PsittaScene

Magazine of the World Parrot Trust

Autumn 2021

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World Parrot Trust

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ABOUT THE WPT

Capture for the live-bird trade, habitat loss and other factors put wild parrots at risk. Nearly 30% of all parrot species are considered by IUCN to be at risk of global extinction.

As an international leader in parrot conservation and welfare, the World Parrot Trust works with researchers, in-country organisations, communities and governments to encourage effective solutions that save parrots.

Since 1989 the WPT has grown to become a global force that moves quickly to address urgent issues and support long-term projects. Over that time WPT has led or aided conservation and welfare projects in 43 countries for more than 80 species of parrot.

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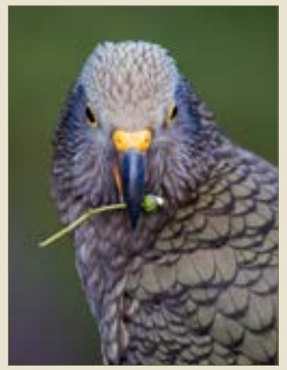
ON THE COVER

Photo © **Imogen Warren, Getty Images**

The Kea *(Nestor notabilis)* is an inquisitive and highly endangered parrot found in New Zealand. Its well-known curiosity can sometimes get it into trouble.

WPT's Oceania Conservation Program Director Luis Ortiz-Catedral reports on key work with these birds in ***'An Encounter with the Kea,'*** Page 16.



a message from...

Steve's Desk

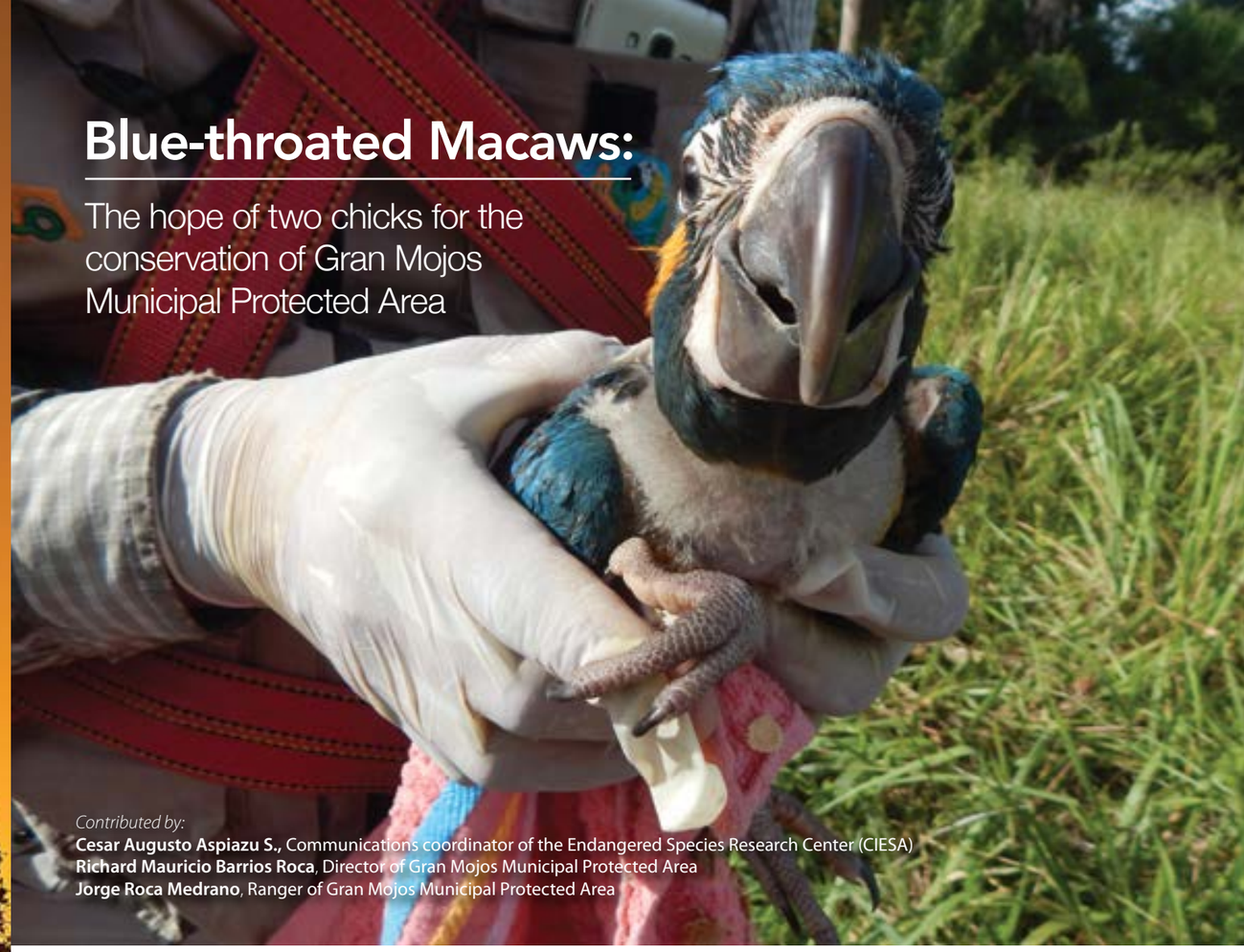
The adaptability of parrots is fascinating to consider. Over millennia they have evolved to exist in some disparate environments, from semi-arid uplands to warm cloud forest to snow-capped peaks. Some of the more familiar species have transitioned from a life in the wild to become a cherished lifelong companions. Others have learned to live in entirely new conditions when they escape into more urban environments. They are truly astonishing creatures.

This flexibility is something that I am reminded of as I reflect on the past 18-months of unprecedented changes in how we all communicate work and live. I am amazed at how resilient, steadfast and adaptable we've all become: our staff, partners, supporters and parrot enthusiasts everywhere. In this issue of *PsittaScene* we look to our current work as a tribute to that resiliency.

As you'll see, a tiny, globally threatened lovebird is getting some much-needed help in a project in Malawi, a couple of struggling Blue-throated Macaw chicks have been saved with dedicated work in Bolivia, and endangered Keas are being health-checked and tested for gene studies in New Zealand. We also take you to our key partner and supporter Tracy Aviary in Utah, USA to see what makes them tick, and take a glance at a new and fascinating chapter in science - parrots and music.

Enjoy,
Steve

Steve Milpacher
WPT Operations Director



Blue-throated Macaws:

The hope of two chicks for the conservation of Gran Mojos Municipal Protected Area

Contributed by:
Cesar Augusto Aspiazu S., Communications coordinator of the Endangered Species Research Center (CIESA)
Richard Mauricio Barrios Roca, Director of Gran Mojos Municipal Protected Area
Jorge Roca Medrano, Ranger of Gran Mojos Municipal Protected Area

One of the chicks nursed back to health. © Vania Isabel González Luna of CIESA

Since 2001, the World Parrot Trust (WPT) has worked with a growing number of partners — including CIESA (Centro Investigación Especies Amenazadas) and CLB Foundation — on Blue-throated Macaw conservation. The work has focused mainly on protecting and maximizing the reproductive output of the remaining wild breeding pairs, as well as understanding the species' ecology.

The team hopes to refine its conservation activities once it learns more about the environmental and socioeconomic factors that threaten the species. The project also constantly seeks community involvement, which has led to the identification of new sites where the species occurs and may be breeding.

Left: *Wet season travel is made easier by using horses.* **Right:** *Park Ranger Jorge Roca Medrano scales the nest tree to check on the chicks.*

In 2017, the project took its biggest step yet to secure the future of these birds by supporting the local government of Loreto in establishing the 1.5M acre Gran Mojos Municipal Protected Area (MPA) in south Trinidad, with the help of local and international partners. The Gran Mojos MPA supports approximately 50% of the known breeding population, which could prove pivotal in ensuring the species' survival.

Based on the successful experience in Gran Mojos MPA, this project will continue securing vital macaw populations by applying the same conservation strategies in Pampas del Yacuma, another area which hosts an important breeding population, in northwest Beni Department.

The team will continue to provide conservation education training for the local community and help boost breeding success for the Blue-throated Macaws by protecting breeding birds and their wild nests.

During the recent breeding season, the protection corps of the Gran Mojos Municipal Protected Area, with the support of CIESA, worked to save two Blue-throated Macaw chicks. On March 24 2021, Richard Mauricio Barrios Roca, Director of Gran Mojos, and park ranger Jorge Roca Medrano, while patrolling the nests found the chicks in poor condition. The Director immediately requested the assistance of the CIESA staff for the evaluation and medical care of the chicks.

The next day, Jorge went to the area accompanied by the veterinarians Vania González from CIESA and Maria Paula Santos from WPT. After three hours on horseback they arrived at the nest, nine kilometers from the municipality of Loreto. Upon examining the chicks, warning signs were noticed: one had an empty crop, and both were dehydrated with weakened body conditions. They were being fed only once a day by their parents, which was not enough to meet their nutritional requirements and proper development.

The CIESA and WPT veterinarians trained park ranger Jorge on the evaluation and care of the chicks. In this way, he could assess the state of the chicks' weight, body condition, degree of hydration, presence of food in the crop, their behaviour and the behaviour of the parents. The vets taught him how to prepare and carry out the feeding process safely and effectively.

During the next six weeks Jorge closely monitored the feeding and condition of the chicks, visiting the nest two or three times a day. He noticed that the parents did not go to the nest when it rained. Jorge made sure he went each day, even in the rain, to support the chicks' care.

Their condition began to improve.

Throughout the month of April, Jorge noticed good progress with the chicks, which were getting bigger and more active. On April 27th the Gran Mojos protection corps, accompanied by the CIESA and WPT teams, went to the nest and observed the parents nearby. Both chicks already had feathers on most of their bodies except for their tails, and both were alert and in good body condition.

Jorge continued feeding the chicks regularly, as the parents still only fed them once a day. On May 6, he arrived at the nest at 9:25 am and did not see the parents nearby, with one chick in the nest and the other having already fledged. The next day he arrived at the nest at 12:05 pm and did not find the chick inside the cavity, instead observing it with its parents near the nest. A gratifying moment for Jorge: "The moment the chicks fledged I felt an enormous satisfaction — they are two more chicks that will increase the Blue-throated Macaw population."

Top, left: *Chick care kit.* **Top, right:** *Ranger Jorge feeds one of the chicks.*
Middle: *A chick awaits clean-up after feeding.*
Bottom: *Veterinarian Maria Paula Santos gives the youngsters health checks.*

"The moment the chicks fledged I felt an enormous satisfaction — they are two more chicks that will increase the population of the Blue-throated Macaw."

Director Roca emphasized that it is essential to strengthen and train the park rangers, since they are confronted daily with a wide variety of challenging situations in the field. Having a foundation in this knowledge allows them to help and care for the wildlife they protect. "We are excited to share the successes achieved with this experience, we appreciate the support and strengthening provided by CIESA, the General Direction of Biodiversity and the World Parrot Trust, who work and support the conservation efforts here in the Gran Mojos Municipal Protected Area."

From late March to early May, perseverance and resilience were key to success, along with medical help and assisted feeding, allowing these magnificent birds to eventually take flight into their natural habitat, one of the most important nesting sites for this critically endangered species.

The flight of these wonderful birds brings hope for the conservation of the species and the biodiversity of Gran Mojos' ecosystem, as well as a feeling of happiness for all of us who work for the conservation of nature.

About CIESA

In 2012, CIESA was founded as the Blue-throated Macaw Wildlife Custody Center and is now the Endangered Species Research Center. The financing and technical support of the World Parrot Trust was critical in developing the first center in the Department of Beni with an operating license granted by the General Direction of Protected Areas. CIESA specializes in the research and conservation of endangered Bolivian lowlands fauna and flora, and is currently focused on the recovery of the Blue-throated Macaw's population.

About the Blue-throated Macaw

The Blue-throated Macaw *(Ara glaucogularis)* is a threatened parrot found in the lowlands of northern Bolivia. Capture of wild birds for the pet trade during the 1970s and 1980s devastated the species, leaving a small remnant population of 125-200 individuals. Although trade ceased in the early 1990s and the population was thought to be stable, numbers are still very low. In 2000, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified the species as Critically Endangered (CR), reflecting an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

SPOTLIGHT

Zoo Conservation Partner

Tracy Aviary & Botanical Garden

Inspiring curiosity and caring through education and conservation

Igniting wonder and an interest in conservation, WPT partner Tracy Aviary & Botanical Garden is committed to the welfare and quality of life of birds within and outside their acreage in Salt Lake City, Utah. "Tracy Aviary walks the talk when it comes to conservation action to positively impact birds in the wild," says Helen Dishaw, Curator of Bird Programs.

In this botanical garden as well as aviary, guests are invited to not only spend time with some beautiful birds, but also soak in the scenery at every turn. For those planning a visit, Dishaw recommends keeping an eye open for roaming encounters. "Almost all of our ambassador birds go out for unscheduled daily walks/flights around our grounds providing enrichment opportunities for the birds and up-close encounter potential for guests – it is a delight to see the moments of connection these interactions create."

With a wide variety of inspiring programs ranging from field trips to virtual learning, the Aviary offers activities for people of all ages to get excited about conservation. Their newest educational initiative is their satellite location, Jordan River Nature Center, which brings nature play, exploration, and discovery to the underserved community. "It's difficult to pinpoint what program is the most successful because so often we impact people at the individual level. One of our guest-experience staff members who participated in some of our field conservation efforts recently received his Ph.D. focused in ornithology."

Likewise, Tracy Aviary is involved with numerous projects through their Conservation Science Program. "Our conservation team is boots on the ground with local fieldwork," says Dishaw. "We also financially support the work of other biologists in the field, for example, our long-term commitment to Great Green Macaws. Through our conservation fund, which is in part funded by admission and membership revenue, we have been supporting the work of Macaw Recovery Network and Ara Manzanillo for almost a decade now. It is empowering to let our guests know that just by visiting the Aviary they are directly supporting conservation."

As a non-profit organization, Tracy Aviary is committed to being mindful of their mission. Dishaw quotes, "There's a saying, you measure what you treasure. While revenue and admission numbers are important, it is more important to emphasize the impact of conservation, education, and contributions to the community."

Providing meaningful moments that connect visitors to birds and the bigger picture is what Tracy Aviary does best.

TRACY AVIARY

Tracy Aviary: 589 E. 1300 S., Salt Lake City, Utah USA
Visit their website at: **www.tracyaviary.org** or find them on Facebook.

MALAWI:

The lovebird journey continues

Article and photos by Sascha Düker, WPT Lovebird Conservation Coordinator

In the Spring 2021 issue of *PsittaScene* we took you to Zambia on an expedition following Black-cheeked Lovebirds (*Agapornis nigrigenis*), one of the most threatened lovebirds on the African continent.

The findings kickstarted the journey on the importance of genetic sampling on lovebird populations that we have worked on since. The next stop was Malawi, the "warm heart of Africa", where we took additional DNA samples and for the first time introduced artificial nesting boxes to support the population of Lilian's Lovebirds *(Agapornis lilianae).*

Malawi is a small but densely populated country. Calling Malawi the warm heart of Africa is not an exaggeration: even through the winter months (June-July) the country is pleasantly warm and tropical. The expression also refers to the Malawians' kind-hearted and welcoming nature, which I experienced throughout my 3-week journey!

I was also to finally meet Dr. Tiwonge Gawa-Mzumara, a Malawian and pioneer researcher on wild lovebirds, and WPT's Lovebird Research Officer. She told me her personal story of doing research on lovebirds which was a rather sad one: she became interested in birds early on after hearing of "Liwonde's Jewels", which she had never seen before and are the smallest parrots among the four species to be found in Malawi.

As she would find out, the lovebirds' population today is entirely restricted to the well-protected area of the Liwonde National Park in the heart of the country.

Dr. Gawa's early days as a researcher began with a tragic discovery during her search for Lilian's Lovebirds at one of the remaining waterholes during the dry season. There they were seemingly perched close by the waterhole; however, on closer inspection she saw there were many individuals lying dead next to the water. This was heartbreaking and clearly not what she had hoped to see with her first lovebird encounter. She couldn't stand the idea that one day the Malawian jewels might not exist any longer.

The experience would kick off many ground-breaking studies, identifying that one of the issues affecting the birds was that they were being poisoned at waterholes by poachers on the hunt for bushmeat. Dr. Gawa also found that due to the relatively dense human population and the high demand for lovebirds' trees for timber and charcoal there are no mature cathedral mopane, which she found to be the only ones naturally developing cavities for the small birds to breed and roost in.

Mopane needs many years to grow to its full potential to be of use for the birds, but in the meantime nesting boxes could help bridge this period for them.

I looked forward to talking about her journey, learning more about her research and starting the project. We began by inspecting the 60 nesting boxes that were manufactured at the workshop by Mr. Robert Gondwe and his team at the Malawian University of Science and Technology (MUST), Dr. Gawa's work place. The boxes were designed by consulting experts from aviculture and parrot projects. The ultimate key was to weigh nest durability in the tropical climate against the most "natural" look and lovebirds' preferences.

We decided to use PVC pipes, relying on Dr. Gawa's expert knowledge and data on the dimensions of natural cavities she had previously taken. The outside was then covered with wood for a natural look and for insulation against the burning sun. Luckily the mopane trees (the natural lovebird breeding and roosting trees) begin sprouting leaves right when breeding starts, providing necessary cover from the sun. For that reason we decided to always hang the boxes only in mopane trees.

After loading the nest boxes on to the trailer, Dr. Gawa led us to all three existing roosting sites still in use in the park, which she had identified in her previous research. We decided to add some of the boxes into these areas to see if the birds would use them. Since lovebirds have been bred in captivity for centuries we know they use them readily, however, would they also use the boxes in their natural habitat? Such a project had never been trialled in the past.

But we wanted to know more: Lilian's Lovebirds are not territorial; they are communal roosters and breeders, which allowed us to hang the boxes relatively close to existing roosting and breeding sites. An interesting question we wanted answered was: would we be able to possibly extend their sites if we were to hang boxes a bit further away? We decided to only mount half of the boxes into existing sites but hang the other half another 1 - 2 kilometres away. What an incredible possibility if the lovebirds occupied those in the future!

This project might bring necessary hope for our tiny parrots. Research has shown the importance of cathedral mopane, so protection of these trees can start and reforestation begin.

Top: *Mr. Gondwe holds a newly completed nestbox. © Tiwonge Gawa*
Middle: *The author and Tamara Chirwa, Wildlife & Ecology Society Malawi (WESM) intern, suited up for tree-climbing. © Tiwonge Gawa*
Bottom: *Patrick Katundu of Mulanje Outdoors completing the installation of a nest box.*

If successful, wild lovebirds can periodically benefit from nesting boxes continent-wide since one of the major threats to the entire group is loss of breeding and roosting habitat.

Entering Liwonde National Park was fascinating. On the 4-5 hour drive to the park we mostly saw small villages, shrubs and some gigantic baobab trees every now and then which seem to be the only tree not being cleared, however, inside the park was a completely different picture. We found ourselves in this green and lush forest of mopane trees, with leafless baobabs patchily in between. A few of the young mopane trees were quite damaged due to the high density of elephants the park has experienced in recent years.

Bad for the mopane trees, but the elephant population explosion shows the success of protecting the park from poaching to the extent that some of them are being translocated to other areas in Africa.

We crossed our first old wooden plank bridge and the adventure began. After a short camp set up, we headed out to the first roost site in the late afternoon. Ambitiously I set up the mist net, hoping to catch birds for my first DNA samples. The nets came up empty; however, several Lilian's Lovebirds arrived at the roosting site by sunset as predicted by Dr. Gawa. It was magnificent to see Liwonde's jewels lighting up the sky searching for their roosting cavities. This was a promising site, and we would return the next day to install the first boxes.

The team: *Left to right - Pilirani Makwasa Imtiaz, driver and assistant; Sascha Düker; Dr. Tiwonge Gawa, WPT Lovebird Research Officer; Tamara Chirwa, WESM intern; Patrick Katundu, professional climber; Nyson Gawani, Museum of Malawi ornithologist.*

I tried mist netting again in the early morning, however, the busy birds quickly left their cavities and flew past the net intent on their daily search for water and food. The set-up of the nesting boxes went well and we quickly identified methods of sharing tasks to make this even quicker. Based on her previous research, Dr. Gawa advised on how high to place the boxes up the trees.

In the evening we spotted and made a note of birds entering cavities. After work we drove back to the camp site, an experience that woke us up again after a long day in the burning sun: a big elephant was right on the track, and we had to wait until she and her calf were finished their mopane leaf dinner. How adventurous, but we were all a bit scared too since elephant moms tend to be quite protective of their calves. With her power even a big 4WD like ours would be no obstacle. Luckily this individual was very relaxed and let us move on after about half an hour.

The alarm rang at 4am the next morning. We wanted to be at the cavities before sunrise to get our first DNA sampling. I brought two cup-shaped nets with me and together with an extendable pole and a ladder was able to place them directly in front of a cavity where birds were. We were lucky! This roost had a family of five in it and four of them got right into the net.

Keeping the handling time brief, we precisely weighed, measured and uniquely ringed the birds. Then we released them together so they could fly off for their well-deserved breakfast and drinks.

The days moved on in the same efficient working rhythm: late night cavity identification, early morning DNA sampling, then nesting box setup and finishing the day off with cavity identification again. Long days, but completely worth the effort.

Top, left: *Entering Liwonde National Park*
Top, right: *Samples and measurements are carefully taken for testing later.*
Bottom, right: *A Lilian's Lovebird is shown with two leg bands.*

After having confidently established the daily working procedures we were able to show what we learned to Tiwonge's students from MUST, who arrived at the next camp we were staying at. This camp was a little more adventurous than the other one, with bigger wildlife walking right by our front door. Monkeys were sneakily stealing food, and warthogs and elephants were regular visitors too.

Hippos would come out of the water to graze during the early morning hours, which was the time we had to head to the field site.

Luckily, we only crossed paths with a hippo on one occasion and were able to slowly back away so as to not disturb this giant too much. We surely didn't want to have a bad encounter with such a big animal. After we presented our research to the students everyone got to learn about the DNA sampling and nesting box installation hands on. It was a fun experience everyone was enjoying, and the early morning tiredness disappeared with the adrenaline of catching the first lovebird for sampling and climbing the trees with rope equipment.

The students, together with intern Tamara Chirwa from the Malawi Wildlife & Ecology Society of Malawi (WESM), will monitor the nesting boxes after a 6-month habituation period before the beginning of the breeding season.

They will also be doing their behavioural studies, using the uniquely ringed birds to study nest box use and collect observational data. I must admit, I am a bit jealous they will be the ones checking the nest boxes, however, the excitement of their updates outweighs this. Fingers crossed for good news by the end of the year!

We finished the arduous fieldwork a little earlier than expected, and I spent the remaining time at Lake Malawi. The famous Malawi cichlids and Galapagos finches were some of the first examples of evolution I saw in my German high school text book. What an adventure to see the lake and the fishes I had learned so much about, which started my interest in the evolutionary history of species. I couldn't believe I was there. To top it off, I got the chance to go on a dive with a renowned professor who had spent his entire lifetime studying sexual selection in these colourful fish.

Malawi, you will surely remain in my heart, and I am hoping one day to return to this beautiful country and its kind-hearted people. Sikomo ('thank you' in Chichewa) for making my stay unforgettable!

Parrots & Music:

DANCING COCKATOOS, ENRICHMENT AND RESEARCH

by Desi Milpacher

© Thomas Demarczyk | Getty Images

People know that parrots are the mime champions of the world, imitating everything from car sirens to alien spacecraft to the human voice.

What they might not know is that these clever birds can also create and get enjoyment from a source that was once considered to be the sole domain of humans: *music*.

Scientists have noted many examples of wild parrots using tools and their vocal abilities to create a joyous noise: Palm Cockatoo *(Probosciger aterrimus)* males use a stick to beat a tattoo on the nearest tree stump or limb, all in aid of attracting a mate.

Evidence shows it's not random but performed, with individual styles, consistent beats and patterns. Many species of parrot vocally duet with each other to strengthen pair bonds and defend territories. Mated pairs of Yellow-naped Amazons *(Amazona auropalliata)* create compositions that require *specific ordering of notes* within the duet. These are coordinated songs that they use to defend their territories.

But it appears that parrots' interest in and use of music and sound is not unique to wild birds - in the last few years social media has come alive with videos of companion parrots dancing to music.

Scientists have long suspected that humans were not the only animals to align movement to music (in other words, to move to the beat). In 2009, animal cognition researcher Dr. Irene Pepperberg and her colleagues teamed up to prove that vocal-mimicking non-human animals— in this case, a Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus)* and a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *(Cacatua galerita)*—can indeed groove with music.

In a study involving the famous dancing cockatoo Snowball, researchers documented 14 different moves and two composite, or combination, moves.

From this investigation they suggested that spontaneous and varied movement to music comes about in the presence of a number of conditions: that the subjects are complex vocal learners, have the capacity to imitate movements, tend to form long- term social bonds, can learn complex sequences of actions, and closely notice movements that communicate something.

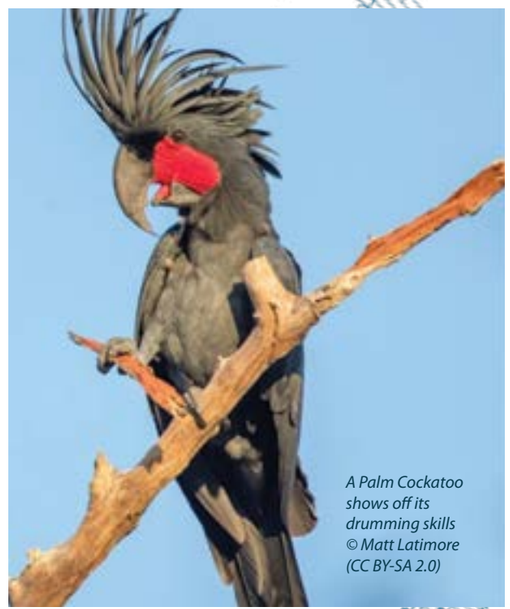
Parrots share all of these traits with people which is, as of now, unusual in the animal world.

Snowball the Dancing Cockatoo courtesy Sky News

Other cognitive studies have centred on the idea that parrots can listen to human music for enrichment and create music all on their own. And Greys, cockatoos, elephants, primates and other animals have shown preferences between different human composers or music genres, and prefer to hear music over silence.

Further, research on the effects of music on zoo-housed parrots focused on providing testing conditions with no sound (control), classical and pop music, natural rainforest sounds, parrot sounds, and a talking radio. The study's authors also took into account other factors, such as whether they were housed in a group or by themselves. They found that birds exposed to rainforest and talking radio preened more than birds which heard no sound, and single birds preened less and showed more stress behaviours than groups of birds. These studies suggested that playing music or other sounds for parrots could potentially be positive for their welfare.

It seems, as these highly intelligent birds have shown us, that the possibilities for further study and applications for companion parrot enrichment are endless. Scientists and parrot caregivers alike will surely enjoy finding out.



A Palm Cockatoo shows off its drumming skills © Matt Latimore (CC BY-SA 2.0)

SOURCES:

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An Encounter with the Kea


© Apinunrin, Getty Images

by Luis Ortiz-Catedral
WPT Oceania Conservation Program

Last month I had the opportunity to accompany Tamsin Orr-Walker, Peter Hillary and Lydia McLean from the Kea Conservation Trust on a mission to capture some Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) at a ski resort in Queenstown.

A snow-covered ski resort at 1500m above sea level in the middle of winter sounds like the most unlikely place to capture a parrot, but Kea are a truly alpine species. So, how does one capture a parrot in the snow? As it turns out, Kea are very inquisitive and often inspect buildings and vehicles. But that is only half the battle. The key is to attract them to a pad with a special trap. A colourful plastic cap or shiny paper does the trick. Birds can also be enticed by using recorded calls. By 5:00 p.m. the trap and recordings were all set up, just as visitors to the Remarkables Ski Resort departed.


© Luis Ortiz-Catedral


© Luis Ortiz-Catedral

Top: The author restrains a Kea for examination and sample collection.
Bottom: The Kea team.


© Anne Webber, Getty Images


© DykyoStudio, Getty Images

Opposite Page: *View of Arthur's Pass as seen from the summit of Avalanche Peak.*


© Grant Amer, Getty Images

Top, left: *A Kea examines a vehicle in a car-park.*
Bottom, left: *Windows are especially fascinating to these inquisitive birds.*
Right: *Two birds at home in the snow.*

As we waited for Kea to arrive, Tamsin Orr-Walker explained to me some of the challenges associated with conserving these large parrots. Kea are very inquisitive and the birds found an abundant food resource in the fatty deposits of sheep introduced to New Zealand in the 18th century. Historically, Kea were very numerous but over 150,000 of them were shot from 1860 to 1970 due to their affinity for sheep's fat, and the perceived (yet exaggerated) impact of these parrots on flocks of sheep.

Nowadays fewer than 7000 Kea exist in the wild, and most populations are affected by introduced mammals (such as stoats) which attack and kill Kea chicks and adults. Another issue is heavy metal poisoning. Throughout the remaining Kea habitat there are dwellings and structures that have lead nails or flashing, which curious Kea nibble and ingest. Affected Kea are captured and treated before being released back in the wild. A group of volunteers known as the "Lead Heads" work hard to remove and replace toxic building materials from Kea's habitat, but there is still much work to be done.

At around 6:00 p.m. we noticed the silhouette of a Kea perching on a rock some 200 m away from us. Lydia and Tamsin tried enticing the bird, but it wasn't until about an hour later when two Kea approached us and started inspecting the vehicles parked at the ski resort. One of the birds was already ringed but the other one was an unringed younger male. The younger bird landed on the specialised trap and just like that, we captured our first Kea.

Lydia carefully measured and weighed the bird and gave it a unique colour ring combination. Some feather and blood samples were also collected to check on the health status of the bird and for genetic studies. We released the bird in the snow and called it a day.

Kea numbers and sightings in the habitat around the Remarkables Ski resort have recently increased thanks to an ongoing predator control program. Having individually ringed birds such as the young male we captured is crucial to monitor the population. Had a female been captured, a transmitter to track her movements would have been attached. These transmitters make it easier to pinpoint potential and active nests and protect these from introduced predators.

To learn more about Kea and the work that Tamsin and her team are doing to protect this alpine parrot visit ***keaconservation.co.nz***

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PSITTA|NEWS

News

Gang-gang Cockatoo could be listed as an endangered species in Australia

The Australia government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will be deciding whether to include the Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatus*) on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) threatened species list. Gang-gang Cockatoos have suffered a nearly 70% decline in the last two decades, and direct losses and habitat destruction from the 2019-20 bushfires.

An inclusion on this list will mean greater protections for these struggling birds.

Read the full release:
tinyurl.com/23d3vsh7

St. Vincent forestry division preparing for parrot census

Officers at the Forestry Division in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are making preparations to do a St. Vincent Amazon (*Amazona guildingii*) count later this year. The effort will require upwards of 60 people positioned at five designated areas. The usual parrot count would begin in March or April of a given year but this year the La Soufrière volcano began to violently erupt.

Read more:
tinyurl.com/3s26sz2b

More Myna Birds mean increased threat for Black Parrots on Seychelles' Praslin island

The Seychelles Islands Foundation is reporting that the feral Myna Bird population on Praslin Island is increasing and presents a renewed threat to the endemic Seychelle's Parrot (*Coracopsis barklyi*). The uptick in population was observed by the Vallée de Mai park research team. The Seychelles Parrot, at a population of fewer than a thousand, is listed as Vulnerable in the wild.

Read more:
tinyurl.com/387nbcw8

Correction Notice

In the Summer 2021 issue of *PsittaScene*, in the article 'Cacti and Parrots' the word for the language on Bonaire is spelled 'Papiamentu', not 'Papiamento.' We regret the error.

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PARROTS IN THE WILD:

Australian King Parrot

(Alisterus scapularis)

A male Australian King Parrot feeds on the kernels of a large sunflower. These birds also eat fruits, flowers, berries, nuts, seeds, insect larvae, buds and other vegetation.