibly impressive trees are used by both Amazons as nest trees. Sisserous prefer tree holes which are covered with epiphytes. I would never have been able to find the nests if the field team had not shown them to me. The Jacos usually lay two or three eggs and often raise two chicks. The Sisserou lay only one egg which is unique in the Amazon family.

Unlike the Jaco, the Sisserou never accepts human civilisation. They live only in untouched remote rainforests. Jacos like to feed in plantations and they even nest in high trees between the plantations. Nowadays the farmers protect the birds despite the fact that they destroy their fruits. The people of Dominica are proud of their Amazons. My first observations were of several Jacos at the Picard River Gorge from the Syndicate Trail, foraging in shrubs and tree tops. There were also two pairs of Imperial Amazons; the small branches bent when the heavy Amazons climbed along them to get seeds or fruits.

We spent many hours in the most exciting forest observing nests to record activity. In April 2002 it seemed that the rainy season was still going on and the breeding season was delayed. There was



Lars Lepperhoff

little activity. The field team (Stephen Durand, Randolph Winston and Matthew Maximea) have been working for many years (in 1981 they started to count the birds) in the forest recording breeding and behaviour details and counting parrots. More recently they were joined by Paul Reillo. It is easy to write about research in the Dominican forest but it is most difficult to work in the field. I have a great admiration for all the forest officers; they are so dedicated and work so hard under difficult conditions. Sometimes you have to climb nearly horizontally holding on to branches and tree trunks but in higher elevations fern tree trunks get thorny...

At the Botanical Gardens in the capital town Roseau are the headquarters of the Forestry and Wildlife Division. The director is Mr. David Williams. Thirty percent of Dominica is protected in national parks. This is a tremendous area. Many very well educated forestry officers are surveying the parks and caring for the Dominican wildlife. There is a parrot conservation centre at the Botanical Gardens with a pair of Imperial Amazons and several pairs of Jacos. It is most important that Dominicans



The Imperial Amazon is called Sisserou in Dominica.



Sisserous in the wild live in remote tropical rainforest valleys such as the Picard River Gorge.



Epiphytic plants like Bromeliad, Ferns and Anthurium are particularly important for Sisserous.

can see these birds (the Imperial is the national bird which is also on the flag) in the very well maintained aviaries. The Rare Species Conservatory Foundation is paying for the improvements of the aviaries and for all the food. Mr. Lenis Bruno is the keeper. He is working every day there and the aviaries and the birds are in good condition.

The populations of the Jacos and Sisserous were very low after 1979 when hurricane David occurred. There were only 20 to 50 Sisserous left. Today it is assumed that there are 150 to 200 Sisserou and probably again about 800 Jacos. It was only possible because of the most effective project which is laid down into the government of Dominica. Only because of this fact it is possible to have a long-term project. In this way it does not die when an organisation stops supporting it. It is not something initiated by a foreign organisation, it is the project of the island of Dominica. This



The aviary in the Botanical Garden of Roseau.

should be how projects are arranged and supported. It is very rare that someone like Dr. Paul Reillo supports a project consistently for so many years. The main aims are to survey the populations and the protected land. According to all these observations it was possible to buy land from private owners, land which is of great importance for the Amazon species. It is possible for the birds to move from the Morne Diablotin to the Morne Trois Pitons national park in the south through mountaneous rainforest. Both Amazons disappeared from Morne Trois Pitons after the hurricane but the Jacos took over quite quickly afterwards. For the Sisserou it was 20 years before forestry officers saw Sisserous again in this area! A further important aim is also to educate people about Dominica's nature.

On Dominica you can find the only untouched Carribean rainforest of the whole region, with many endemic plant and

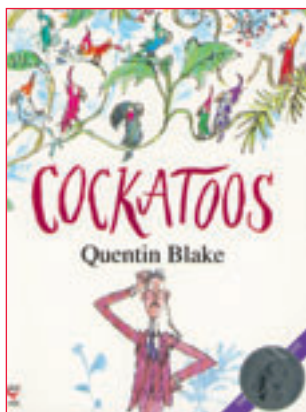


Jaco or Red-necked Amazon in the aviary of the Botanical Garden.

animal species. You can drink the water out of rivers and from the tap. There is no environment pollution. On my journeys around the island I asked different people like bus drivers, farmers about their parrots. All of them knew them very well and were pleased to speak about them. I felt that they had a personal interest to protect them.

Two pairs bred

According to Dr. Paul Reillo the year 2002 finally ended quite well. For example the field team could observe two pairs of Sisserous rearing youngsters. Further nesting activities could be observed on Morne Diablotin later on in the year. Dr. Reillo is optimistic for the breeding season 2003 because of the good state of the forest and of the breeding trees.



Children's T-shirt for Sale

The celebrated author, illustrator and friend to the parrots Quentin Blake has kindly allowed the front cover of his hilarious book 'Cockatoos' to be printed on a T-shirt and sold in aid of the World Parrot Trust.

They are available in sizes: Extra Small (36cm x 45.5cm); Small (39cm x 49.5cm); Medium

(42cm x 53.5cm); L (45cm x 56.5cm) and XL (47cm x 60.5cm) at a price of £9.99 incl. postage and packing. A few copies of the signed childrens book may also be available for a donation towards the Palm Cockatoo fund (while stocks last).

To place an order please call 01736 751026 or visit our website www.worldparrottrust.org



Reports from European Representatives

Switzerland Lars Lepperhoff

The Swiss WPT-branch has existed since 1995. It is well integrated in the Swiss avicultural society Exotis which is the main organisation for parrot people in Switzerland. In every Exotis-magazine "Gefiederter Freund" one or two pages are reserved for WPT news, sometimes with articles about WPT projects. This encourages people to become members.



An example of an indoor aviary.

Recent highlights include a donation of Fr.1100 - from a school class which wanted to help parrots in the wild. They were particularly impressed with the Dominica project. The children, aged 9, became interested in parrots through their teacher Miss Daria Nold, who keeps a Maximilians Parrot (*Pionus maximiliani*) named Mäxi. She takes the lucky bird to school every day. The parrot flies freely in the class room and visits the children. He even gnaws on the exercise books and sheets of paper!

Daria Nold reports that it was amazing how fascinated the children were by parrots and how excited they were to learn about them. Some children were

finally able to identify about 50 parrots without a mistake! The children were very concerned about the plight of many parrots. Therefore they started to make and to paint cards which they sold. They also created a parrot theatre and sold cakes. These activities went on during 5 months. The children never lost their enthusiasm so Daria Nold never had to motivate them. WPT Switzerland appreciates this donation very highly.

We are lucky to have a good conservation minded aviary builder in Switzerland. Mr. Rolf Senn builds spacious made-to-measure indoor aviaries. To own an aviary is not only a privilege for people who own a garden; it is also possible to have a

nice aviary in a flat. WPT Switzerland is promoting these indoor aviaries because they give, for example, an Amazon pair or a pair of African Greys, enough space to live. Rolf Senn advises his customers very well and is teaching very high standards in parrot keeping. Every customer who buys an aviary from Rolf Senn is automatically made a WPT-member. We are very grateful to him because in this way we can increase quickly. Many decide after one year to renew their membership.

The main reason why WPT-Switzerland is successful is because the whole magazine is translated into German by Mrs. Franziska Vogel, thus "PsittaScene" can be read in the entire German speaking world. Many thanks to her for her very time consuming contribution. The continuous publication of translations in our country during almost 9 years help to find new members.

Switzerland does not import parrots (or sometimes a very low number). People are buying parrots directly from breeders and rarely through pet shops which normally do not sell parrots. Therefore the situation is quite good compared with other countries.

Italy Cristiana Senni

As very few good resources about parrots are available in Italian, and only a minority of people know other languages well, WPT Italy focuses on providing information about parrots in the wild and in captivity. The fact that the Internet is now used much more than just a few years ago has helped very much. There are now several good web sites and e-mail lists through which many people can seek advice and find information.

Through the Italian WPT members and the e-mail lists members I received a large number of signatures for the trade ban petition. Currently Italy has contributed with a total of 1,500 signatures, for which I am very grateful to everyone who helped. Alfonso Filippi, an active WPT supporter, designed the WPT No Import sticker. We hope very much that the European members will like this sticker and that a large number will be ordered, as this will be a great support for the trade ban campaign. The importation of wild-caught birds is one of the issues which concerns me most and which is almost totally unknown to the public, also due to the fact that whenever the exotic wildlife trade is mentioned in the press it's always in connection to the illegal trade, with no mention of the negative impact of the legal trade. Of course, the illegal trade is a very serious issue, but one that cannot be controlled by buyers of pet parrots as it is often impossible to find out whether a bird was

legally imported or not. This is why I was very glad to have the opportunity to participate on two TV nature programs where I spoke about the wild-caught bird trade and showed some trapping footage.

We have distributed about 7,000 Happy Healthy Parrot leaflets, which were printed in Italian, and all the articles of *PsittaScene* are translated for our members.

Last year, Lori Samarelli a WPT member who teaches in a high school in Bari, organised a WPT day for the school classes as described in the *PsittaNews* section of the May 2002 issue. A group of students were previously asked to prepare and research about parrot conservation, so that they could speak about it to the other students. I sent them posters, leaflets and trapping videos. Avril Barton, UK has also visited this school where the children are very supportive of conservation and welfare.

This year a group of high schools of the whole province met on 30th April for an outdoor Art Day. Lori organised an environmental stand shared by the World Parrot Trust and Greenpeace, in which we provided information and collected many more signatures for the trade ban campaign.



Benelux – Ruud Vonk

We began in 1990 with the enthusiasm of just one lady and one table as our booth, visiting parrot shows and exhibitions in Holland only. After 2 years we founded the WPT-Benelux section in Antwerp Zoo.

We started the membership registration in Holland and Belgium and with the *PsittaScene* translation, which is posted with the magazine and an additional newsletter in the Dutch language, as something extra for the members.

In 1995 an old bus was donated to WPT-Benelux. An artist managed to paint the bus all over with parrots and flowers. This painting job involved a social project in the youth penitentiary prison as a creative and time-consuming job. Unfortunately, after travelling around in Holland and Belgium, we had to give it up because to maintain it and the MOT was too expensive for a low-budget organisation like WPT-Benelux.

Also, a Belgium printer (WPT member) offered to print a few posters for us and we designed a professional infoscreen, containing 12 posters about what WPT is doing.

At our tenth Parrot Symposium the Benelux branch celebrated this event with the publishing of a book of 614 pages, containing all the past and updated lectures of the ten symposiums and special articles from well-known aviculturists. The contributions of 'Parrot' artists such as Eric Peake, David Johnston and Frans van de Ven with full colour pictures in the centre of the book were outstanding.

We have translated the WPT Highlights



leaflet and the Happy, Healthy Parrot leaflet. For the Island of Bonaire we printed and donated a special version for the *Barbadensis* project as described in the February 2003 issue article on Yellow-shouldered amazons. Bonaire was a colonial island in the history of Holland and a substantial part of the population speaks Dutch.

A highlight in Parrot Conservation by WPT is certainly the publishing of the 'Parrot Action Plan', for the costs of printing WPT-Benelux donated €1,450.

Our effort concerning the global WPT action 'Stop the Import of Wild-caught birds' resulted in 2,000 signatures on our petition lists and we have the support of the 'Royal Dutch Protection of Animals'. We are still working on the subject with the cooperation of local vets.

During the 8th Symposium held at Antwerp Zoo we focused with special attention on the Lear's Macaw project. Our key speaker was Charlie Munn, with of course, a lecture about the Lear's project. We organised a special press meeting, a raffle (see picture) and sold a



Two young WPT supporters dressed up as Lear's Macaws sell raffle tickets during the Symposium.

lot of 'palm for a parrot'. Finally we were able to hand over to Charlie Munn a cheque of €6,000 for the project.

In 2003 again we will be very active for the Lear's Macaw project. We have written a very interesting article of 4 pages A4 text and together with a superb photo of a Lear's in his habitat (from Jamie Gilardi). We offer this special package to the Parrot Societies in Holland and Belgium to publish this article in their magazines and ask them in return for a donation to the project. Together with our WPT PR-slideshow we hope to focus on and raise a substantial amount of money for the Lear's until early 2004.

Sweden

Dan Paulsen & Bo Gerre

For a few years during the nineties the two of us worked together on the board of the Swedish Aviculture Association (SAA) as Secretary (Bo) and Chairman (Dan) and this work has been the platform for our taking up the task as representatives for WPT in Sweden.

It started with articles from "*PsittaScene*" that we translated for use in the Swedish national newsletter "*Fågelhobby*" where Dan was previously the parrot Editor.

Recently WPT Chairman Michael Reynolds asked whether we would be interested and willing to become WPT representatives in Sweden and possibly other Scandinavian countries. We accepted, and for some time now Dan has been the official Representative with Bo assisting him whenever needed.

In order to enable members to pay membership fees in Swedish currency we applied for an account with Swedish postal giro service ("Postgirot"). The account would also make it possible to transfer funds on-line to HQ in UK as well. After nearly a year with many contacts and much trouble with "Postgirot", we finally got the account number 400 81 84-6 up and running, and



Bo (left) and Dan managing a WPT stand at the SAA Convention last October.

Photo: Dan Paulsen

Scandinavian members that benefit from a Swedish translation, to receive it. We have also just completed a version in Swedish of the leaflet for new members which will be available soon.

We have recently accepted an offer to have a free advertisement for WPT in the Swedish newsletter. It will run in the remaining issues for 2003, informing the readers of the aims and work of the Trust and how to become members.

We would like to take this opportunity to ask current Scandinavian members to inform other parrot lovers about WPT and encourage them to enrol.



Psitta News

The Yellow-shouldered Amazon on Bonaire

'Letter from the field'

The Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*) is a Cites I species and it is considered vulnerable to the threat of extinction. There are several isolated wild populations and these are found on mainland South America in Venezuela and on a collection of nearby Caribbean islands. The Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire holds one of these populations and, this summer I will be on the island trying to study the wild population there. This has only been made possible because of the generous support given by the World Parrot Trust, both the American and British Amazona Societies and the Parrot Society UK.

There are only around 400 wild individuals of this species on Bonaire and nest poaching for the local pet trade is believed to be a major factor in keeping their numbers this low. Poaching is of course illegal and the birds have actually been protected by law since 1952. Despite this there are more of these amazons, known locally as "Lora", kept as pets than there are in the wild. Last year an island wide amnesty of all captive birds was held. Islanders declared their Lora and the birds were rung with unique rings. At the same time an awareness campaign was run and this included a donation of Happy Healthy Parrot leaflets for all Lora owners organized by Ruud Vonk (WPT Benelux trustee). Now people who are in possession of un-rung birds risk heavy penalties.

This year the government officials hope to run a follow up campaign highlighting the risks people now face if they should purchase illegal birds but also promoting the wild birds as something everyone should be proud of. I hope to have more news of the campaign and of how the wild birds are doing when I next write!

Sam Williams

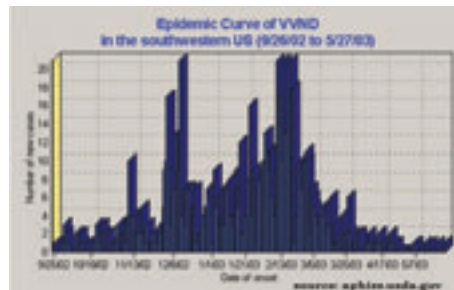
Lesser Vasa Parrot

The first meeting of the European Conservation Breeding Programme for the

Lesser Vasa Parrot (*Coracopsis vasa*) will take place on November 1 in Leipzig, Germany. It will be held at the major bird exhibition of VZE staged on November 1 and 2. Further information can be obtained from Jorg Asmus, fax no 0049 179 3366 86031.

Avian disease updates

Depending on where you hail from, you may be having concerns about the latest in bird viruses, both for you and your bird. Following up on our last update in *PsittaNews*, the news is mostly good when it comes to Exotic Newcastle Disease. There have been new cases reported in New Mexico and Texas in the USA, suggesting an eastward expansion from the majority of cases in California. However, those cases were apparently contained rapidly and widespread outbreaks have not been detected in either state. With any luck, the worst is over - as this graph indicates, there have been very few new cases in the past couple of months. Over 3.5 million birds have now been euthanized, primarily poultry, but these figures include about 300 parrots as well. Until this END outbreak is clearly over however, we encourage bird owners to practice careful biosecurity measures and record keeping.

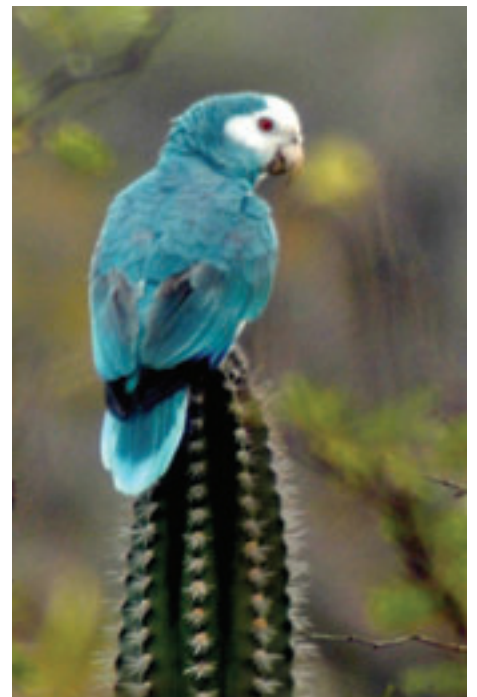


As many members from eastern USA are well aware, a potentially deadly bird disease called West Nile Virus has been wreaking considerable havoc with wild birds and has now caused over 200 human fatalities as well. This virus is carried by mosquitos and appears to be particularly threatening to crows and their relatives. Given the numbers of parrots housed outdoors in the southeastern states and the fact that so far the virus has only been detected in a very small number of parrots, it seems unlikely that this disease presents a serious threat to captive parrots. Keepers of crows, jays, magpies and relatives however, might consider the possibility of installing insect screens and mosquito traps to protect their aviaries, and they might also consult their veterinarian about the value of vaccinating their birds for West Nile. The expectation is that the disease will be thoroughly established in wild birds along the west coast of North America by the end of this summer.

In the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, an outbreak of avian influenza has caused widespread concern for both bird and human populations. This 'bird flu' apparently spread from wild ducks to poultry in the Netherlands. Rapid response by authorities appears to have quelled the outbreak, however dozens of health workers contracted the disease, and tragically, one veterinarian died from pneumonia attributed to the avian flu. Now that over 25 million chickens have been euthanized, and a considerable number of aviary birds were destroyed in the Netherlands, the disease has apparently been contained and export restrictions are soon to be lifted.

Caribbean Blue

Many of you are familiar with rare mutations of captive Amazons in which the bird is almost entirely blue. While we occasionally encounter parrots in the wild with odd plumage - either hybrids or mutations - seldom have we encountered one so striking as the one pictured here. A naturalist in the Netherlands Antilles named Jerry Ligon sent us this stunning photo of this lone blue bird captured on camera by residents Joe and Lois Liebher. So far, very little is known about this bird, nor is much known about how wild parrots treat other parrots with aberrant plumage. In some wild birds, oddities are treated very poorly by their "normal" plumaged comrades, yet in others unique birds seem to pair up and do just fine. Rest assured, this "Caribbean Blue" is being closely watched, both to protect it and to determine how it fares in terms of breeding and survival, so we'll look forward to keeping you posted with any updates.



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

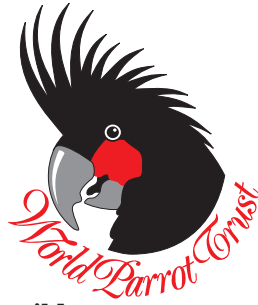
Member, Donation or Legacy

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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Main: <http://www.worldparrottrust.org>,
Canada: <http://www.canadianparrottrust.org>,
Italy: <http://www.worldparrottrust.org/italy>

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Parrots in the Wild



Peach-fronted Parakeets

Aratinga aurea

By JASON CONRADT

These Peach-fronted Parakeets were playfully climbing up a wooden post beside the Transpantaneira road in the Pantanal of Brazil. The picture was taken out the back window of a car with a PowerShot S230 Digital Elph Camera pointed through Leica 8 x 42 binoculars in April, 2003