

# PSITTA SCENE

Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Summer 2019



### ABOUT THE WPT

Capture for the live-bird trade, habitat loss and other factors put wild parrots at risk. One in three parrot species are currently threatened in the wild.

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 70 species of parrot.

### CHARITY INFORMATION

United Kingdom: # 800944  
United States: EIN 62-1561595  
Canada: BN 89004 1171 RR0001



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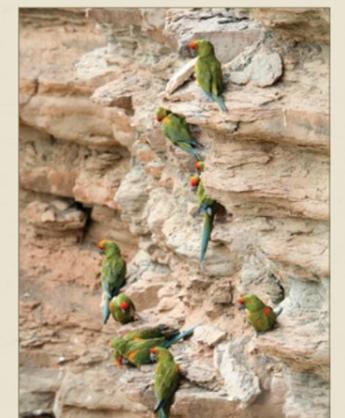
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### ON THE COVER

Endemic to Bolivia's rugged inter-Andean valleys ecosystem, the **Red-fronted Macaw** suffered a devastating population decline linked to trapping for the pet trade, and as a result of conflict with farmers.

Learn more about the work being done to protect this species on Page 15: **Red-fronted Macaws - Working together to bring them back from the edge.**

Photo © National Geographic Image Collection



*A message from...*  
**Steve's desk**

As we head into mid-year we are reminded that a central issue still affecting wild parrots is the wildlife trade. In 'Confiscation is the First Step...' by Indonesia Program Manager Mehd Halaouate, we learn that poaching is a major factor affecting parrot populations in one of the most widespread and complex countries on Earth.

Elsewhere in this issue we learn that persecution and habitat loss have all but wiped out wild Red-fronted Macaws in Bolivia. And although these issues persist, WPT is working hard to address these challenges, collaborating with local communities to change perspectives and outcomes.

On more positive notes, Dr. Rowan Martin takes a look back at a seminal event for parrots from over a decade ago, the European Union trade ban in wild-caught birds, and how it's affected wildlife trade and wild populations since its inception. And finally, WPT supporter Cheryl Rutherford takes us on a journey of a lifetime to see wild parrots at clay licks in Peru.

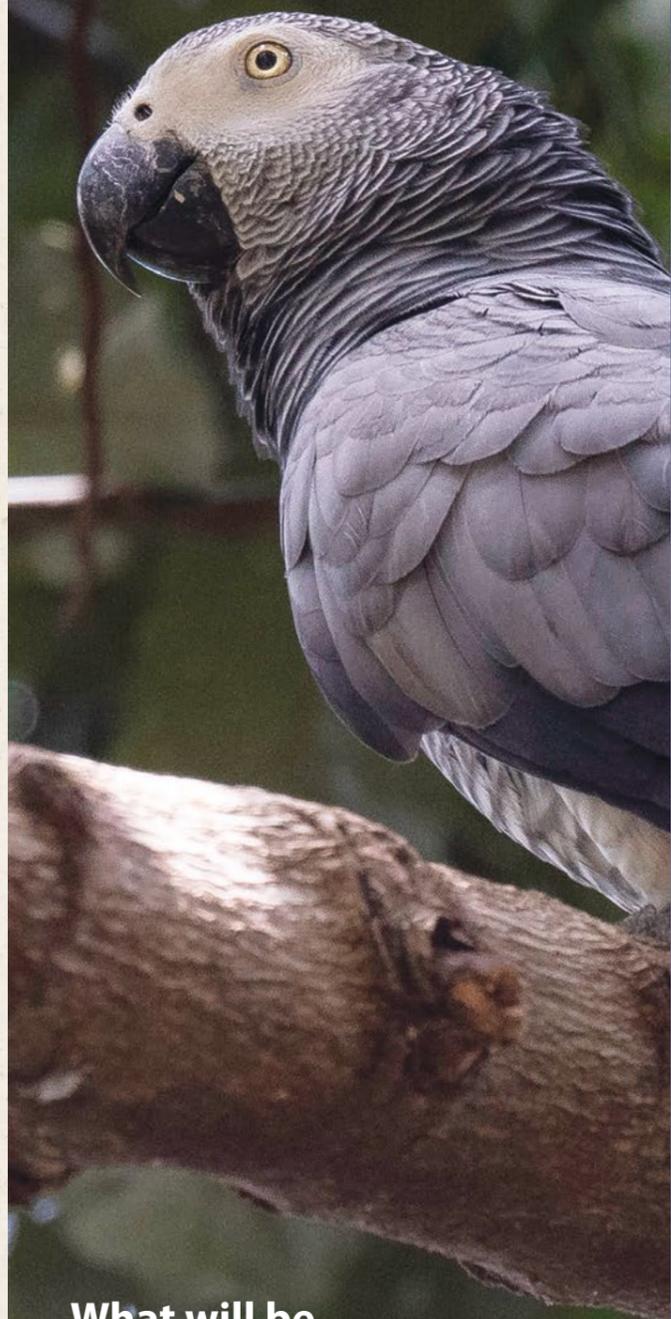
We invite you to reflect on and enjoy the stories featured in this issue.



*Steve Milpacher*  
Operations Director

**LEAVE A  
LEGACY  
FOR PARROTS**

Grey Parrot © Elaine Henley



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**14 YEARS ON FROM THE EU TRADE BAN:**

**MILLIONS OF BIRDS FLYING FREE**

by Rowan Martin, PhD  
WPT Africa Program Director



*Blue-fronted Amazon caught in a mist net.*  
© World Parrot Trust

In October of 2005 the European Union (EU) moved to end the importation of wild birds – a decision which had the potential to save millions of birds each year.



Patagonian Conures caged for shipment (circa 2005). Photos like this and video evidence collected by the World Parrot Trust were instrumental in helping achieve the EU wild bird import ban.

## The World Parrot Trust was at the centre of efforts to end the trade, spearheading a campaign eventually supported by 230 organisations urging the EU to end imports of all wild birds.

**THE INITIAL BAN WAS A TEMPORARY** measure aimed at preventing the spread of avian flu, but based on the EU's own risk assessment, the ban was made permanent in 2007 with a focus broadened to include both biosecurity and animal welfare.

According to official CITES statistics, in the 1990s and early 2000s the EU dominated the trade in wild parrots and other birds, importing 2,278,000 wild parrots between 1995 and 2005. Prior to 2005 Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain accounted for the import of two-thirds of the 1.3 million wild birds sold annually on the global market. Many of the birds in trade came from West Africa, with 70% of all exported birds coming from Guinea, Mali and Senegal.

While the ban was certain to have a huge impact on legal imports into Europe, there was uncertainty as to how things would play out. Would the ban simply drive trade underground? Would trade be directed to new regions? Or worse, could a ban even stimulate wildlife trade as some feared? A number of recent studies have begun to answer these questions. In 2017, a study published in the leading journal *Science Advances* analysed official CITES figures and found that global trade had dropped by 90% following the ban.

Prof. Diederick Strubbe explained, "There is some redirection of trade to other areas and some may have gone underground, but the global drop is so massive that those cannot account for

it on their own." The study also found that the international bird trade was a main cause of exotic birds spreading around the world, and that the EU trade ban strongly reduced the risk of introducing invasive species across most of the globe.

Another recent study approached the subject from a different angle, but coming to similar conclusions. In this study, a team led by Dr. Laura Cardador of University College London focused on the impact in just two EU countries - Spain and Portugal. They explored in detail changes in parrots for sale in pet markets and the introduction of exotic birds before and after the ban. While the number of newly introduced exotic species per year increased exponentially until 2005 (in parallel with the volume

of wild birds imported), it sharply decreased in the years following the ban. Interestingly, the diversity of bird species available at pet markets did not decrease significantly after the ban, but there was a dramatic switch away from the sales of wild-sourced birds towards those bred in captivity. This again supports the idea that far from stimulating a thriving black market in wild birds, the ban was effective at reducing the numbers of wild birds entering the EU.

However, disentangling the impact of the ban versus other factors is not always easy. Around the same time as the ban there were many other changes taking place around the world which also affected global trade. For instance, in 2006 CITES made a number of recommendations affecting the trade in African Grey Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*), which at that time were among the most traded of

all wild birds. These recommendations included suspensions on exports and the use of 'conservative' export quotas from several exporting countries in west and central Africa, around the same time populations in the wild were collapsing. Between the early 1990s and early 2010s African Grey populations in Ghana, which had been one of the leading exporters of wild Greys, declined by between 90-99%.

A similar challenge of attribution lies with the drivers of imports of wild Monk Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*) into Mexico. This trade has dominated the global trade in wild parrots in recent years with over half a million wild Monk Parakeets imported into Mexico between 2000 and 2015; ninety percent of which occurred after 2008.

As a result, wild populations of Monk Parakeets have become established all over Mexico and continue to spread.

The rise in imports coincided with the mid 2000s, leading some to conclude that the EU ban was responsible for redirecting trade to Mexico. However, the scale of trade into Mexico after the EU ban dwarfed the number of Monk Parakeets that were previously being imported into the EU, suggesting that other factors were at play.

**Prior to the ban on wild bird imports made final in 2007, the EU allowed the importation of over 2 million birds annually.**

A recent examination of the latest drivers of the Monk Parakeet trade conducted by conservation groups in Mexico concluded that the EU ban was not to blame, pointing to the fact that Mexico was already a major importer of parrots prior to the ban, and that the increase in trade in Monk Parakeets was mirrored by a burgeoning trade in other exotic pets, including reptiles and ornamental fish. Instead the rise in trade was attributed to economic factors and opportunism by a handful of importers.

It's now clear that the EU trade ban has had a positive impact on the global trade in wild birds. Millions have been spared unnecessary suffering, the spread of exotic species and infectious diseases curtailed, and wild bird populations protected. The biggest questions remaining are why did this not happen sooner, and why do some countries still allow this practice to continue? Meanwhile, we're making progress, but there remains much work to be done. The World Parrot Trust will continue to lead the way, advocating for sensible evidence-based policy to end the trade in wild birds. ☐

### What is CITES?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that worldwide trade in species of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Parties to CITES are required to annually submit data on numbers of 'specimens' of all species listed on the conventions appendices. These include all parrot species with the exception of Budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), Cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), Ringneck Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and Peach-faced Lovebirds (*Agapornis roseicollis*).

### Further Reading

This article is based on the following peer-reviewed research papers and reports. Those marked with an asterisk are available open access.

Cantu-Guzmán, J.C. and M. E. Sánchez-Saldaña. (2018) **Mexico's massive imports of Monk Parakeets: Debunking a myth.** *Defenders of Wildlife and Teyeliz A.C.*

Cardador, L., Lattuada, M., Strubbe, D., Tella, J. L., Reino, L., Figueira, R., & Carrete, M. (2017) **Regional Bans on Wild-Bird Trade Modify Invasion Risks at a Global Scale.** *Conservation Letters*, 10(6), 717-725.\*

Cardador, L., Tella, J. L., Anadón, J. D., Abellán, P., & Carrete, M. (2019) **The European trade ban on wild birds reduced invasion risks.** *Conservation Letters*, 20, e12631-7.\*

Hobson, E. A., Smith-Vidaurre, G., & Salinas-Melgoza, A. (2017) **History of non-native Monk Parakeets in Mexico.** *PLoS ONE*, 12(9), e0184771-17.\*

Martin, R. O. (2018) **Grey areas: temporal and geographical dynamics of international trade of Grey and Timneh Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus* and *P. timneh*) under CITES.** *Emu - Austral Ornithology*, 118: 113-125.

Martin, R. O. (2018) **The wild bird trade and African parrots: past, present and future challenges.** *Ostrich-Journal of African Ornithology*, 89: 139-143.

Reino, L., Figueira, R., Beja, P., Araújo, M., Capinha, C., & Strubbe, D. (2017) **Networks of global bird invasion altered by regional trade ban.** Vol. 3 (11), e1700783.\*



Confiscated White Cockatoos await transport to a rescue facility

# Confiscation is the First Step:

## Returning trapped parrots to the wilds of Indonesia

Photos and article © Mehd Halaouate,  
WPT Indonesia Program Manager

**WE AT THE WPT HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY FIGHTING** the illegal trade in parrots in the Moluccas and in Sulawesi, Indonesia for a few years now. Results have been mixed, since these actions are new in the region and the rest of the country. Part of the issue is that trapping and trading in wildlife has long been common and acceptable here. It is only now, and after pressure from the international conservation community, that Indonesian officials have started enforcing the laws involving illegal wildlife trade and making plans on how to manage increasing numbers of animals trapped for this purpose.

The trade in wildlife from the Philippines and Indonesia is escalating rapidly as the hobby of keeping wild birds is becoming more popular in both countries. WPT learned of *no fewer than four* major confiscations in April 2019 alone. In Bali,

new pet shops have been springing up unchecked. Indonesia is a major supplier and exporter of captive-raised species like lovebirds and budgerigars, but these birds aren't what collectors are looking for. They're after the most exotic of wild parrot species, and trappers are supplying them in ever-greater numbers.

### Why confiscating illegally trapped wildlife is only a first step

Placing all of the parrot species in the region on the Indonesian protected list in 2018 was a major step forward. It is also a great achievement that officials manage to stop birds from leaving the islands where they come from. There is still a lot of work to do however; when dealing with illegal wildlife trade, government and enforcement officials in the country seem to stop at the confiscation

process, and what happens to the animals afterward is uncertain at best. Because of this, all of us who work to stop trade must make sure that confiscated animals are rehabilitated as quickly as possible so they can return to the wild without major issues. The longer they stay in captivity with no clear plans for their future, the less likely they are to survive.

### Positive actions can equal positive outcomes

By necessity, there are many actions to be taken to ensure that these birds have the health and skills necessary to survive once they are released. WPT, along with our partners in Indonesia, is actively addressing these steps on different islands in the region, providing training for forestry staff in emergency management and care and also giving funding for housing, food and medicine so that the birds can be well cared for. We have been instructing staff at local rescues on the birds' rehabilitation, and for following the right procedures when planning and conducting releases.

Another step in the process is to build more capacity to manage the increasing amounts of confiscated wild parrots. This is not to 'warehouse' birds indefinitely, but to see these rescued birds through each step of rehabilitation, recovery and release. One example is on North Maluku (Moluccas),

where Nature Conservation Agency Indonesia (BKSDA) is now building a new centre to temporarily house large numbers of confiscated wildlife, especially parrots. The new facility at Tobelo has the space to grow some of the foods the rescued birds need. This is important, as supplies are expensive to buy in the region. Tobelo, a town in the province of North Maluku, and Morotai Island, north of Maluku, are smuggling hotspots so having a centre there will not only help wildlife in need, it will also enhance and increase the presence of the Forestry department in the region.

### Gathering data on parrot sales at markets in the region

One of the more important aspects of our work to stop the parrot trade in Indonesia is gathering data from the large and bustling bird markets on the islands of Java and Bali. It is vital to document these trends, as these places are major hubs of commerce where trafficking is concerned. With this information we can fairly predict which species could be soon added to the endangered list. We have been raising flags for a number of species after compiling the market data; parrots like Ornate and Forsten's Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus ornatus* and *T. forsteni*), Chattering Lories (*Lorius garrulus*), Eclectus Parrots (*Eclectus roratus*), and White Cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*) are seen frequently in trade.



Above: A Chattering Lory languishes in a makeshift cage

Below: White Cockatoos show signs of rough handling by people





Confiscated parrots feed on local foods while waiting for transport to larger enclosures

In order to get a complete picture of the effects of trapping we also conduct fieldwork in the regions where these species are found. We can see clearly, both in Sulawesi (where Ornates are seen) and Sumbawa (where Forsten's are found), that numbers of these lorikeets have seen a major decline in the wild. The situation is the same for Chattering Lories and White Cockatoos. This is mostly due to trapping for the pet trade.

We are beginning to see positive results, however, from our collaborations with local officials and wildlife carers: on the 19th of July 2018 our local partner Nature Conservation Agency Indonesia conducted a release of rehabilitated parrots on Bacan Island in North Maluku. WPT had given funds to build temporary enclosures (for housing birds prior to a 'soft release' – one that allows for the parrots

to become accustomed to the surrounding area, its food sources and possible dangers) and some logistical guidance. Twenty-seven White Cockatoos, ten Eclectus Parrots and fourteen Chattering Lories flew back to freedom that day, a triumph for the birds and for all of the agencies involved.

Returning healthy birds to the wild is the best statement to show that these amazing creatures are better kept wild and free. There are plenty of captive-bred parrots to satisfy the demand for companion animals, and there are no practical or moral reasons to trap wild ones. All of us who keep and admire parrots as companions have a role to play in fighting the extinction of these species, and not just where parrots are found. We can do this from wherever we live, by making the compassionate choice of not buying wild-caught birds. 📌



A male Eclectus Parrot recovers after confiscation

## TO SEE WILD PARROTS:

*a personal trek to Tambopata, Peru*

PHOTOS AND ARTICLE © CHERYL RUTHERFORD

*It was at least 10 years ago when my interest in parrots grew from having them as pets to include conservation and environmental issues. In my research, I learned of the Tambopata National Reserve in the Amazon Jungle and its population of wild macaws and parrots. Even the word "Tambopata" sounded magical to me; it was like a talisman or touchstone to what was important.*

*Over the years, I'd think of it and tell myself, "One day, I'll visit Tambopata. One day, I will see parrots living in their natural habitat, flying freely against the blue sky. One day, I'll hear their wild voices calling across the tree tops."*

***Then, finally, "one day" became "today".***



### **AUGUST 25, 2018 BEGAN AT 4:30 IN THE MORNING.**

I felt my husband's hand on my arm, ensuring I was awake. I opened my eyes to the dark and listened to the sounds of the jungle - even then, life was calling all around. We heard our neighbours' alarm gently go off and their quiet voices in the cabin next to us.

After a chilly night in the jungle, I quickly jumped out of bed, rinsed my face with cold water and grabbed my camera gear. I could barely contain my excitement. Today I was going to the Chuncho clay lick in the Tambopata National Reserve to witness wild macaws and parrots and parakeets in their natural habitat first-hand.

As I made my way to the main lodge, I reflected on the past few days. We arrived at the Collpas Tambopata Lodge in the Amazon rainforest (located on the Madre de Dios River in southeastern Peru) after a plane ride from Lima to Puerto Maldonado, a taxi ride to a small community on the outskirts of the rainforest, a 4X4 ride to the river over a bumpy, roughly hewn road (past sections of jungle being

burned to make way for civilization), a river boat ride past illegal gold mining operations, and then finally up some steps carved into the side of the river bank and through a short, forested path to our lodge. This was to be our home for the next 5 days.

While all the guides we met at the lodge were friendly, experienced and well-versed in local flora and fauna (one broke out into a grin after telling me he much preferred showing tourists the birds and animals rather than hunting and poaching them as he'd had to do in his youth), we were particularly fortunate to have a local birder – Jesus Cieza from South Birding Peru – as ours.

After I told him I was "here for the birds", he obliged me by pointing out various feathered species during our hikes in addition to the land-bound mammals and rainforest plants. A colony of Russet-backed Oropendolas maintained a dozen long, pendulous nests in the center of the lodge's grounds while Blue-grey and Silver-beaked Tanagers flitted about the bushes.



We spotted Capybaras and Columbian Red Howler and Black-capped Squirrel Monkeys. I watched a Kalinowski Agouti (a type of rodent) forage for wild bananas mere feet from me one morning. I even psyched up the courage to go and look at some tarantula babies quietly resting outside their burrow near our cabin. We met the resident Scarlet Macaw, Cheska (“Star”), and Amazons Poly and Pepe (all rescued birds who could not be released) and shared delicious meals with them.

But these new experiences were just a prelude to the main reason we had traveled all this way. It was now 5:30 am and dawn was just beginning to break. Our small group gathered in the communal dining area, grabbed our locally sourced breakfast supplies and got into the river boat for the 45 minute journey to the clay lick. We stopped at the Ranger Station to announce our ingress into the reserve, and then carried

on our way. While we boated down the river, Jesus pointed out animals (Caiman, Black Hawk, Snowy Egret, Neotropic Cormorant, Ninja Turtles) and I eagerly scanned the skies for parrots.

When we arrived at our destination, other boats were already there. We were told to be quiet, respectful and stick to our part of the viewing station. As we walked through the jungle, I could already hear the birds. They were raucous and chatty and the clamorous sound brought a huge smile to my face. We broke through the trees and looked across the ravine.

**Finally, there they were.**

It was as if Nature had opened her paintbox and splashed strokes of vibrant kelly green, rich lapis lazuli and deep ruby red on a canvas of leaves. I stared as bright flashes of crimson, cobalt, ochre and jade careened through the air.

Periwinkle heads bobbed next to sage and slate. Scarlet Macaws, Blue-and-yellow Macaws, Red-and-green Macaws, Mealy Amazons, Dusky-headed Parrots, Blue-headed Parrots: they were all there. Dozens upon dozens of birds, each taking their turn digging into the clay or flocking in the surrounding trees. I stood gobsmacked, gazing at their antics with my mouth agape and my eyes filling with tears.

After we watched for a while, Jesus informed us that today was very special. Obviously, you can’t make appointments with animals, so it’s always a toss-up as to how many – if any – you will see at a particular location. But on this morning, we had hit the jackpot of days: a gorgeous blue sky and 500–600 birds all partaking in the social event known as the clay lick. The guides remarked to each other about how rare a morning it was, hypothesizing it was perhaps due to the heavy rain we’d experienced

the previous day. Everywhere we looked, macaws were eating, parrots were boisterously playing, birds were sitting in trees preening and getting ready for the day. Wings were being stretched and tails spread; avian alliances forged and bonds renewed. It was, in a word, spectacular. We were told that the clay lick serves three important functions for the parrots in that part of the Amazon:

1. It provides minerals (sodium) that are otherwise lacking in their diet;
2. The clay neutralizes toxins found in some fruit/seeds they eat;
3. It is a social gathering place and “dating site” where the birds can get together, socialize, and find potential mates.

I took photo after photo until finally my husband (lovingly) told me it was time to put down the camera and just soak it in. So I did. He was right. I stood there gazing

at the multi-coloured spectacle before me with my feet in the dirt and my heart soaring with the birds. Marveling at how exceptional this experience was, I was filled with gratitude.

Later, after we’d eaten some breakfast surrounded by the sight and sound of birds eating theirs, we carried out all that we’d brought in, loaded up the boat and set off back to the lodge and onto our next adventure. Sitting on the bench, the boat’s motor humming in my ears, I grinned up at the sky, my heart near to bursting. I could still hear the birds chatting in my head, the air alive with colour. As we moved up the river, I spotted a large flock of macaws sailing up over the tops of the trees, in constant communication as they flew above the canopy.

They were getting on with their day, too – and it was a joy to see. ☐

*For more information on sourcing responsible travel:*

*The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) is a global network of professionals, institutions and individuals helping to put environmental and socially accountable principles into practice within the ecotourism industry.*

*Links to TIES, Wild Parrots Up Close, Parrot Lovers Cruise, Grey Parrot Excursions-Uganda and others can be found on the WPT website at: [parrots.org](http://parrots.org) >take action > ecotourism*

IT'S 4 IN THE MORNING AND IT'S TIME TO LEAVE. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO ARRIVE AT DAWN TO SEE THEM LEAVE THEIR ROOSTS. THEY LEAVE AS COUPLES, IN GROUPS, AND GO TO DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS WHERE THEY SPEND THE DAY LOOKING FOR FOOD.

WE HAVE TRAVELED 67 KM IN 6 DAYS WALKING AMONG THE PATHS OF COWS AND GOATS TO REACH THE HISTORIC SITES WHERE THE MACAW NESTS. WE COUNTED 301 MACAWS, OF WHICH 11 ARE JUVENILES, GIVING HOPE TO THE SPECIES.

## RED-FRONTED MACAWS:

Working together to bring them back from the edge

By Jhony Salguero Colque, Christian Orgaz and José Antonio Díaz Luque  
All photos © Parrot Conservation Bolivia (CLB)

THE DRY AIR RINGS WITH SHORT squawks: some are harsh, others musical. The medium-sized, all-green macaws with the bright red accents are very busy during the day flying to and from feeding areas, foraging, preening, and socialising. A pair wings its way around the valley with its juvenile chick in tow, the fledgling sporting a black forehead instead of the brilliant scarlet of his parents. Once the day is done they all gather at roosts in cliffs or the few remaining large trees to rest for the night.



The Red-fronted Macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*) is considered by International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to be one of three species of macaw most threatened with extinction worldwide. Endemic to Bolivia's rugged inter-Andean valleys ecosystem, the species

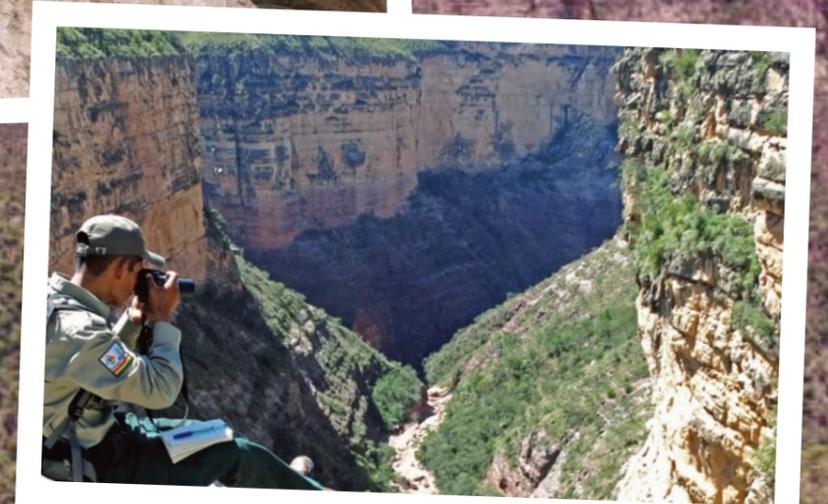
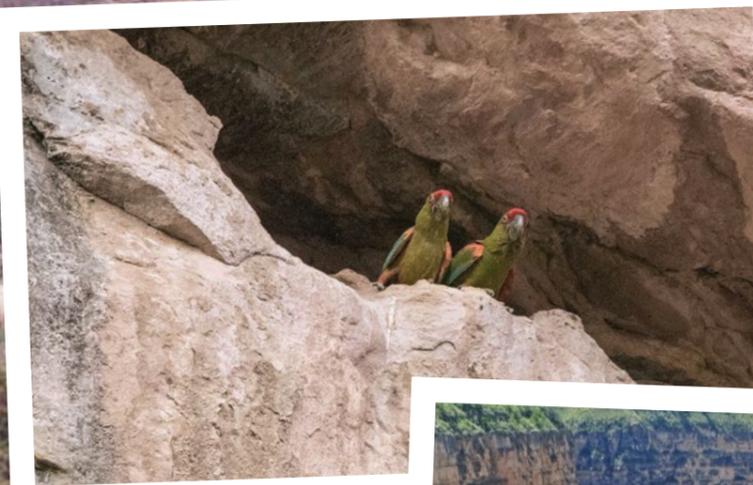
suffered a devastating population decline linked to trapping for international trade, where thousands of individuals were taken to eventually end up as pets, mainly in North America

and Europe. In addition, trapping chicks for use as pets locally and the killing of adults and juveniles as a result of conflict with farmers are the main threats that are bringing the species to the precipice of

extinction. Is it too late to save the species? Past experience says not necessarily: the Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*), whose wild population numbered only a hundred individuals at the time scientists discovered the species, has so far been spared the terrible fate of extinction because of a concentrated effort by the World Parrot Trust (WPT) and local and partner organisations.

Based on that success, in 2017, initial work began in the Red-fronted Macaw's range in the communities of Anamal and Las Juntas in the Jardín de Cactáceas Municipal Protected Area, to determine the main threats to the birds and find solutions that can help both macaws and people coexist.

A draft work plan has been completed, one that places an emphasis on community



involvement and leadership similar to an initiative for the Blue-throated Macaw and the Gran Mojós Municipal Protected Area (see *PsittaScene Winter 2016/17, Bolivian Community Creates Vast Reserve.*)

It has become clear from the Blue-throated Macaw effort that the true conservationists and beneficiaries from the protection of the macaws should be the people who live their day-to-day lives with them, and with this in mind, the Red-fronted Macaw Program was born.

Once the data from the initial research has been analysed, the resulting model can then be used in surrounding communities which have high-density breeding cliffs and/or where crop depredation by the birds is severe. The relationship of each community with its resident Red-fronted Macaws is unique and requires special consideration, accordingly, the team will work with the villages individually to meet the needs of both people and birds.

### Engaging communities to learn about and participate in conservation

Forming a network of local and international alliances is a necessity for achieving a long-lasting and consequential impact in the conservation of the Red-fronted Macaw. One way to work together with people is by offering environmental outreach programs, where hundreds of children (and some of their parents) will gain information about the wildlife in their area.

Communities where the macaws are found participate in yearly events such as the Saint's Day's festivals, which program staff will attend to spread awareness about the birds. Local people will also participate in community-led activities that bring income to desperately poor families. For many, help is urgently needed: farmers in the region encounter trouble with macaws preying on their peanut and corn crops, taken when natural foods become scarce during the dry season. This compounds

the effects of poverty and leads to conflict with the macaws. The Red-fronted team now has some practical solutions: work has begun with the communities of Anamal and Las Juntas, together with the Municipality of Comarapa, to begin planning for a Breeding Colony Guardian program (Guardianes de Colonias), which will support local communities under a model of sustainable development in the most important breeding areas for the species.

In two of the Protected Areas there are a total of 209 macaws, and the villagers in these areas will be in charge of them and the land, protecting it and utilising it sustainably with ecotourism and other activities backed by the WPT and its local partners. Among the commitments assumed by the communities will be fighting against wildlife trafficking, restoring habitat, rebuilding degraded riverbanks, and protecting the macaws' breeding sites. Following the breeding season, the team will host an exchange between the participating

communities to discuss challenges and possible improvements.

### Out in the field working with the macaws

For populations this small, maximising the breeding output of wild pairs wherever possible can help ensure that the population can stabilise and then grow. While there is an estimate of the population (600-800 individuals), true numbers are not currently known, making it critically important to protect adults, their nests and their chicks. In addition, staff, researchers, and community members will carry out a range-wide count to find out their current status. The census will identify the most important breeding areas that may be at risk, so that the Breeding Colony Guardian program can be begun in those places.

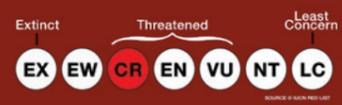
### Reduce or stop trapping of wild birds

Lastly, reducing or stopping trapping altogether is crucial; chicks are still being taken from their cliff nests. The team will find out how many companion parrots are currently being held in the Breeding Colony Guardian program communities; in Bolivia the government retains ownership of

all wild animals in the country and citizens are not permitted to keep them. However, under the program, a person who currently keeps a companion bird, can prove it is in good condition, and will learn more about its care, and will become a 'legal guardian' of that bird. This method averts a systematic government roundup of illegally held animals, preventing them from being warehoused indefinitely in rescues.

The team will also support the coordination of the government institutions responsible for the control of and prosecution against wildlife trafficking, and will help strengthen park officers' ability to enforce anti-trapping laws with equipment and training so that they can more effectively do their jobs. Encouraging the wide publication in the press of confiscations and subsequent legal actions will send a message to would-be trappers that their activities are not permitted.

These actions are coming not a moment too soon, as the Red-fronted Macaw is disappearing and prompt action is needed to save them. With the help of local, regional and international organisations and a plan of action put in place, the macaws' survival in the wild just may be possible. 📷



**Red-fronted Macaw**  
*(Ara rubrogenys)*

**World population:**  
< 800, decreasing.

**Where found:**  
Restricted to small area on the east Andean slope of central and southern Bolivia.

**Threat Summary:**  
Threatened by severe habitat loss, trapping for trade, and increasing persecution as a crop pest.

**About the Authors**

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**Left:** WPT staff and team members tour the Protected Area.

**Right:** In the communities of Anamal and Las Juntas, primary school students learn to be guardians in their areas where the macaws live.



**Left:** Red-fronted Macaws often raid farmers' corn fields during the dry season when natural food sources are scarce.

**Right:** Evangelina Quispe, from Torotoro village, is a representative of the Bartolines, a Bolivian women's group interested in creating administrative legal protection for their community's land.



**Left:** Sixto Aguilar, a Cactaceae Garden Protected Area forest ranger, teaches children to identify and protect wildlife.  
**Right:** Wild Red-fronted Macaws rest in the valley.

NEWS

Escaped companion parrots are now naturalised in 23 US states, study finds

Stephen Pruett-Jones, PhD, an ecologist from the University of Chicago who usually studies wild birds in Australia, noticed a large group of Monk Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*) on his daily commute past Hyde Park. After sending his students out to study the birds and organising an annual lab project to count them, he embarked on a larger study of feral parrots in the US.



© Nadine Trief

Pruett-Jones teamed up with a pair of other researchers to review data from the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count and Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird on bird sightings from 2002 to 2016. They found that there were 56 different parrot species spotted in the wild in 43 states, many escaped companion birds. Of these, 25 species are now breeding in 23 different states. The most common species reported were Monk Parakeets, Green-cheeked Amazons (*Amazona viridigenalis*), and Nanday Parakeets (*Aratinga nenday*). Pruett-Jones says there are now more Green-cheeked Amazons living in California than there are in their original habitat in Mexico.

Learn more: [tinyurl.com/y2l57ty8](http://tinyurl.com/y2l57ty8)

Mesoamerican Parrot Census Network  
New citizen science effort launches

Yellow-naped Amazon (*Amazona auropalliata*) numbers are declining rapidly due to trapping and forest habitat loss. The newly-launched Mesoamerican Parrot Census Network is looking for qualified volunteers to help locate and count Yellow-naped Amazons at their roosts, allowing researchers to gain knowledge of the birds' population size and distribution throughout their range in Central America.



The new group welcomes comments and questions about the network on their Facebook page, and encourages others to share photos, stories and thoughts on wild parrots.

Website: [parrotcensus.com](http://parrotcensus.com)  
Facebook: [fb.com/parrotcensus](https://www.facebook.com/parrotcensus)

Non-profit org Echo promotes reforestation on Dutch Caribbean island

WPT partner Echo recently began a new campaign, My Bonaire Tree, to raise awareness and funding for the reforestation of Bonaire's disappearing forest biome. Over the last two and a half centuries, Bonaire's unique dry forest habitat has been dramatically altered, causing devastating effects for native animals and people. By Adopting a Tree, supporters are helping to ensure the survival of species, such as the vulnerable Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*), that rely on the forests.

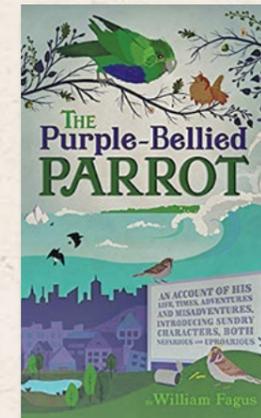


Learn more and adopt your tree: [mybonairetree.org](http://mybonairetree.org)

BOOK REVIEW

**The Purple-Bellied Parrot**  
Author: William Fagus  
Page count: 358 | ISBN: 978-1791993603

A delightful read for all ages – this book leads you on a journey of discovery and adventure as the Purple-Bellied Parrot tries to find out what his life should be like. The book begins with the Purple-Bellied Parrot living in a cage within a city apartment, unable to fly and not knowing life before the cage. After befriending some local sparrows, he escapes the apartment and embarks on a journey to discover who he is...meeting many unforgettable characters along the way.



A wonderful book, which encapsulates friendship and finding a way home, interspersed with some hilarious footnotes by the author. A moving, spellbinding and witty story which will stay with you for a long time after reading.

Get your copy from the author's website: [williamfagus.com](http://williamfagus.com)

2020 Parrot Calendars – on sale now!

Sale proceeds support parrot conservation.

Get your copy online at: [parrots.org/shop](http://parrots.org/shop)



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## PARROTS IN THE WILD:

### Sulphur-winged Conure

*(Pyrrhura hoffmanni)*

These striking little parakeets are equally happy feasting on the occasional apple as they are on native fruits and figs. They are found in Costa Rica and Panama in Central America.

Photo © Corey Raffel