

PSITTASCENE

Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Winter 2019/20



WORLD PARROT TRUST
30TH ANNIVERSARY SINCE 1989

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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

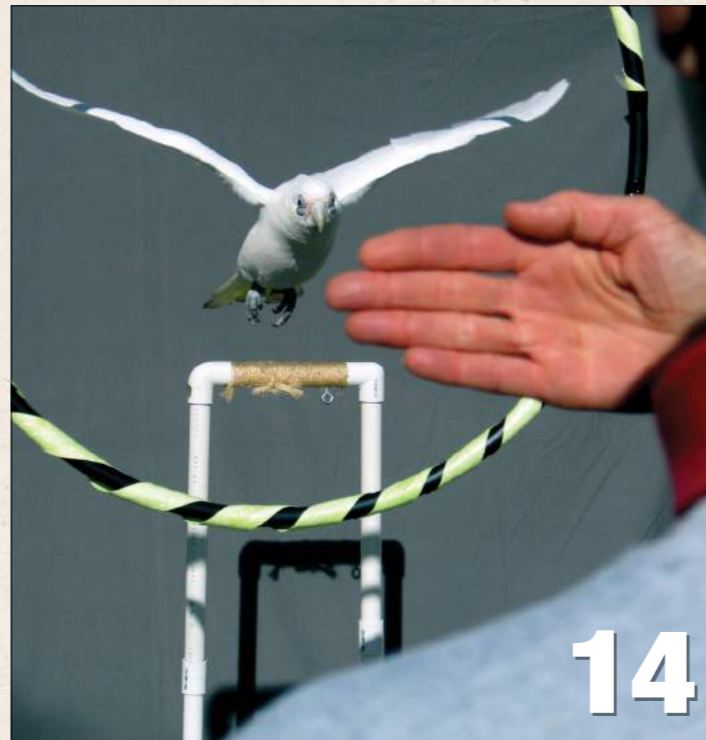
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ON THE COVER

Photo © Aaron Fellmeth Photography

Also known as the Orange-fronted Parakeet, the **Malherbe's Parakeet** (*Cyanoramphus malherbi*) is listed as Critically Endangered (IUCN) in its native southern New Zealand, with fewer than 300 individuals left in the wild. These birds are threatened by feral predators, loss of nesting trees and disease.

Learn more on **Page 9: The Malherbe's Parakeet: New Zealand's winged gem.**



A message from the Chairperson

So with this issue of *PsittaScene* the World Parrot Trust starts its fourth decade! How proud would my father be to know how much has been achieved since he had the idea to start a trust to help parrots, and how much more is planned thanks to the support of so many parrot-lovers around the world.

This time we bring you the story of an individual Grey Parrot, trapped in Africa but later released by WPT partners. Find out what news there is of Mshindi eight years on, and how she got her name. Rowan Martin also writes about Africa's other Grey Parrots, the Timnehs, and their small population in Sierra Leone.

On the other side of the world, Luis Ortiz-Catedral tells you of his work with Malherbe's Parakeets, the Critically Endangered species better known as the Orange-fronted Parakeet.

And we haven't forgotten companion and aviary birds in this edition. Pamela Clark considers training as a route to creating rewarding relationships, and we spend a day at Paradise Park where visitors can get close-up with free-flying parrots in deepest Cornwall where the Trust started all those years ago.



Alism

Alison Hales
WPT Chairperson

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR PARROTS

Hyacinth Macaw © Corey Raffel



What will be your legacy?

By including the World Parrot Trust in your will, trust or beneficiary designation, you are creating a personal legacy that will have a lasting impact for parrots and the places where they live.

For more information about including WPT in your planned giving opportunities, visit www.parrots.org/legacy, or contact the branch nearest to you (see page 23.)

"Wow!" I whispered, barely containing my excitement.

In front of us was a pair of Timneh Parrots, engaging in what appeared to be a courtship display. There was a distinctive 'head bob' followed by a clamping together of beaks and the regurgitation of food.

Then some playful nibbling, more bobbing and more feeding. After a few minutes, the male sidled up to the female, leaned in for another nibble, reached over his leg, their cloacae met and the act was complete.

I looked over at Momoh and Arnold, and we all smiled.

"Wow".



© Rowan Martin

The Timnehs of Sierra Leone

Rowan Martin, PhD. WPT Africa Programme Director

We already knew we were in a special place. Since setting off just after dawn to survey for Timneh Parrots we had encountered numerous small groups flying overhead and feeding on palm fruit.

As the mist lifted on the morning there was a sense the parrots were becoming more active. We were in a remote coastal region of Sierra Leone, one of only five small West African countries where Timneh Parrots occur.

Since 2018 World Parrot Trust (WPT) has been working with local ornithologists in Sierra Leone, Momoh Sesay and Professor Arnold Okoni-Williams of the University of Sierra Leone, to determine the status of these parrots and

importantly, to identify 'hotspots' and strategies to protect them.

Timneh Parrots were only recognised as a distinct species by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) in 2012, and in 2016 were categorised as globally Endangered. While little is known about their numbers in the wild, it's clear that they are much rarer than their brighter, brasher cousins the African Greys, and recent work in Guinea-Bissau had given us cause for concern.

Our research suggested there are no more than 1,000 throughout the entirety of Guinea-Bissau and probably far fewer. The remaining Timneh Parrots are largely restricted to just two tiny and remote islands, with numbers elsewhere depleted by trapping and forest loss.

Fortunately, initiatives led by IBAP (National Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas), with the support of WPT, Save Our Species and MAVA have been successful in working with local communities to find alternatives to trapping. For now, the tiny populations in Guinea-Bissau remain stable, but there is an urgent need to build on these efforts to protect wild populations elsewhere.

Back in Sierra Leone, the focus has been on making rapid assessments of five areas in the more forested southern and eastern parts. In particular we were targeting potentially suitable, but largely unknown, patches of habitat outside of existing National parks and other protected areas. Adapting an approach developed in Guinea-Bissau, the surveys combined direct observations with interviews with local community members. The people who live alongside the forest have a vast knowledge of local wildlife, their lives deeply entwined with the threats facing the parrots. As well as gaining insight into the status of the parrots we also wanted to understand people's attitudes and the values they place on wildlife. Such information is fundamental to building effective conservation.

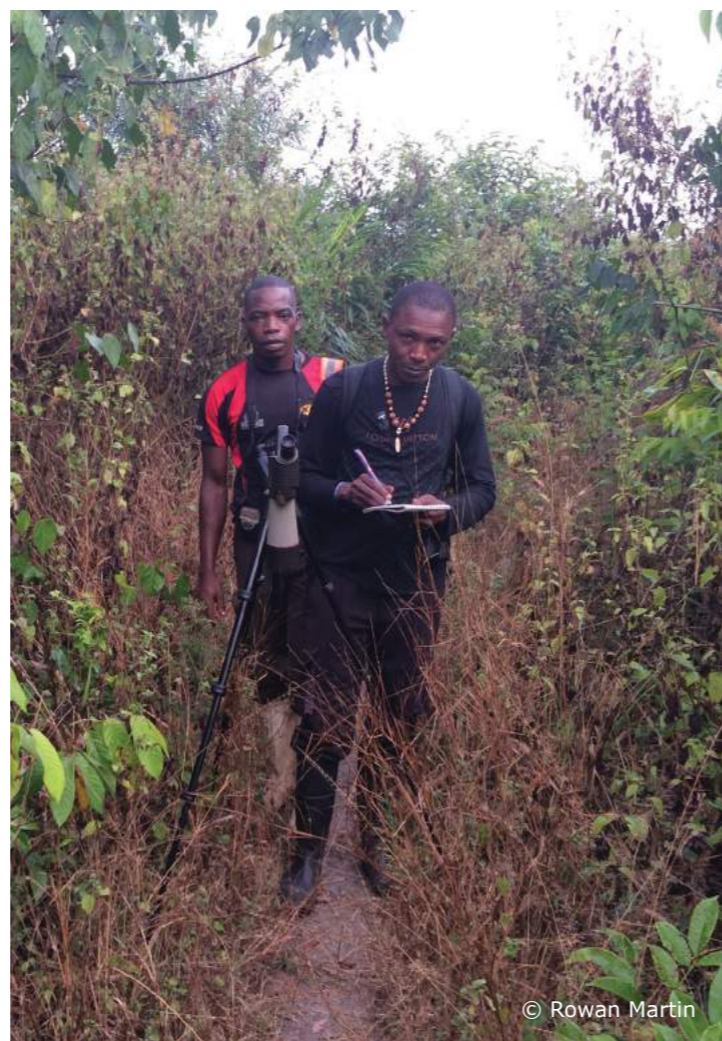
Of the 62 people interviewed, the majority had seen Timneh Parrots flying over, or feeding on foods such as the fruits of oil palms, in the past year. At three of the five sites, people reported how they saw them less frequently and in lower numbers than in the past, but at two sites numbers were considered stable.

Seven individuals admitted to having captured Timneh Parrots, describing how they sold them to middlemen or took them to the capital, Freetown. Parrots would be transported on public boats along the coast to Kambia district where they then crossed the border to Guinea. Additional interviews conducted with law enforcement officials based in the Kambia district verified this route.

Historically, Sierra Leone's western neighbour has been a major exporter of both Timneh and Grey Parrots. In the mid-2000s, Guinea issued CITES permits annually for exports of wild



© Rowan Martin



© Rowan Martin

parrots greater than the entire estimated national population. Many more were exported as captive-bred despite there being no captive-breeding facilities. Fortunately, in 2017 these 'loopholes' were closed down when CITES transferred the species to Appendix I. The governments of Sierra Leone and Guinea strongly supported this change as vital for protecting their wildlife.

The recent research by Sesay and Okoni-Williams in Sierra Leone also uncovered a small but possibly significant local trade in parrots as pets. Timneh Parrots were found for sale in a market stall in Freetown and several pet owners were identified. Two-thirds of people interviewed were unaware that Timneh Parrots were a globally threatened species, while a similar number did not know that their trapping and sale was prohibited under national law. Momoh Sesay discussed the situation with the stall holder, who no longer sells parrots. These findings suggested that significant gains could be made through raising awareness and that even apparently small actions can make a difference.

Encouragingly, the National Protected Areas Authority (NPAA) of Sierra Leone, which is the national government body that oversees the implementation of wildlife trade laws, is taking action. Following a tip off in 2018, a group of Timneh Parrots were seized in a village not far from the site we were surveying. The parrots were found together with a baby chimpanzee, and all were reportedly en route to an expatriate working at a nearby mine.

Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary stepped up to take in the chimp and the parrots. With support and guidance from the WPT, the parrots have been rehabilitated and by the time you read this article should be flying free again in the wild!

Direct observational surveys were also a central part of our investigations, complementing information obtained through interviews. At each site we walked a number of transects, collecting data on parrots as we went. Much of the coast of Sierra Leone is cloaked in mangrove forests and in many places the tangled mass of roots and branches rising from deep, sucking mud is all but impenetrable on foot.



© Rowan Martin



© Rowan Martin



© Rowan Martin

Upper right: Momoh Sesay and a field assistant conduct a survey transect. **Lower right:** Patrick Dauda and Momoh Sesay search for Timneh Parrots in Gola Rainforest National Park.

Upper and lower right: Confiscated Timneh Parrots at Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. **Middle right:** An examination of one of the birds reveals damaged flight feathers.



© Rowan Martin

Above: Traversing Timneh Parrot habitat.

On several occasions Momoh took to boats to conduct surveys within extensive areas of mangroves. Although both African Grey and Timneh Parrots are known to frequent mangroves, they are more commonly thought of as birds of closed canopy rainforest.

Yet during surveys the most sightings of Timneh Parrots were made in mangroves. It's possible that due to their inaccessibility, these swampy areas act as vital refuges for parrots in the region, providing nest sites safe from poachers. Local people reported seeing parrots in mangroves most frequently during the breeding season, supporting this idea.

Multiple surveys of some of the most extensive areas of rainforest in Sierra Leone, such as the Gola Rainforest National Park, have repeatedly found numbers of Timneh Parrots to be extremely low. Either such habitats are not

as important as once thought, or populations in these relatively accessible areas have collapsed.

Our attempts to verify reports of roosts used by large numbers of parrots just outside of Gola National Park found no signs these roosts still existed, sadly suggesting that numbers have been driven perilously low by heavy trapping.

Against this backdrop, the sense of joy among our team at seeing signs of breeding was even greater. There was no doubt this was a deeply precious site. Just as in Guinea-Bissau, this 'island' of forest had been protected in part through its remote location.

The challenge now is to ensure these sites, which are becoming increasingly rare, receive adequate protection, supported by local communities, government and the international community. ☐

Extinct Threatened Least Concern

EX EW CR EN VU NT LC

Timneh Parrot
(*Psittacus timneh*)

IUCN Red List Status:
Endangered

CITES Listing:
Appendix I

World population:
Likely much fewer than 100,000

Range:
SE Guinea, Guinea-Bissau (Bijagós islands), and southern Sierra Leone, Liberia and western Côte d'Ivoire.

Threat Summary:
The species has been heavily traded on the international market: 176,052 individuals have been exported from range states since 1975. Habitat loss is also significantly impacting the species' range. In many countries there has been marked losses of the birds' preferred nest trees.

THE MALHERBE'S PARAKEET

New Zealand's winged gem

LUIS ORTIZ-CATEDRAL, MICHAEL SKIRROW AND CRYSTAL DALBETH
PHOTOS © LUIS ORTIZ-CATEDRAL

The Malherbe's Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus malherbi*) (also known as Orange-fronted parakeet or *kākāriki karaka* in Māori) is one of the rarest New Zealand forest birds, and also one of the least studied. The taxonomy of the species alone has a 200-year history.

It has been considered a colour morph, a hybrid or a subspecies by various authors due to the similarity in colouration between it and many *Cyanoramphus* species. Recent molecular work has determined that Malherbe's Parakeets are in fact a separate species with a fascinating evolutionary history.

Unfortunately, by the time their recognition as a species came up, their numbers in New Zealand forests had gone down to alarming levels. Like many other New Zealand species, Malherbe's Parakeets are threatened by introduced predators.

Their survival nowadays is thanks to the ongoing work by the New Zealand Department of Conservation, which manages the remaining mainland populations of the species by creating predator-proof nests, and by controlling introduced predators like stoats and rats. Starting in 2005, an ambitious new approach was implemented: Malherbe's Parakeets are being bred or reared in captivity and released to offshore predator-free islands.

The captive breeding program, which includes the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust and the Auckland Zoo, continues to produce numerous juveniles that are released into the mainland population. Establishing populations via release of captive-bred birds has been successful for the Red-fronted Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*) and Yellow-crowned Parakeet (*C. auriceps*) — close relatives of Malherbe's Parakeets — so there is substantial evidence that in principle, another *Cyanoramphus* species could thrive on predator-free islands. However, their survival and persistence on islands is not fully understood.

From 2009 to 2018 we have monitored Malherbe's Parakeets on Chalky, Maud and Blumine Islands and have also collected opportunistic information on the behaviour of these birds. Our analysis shows that in the short term, Malherbe's Parakeets establish well in their new homes and can reproduce within months after release.

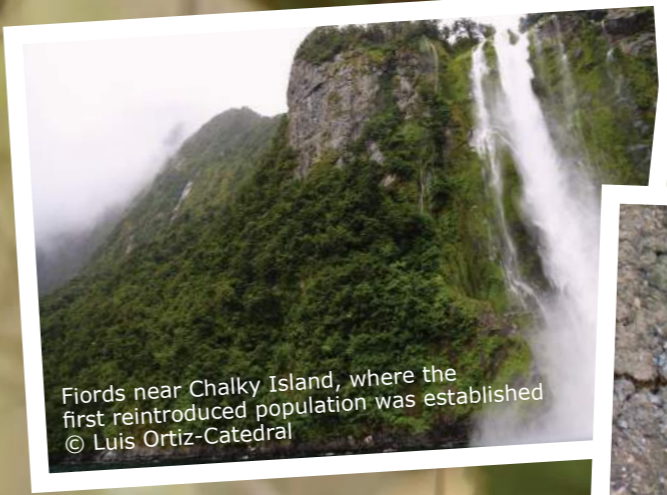




Male parakeet on Blumine Island
© Luis Ortiz-Catedral



Female in forest canopy © Luis Ortiz-Catedral



Fiords near Chalky Island, where the first reintroduced population was established
© Luis Ortiz-Catedral



Parakeet at nest burrow © Luis Ortiz-Catedral

Finding Malherbe's Parakeet nests on offshore islands is an interesting activity. It starts with watching a parakeet or two flying regularly to a specific location, then approaching the area carefully to register breeding behaviours, like courtship feeding or nest guarding. Then, when the parakeets leave the area, we need to inspect available hollows and cavities in the area using a flashlight and mirror. Some cavities are high in the canopy, and we can spend hours looking through thick foliage with binoculars scanning for potential hollows...only to find out that the nest we are looking for is located on a fallen log, on a rock crevice or a hollow on the ground!

On Maud Island we documented seven nesting attempts that differed significantly from the "standard" nest type that the species uses on the mainland. This is actually good news as it shows that captive-bred or captive-reared birds have behavioural flexibility that allows them to use the resources in their new homes.

A few years after their initial release, we have registered juveniles hatched on Chalky, Blumine and Maud Islands. We have also attempted to estimate population sizes based on these records, and by mapping areas of greater activity. Based on our records, the population of parakeets on Maud Island appears to be in very low numbers...so low that we only have sporadic detections.

On Chalky Island Malherbe's Parakeets coexist with the more abundant Yellow-crowned Parakeet. Malherbe's Parakeets there number approximately 50-100 birds. On Blumine Island numbers appear higher with around 200 Malherbe's Parakeets. Their distinctive chuckle can be heard overhead as they forage on the tall beech trees.

A fourth island, Tuhua, also had Malherbe's Parakeets introduced from captive stock but their numbers have not been established. Similar to the other three islands, parakeets readily

established after release and there have been records of juveniles hatched on site. However, it is uncertain how small or large their population is there. In 2020 with the support of the New Zealand Parrot Trust, we will attempt to unravel the mysteries of the Malherbe's Parakeets on Tuhua Island.

We will conduct an island-wide survey and collect information on their nesting biology that hopefully can help us understand how well they are establishing there. With plenty of offshore islands and the technology to control introduced predators more efficiently on the mainland, we believe that the future bodes well for these beautiful birds, and we hope that many more island populations are established to conserve a truly enigmatic New Zealand endemic. 📍

Special thanks:

Our work on Maud, Blumine and Chalky Islands has been supported by the Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund, Massey University, Brian Mason Scientific & Technical Trust and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. We have also received help from numerous volunteers to whom we extend our thanks.



Malherbe's Parakeet
(*Cyanoramphus malherbi*)

IUCN Red List Status:
Critically Endangered

CITES Listing:
Appendix II

World population:
Fewer than 300.

Range:
New Zealand, formerly throughout North and South Islands, now only on South Island in South Hurunui, Poulter and Hawdon River valleys. Captive bred birds introduced to Chalky Island, Fiordland, and Maud and Blumine Islands. Also introduced in the north to Tuhua Island.

Threat Summary:
This species has suffered from feral rat and stoat predation, and also loss of nesting beech trees through harvest and burning. Also lost is low-lying brush to deer, cattle and possums. Psittacine beak and feather disease found in a few individuals; regular monitoring now occurs. Sex ratio skewed towards males due to predation of females.

WPT AFRICA CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- 2019 IN REVIEW

From groundbreaking investigations leading to better protections for parrots threatened by trade to heartwarming tales of parrots rescued from trafficking now thriving in the wild, it's been another important year for parrots in Africa.



Illegal trade: Turkish Airlines takes action on trafficking of wild African Greys following investigations and public campaign

Policy: urgent publication of findings of investigations into of how legal parrot trade is used to conceal trafficked wildlife from Africa



Policy: results of field research and trade investigations presented to CEBCEM conference in Lagos, Nigeria



Flyfree: African Grey parrots rescued from trade in Uganda found thriving in wild 8 years after they were released

Research: New partnership formed with Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association to address parrot trade



Policy: Participation at CITES CoP18 in Geneva ensuring protections for parrots in trade

Conservation planning: Cape Parrot Conservation Action Planning workshop held in Hogsback South Africa



Illegal trade: Surveys of trade in parrots in markets in Nigeria completed

2019

- Jan **Flyfree:** Timneh parrots rescued from illegal trade moved to release site in Sierra Leone
- Feb **Habitat protection:** Research published on threats to Lilian's lovebirds in southern Africa's Mopane woodlands
- Mar **Eco-tourism:** WPT ACP Director participates in inaugural African Grey parrot ecotours in Uganda
- May **Flyfree:** WPT ACP Director visits partners in eastern DRC to develop partnership for parrots rescued from trafficking
- Jun **Illegal trade:** Launch of recommendations from USFWS project on 'Combating Wildlife Trafficking in Angola'
- Aug **Research:** First national status assessment for Timneh parrots published
- Oct **Flyfree:** ACP visits Cameroon with Zoological Society of London to partner in strategy for parrots rescued from trade
- Nov **Illegal trade:** New research collaboration launched with University of Exeter, UK, to examine bird trade in West Africa
- Dec



Download the full chart: tinyurl.com/WPTafrica2019



WHY TRAIN A Parrot?

© Chris Shank

We would not adopt a puppy without the expectation that we will need to train some basic behaviors, if we expect to have a well-behaved adult dog. However, when we bring a parrot home, we rarely entertain this same expectation beyond the need to teach the parrot to step up.

As a behaviour consultant, I regularly speak with well-meaning people whose parrots roam the floor chewing up the baseboards and chasing four-legged pets, who attack less preferred family members, and who scream for prolonged periods. Parrots, like all animals we keep as companions, need guidance. If they don't receive it, they develop behaviours that aren't consistent with a happy, socially well-balanced household.

These behaviour problems develop from a lack of training and lack of understanding about how behaviour works. Inappropriate diet, social interactions, and environmental deficits may also play a role. Thus, behaviour

consultations typically follow a similar pattern. We improve the diet, evolve social relationships to eliminate pair bonding activities, and increase enrichment and other opportunities for making choices. Then we discuss the most appropriate behaviour change strategies, including the alteration of behaviour patterns through the use of positive reinforcement. In other words...training.

In these cases, training involves the development of desirable responses and the inhibition of undesirable responses. For example, we can teach a parrot to talk instead of scream when it wants attention. We can teach a parrot to stay on a perch rather than get down to cruise the floor. Positive reinforcement is the behaviour change strategy of choice. This is the process of offering the animal a valued item after it has performed any behaviour that we have cued or would like to see again in the future. Any behaviour that gets a reward will occur more often in the future. Most often, when training begins, food treats are used as reinforcers until

others have been identified. This type of training results in a number of desirable outcomes, in addition to solving these urgent problem behaviours. We become better able to read body language. Positive reinforcement training creates greater trust between bird and owner. It also affords the parrot a much greater degree of control over his existence, increasing quality of life.

Often I hear the expressed concern that a parrot isn't food motivated. If you think about it, this can't be correct. Parrots need food to live, so they must by definition be food motivated. What owners usually mean when they say this is that their parrot has not seemed interested in taking a treat in exchange for a cued behaviour. If parrots are not motivated to earn training treats, it is typically because they are getting too many fatty and carbohydrate-rich foods in their daily diet.

Thus, we often must improve the bird's diet before we can modify his behaviour. If you convert the parrot to eating formulated foods and fresh vegetables with limited fruit, you will have a parrot who is "food motivated." The best practice is always to reserve seeds and nuts, as well as anything else the parrot values, for use as reinforcement. It's a win-win situation. The bird still gets to have treats, but has to earn them rather than finding them in the food bowl.

Basic behaviours that we should teach our parrots include stepping up, stepping off, going back into the cage, stationing, targeting, stepping onto a scale, and going into a carrier

The first signs of illness in a parrot can often be fluctuations in weight. Weighing your birds on a weekly basis is a recommended practice, so teaching them to step onto a scale is a very useful and practical behaviour to train.

It not only makes it easier for you as the caregiver to monitor their health, but it can also be a useful behaviour to employ in veterinary checks as well.



© Kathy Kaminski | Dreamstime.com

on cue. We can also teach some simple, fun behaviours like turning around or waving. Anyone can teach these things! You would be amazed at how forgiving, flexible, and adaptable parrots can be in the face of our own lack of training skills. They still learn quite readily and have fun doing it. They love this type of social attention.

We must accept that we are all trainers. We have the responsibility to think about what we are training our animals with our social attention... all of the time.

However, training is not necessarily easy for people in the beginning. It can be tiring because of the focus it takes. For many of us, so used to having our attention fragmented, this type of focus can seem like very hard work. And often, beginning training sessions reveal our own lack of brain-hand-eye coordination. This means practice for us, even when training simple behaviours like targeting. It can take a bit of repetition to get to the point where we don't feel so awkward.

The truth is, however, we are all trainers. Animals are always learning with every single social interaction they have with us. Their learning ability doesn't switch off and on. If they are always learning, then we are always teaching. This past year, I had one unhappy client react to my encouragement to teach her parrot to station, by saying, "I am NOT

a trainer." I had to point out to her that she previously had very effectively trained her parrot to scream and lunge aggressively. The fact that her training was unintentional doesn't matter. It was her reactions to her parrot's behaviours that reinforced them to the point where they became serious problems that required professional help to resolve.

We really don't have a choice. We must accept that we are all trainers. We have the responsibility to think about what we are training our animals with our social attention...all of the time. As I once heard zoo trainer and consultant Barbara Heidenreich say, "If an animal is aware of you, you must be aware of the animal." I have never heard better advice. Once we come to recognize this reality, interactions with our parrots become smoother and better behaviour results. I have trained myself to think always about what I might be teaching the bird every time I have an interaction. I have come to realize that my first impulses are often incorrect.

I now consciously ignore behaviour that I don't like, which includes highly aroused body language. I also work hard at trying to catch my birds in the act of displaying behaviour that I do want to see again in the future. When I do, I am quick to say a crisp "Good!" and follow that up with a food reinforcer. If we want to have well-behaved, happier parrots, we must assume the responsibility for guiding their behaviour, remembering that any behaviour that we reinforce with our attention is likely to be offered again in the future. ☐



About the Author

Pamela Clark CPBC, CVT is an IAABC certified parrot behaviour consultant whose base of experience includes work also as a trainer, veterinary technician, breeder and rehabber.

To book a consultation or read more of her free resources — including her popular behaviour blog — visit her website pamelaclarkonline.com, or find her on Facebook (@TheParrotSteward).

PARADISE PARK UK:

Where Birds Inspire

by Desi Milpacher

Established more than 45 years ago, UK's Paradise Park is a little slice of otherworldliness – an engaging family outing, a worthwhile educational experience and through the spring and summer especially, a cheerful, bustling place.

It has big aspirations, serving as a wellspring of aid for wildlife conservation in the UK and beyond.

**Paradise Park**
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY • CORNWALL UK



Upper left: Curator David Woolcock engages the crowd during one of the daily free-flight shows.

Upper right: Black-cheeked Lovebird chicks are deemed fit and healthy at their latest check up.

Lower left: Parrots are not the only birds to see, and in August 2019 the Park welcomed its first Caribbean Flamingo chick (inset).

Lower right: Well-appointed gardens shimmer with colour.



It's easy to imagine that you've been transported to the tropics on arrival at Hayle's wildlife sanctuary in the far south west of England.

This place is lush with trees, flowering shrubs, tree ferns and stands of bamboo. Time and the mild and moist climate in the county of Cornwall have allowed the trees to grow large, creating a mini-rainforest canopy that envelops the extraordinary wildlife collection within. It has big aspirations, serving as a wellspring of aid for wildlife conservation in the UK and beyond. The Park's efforts have earned it

many commendations; a recent zoo inspection assessment was rich with praise for top-notch animal husbandry, captive breeding programmes, fundraising for conservation and educational messages.

"It's wonderful that all the hard work by staff in the care and welfare of the animals, and the ongoing conservation projects, were recognised by the inspection team," says Alison Hales, Paradise Park co-owner and World Parrot Trust Chairperson.

Many of the staff came originally through student placements, getting summer jobs before becoming

full-time employees. Long-term associations with Cornwall College and the University of Exeter has led to hundreds of students getting valuable hands-on experience, and there are volunteers as well.

Inhabitants of the Park include unusual Keas and Eclectus Parrots, conures of every colour, exuberant macaws and cockatoos, tiny lovebirds and more – all calling and capering with each other. In the lorikeet encounter flight there are *oohhs* and *ahhhs* from the visitors as the birds swoop back and forth overhead like energetic rainbows, eventually settling on waiting hands to feed from small pots of nectar.



Left and centre: Much preparation goes into the daily feeds; each species has a specific diet regimen. **Upper right:** A Timneh Parrot free-flies. **Lower right:** A Keeper works with Scarlet Macaws featured in the free-flying show.

Left: Trained free-flying macaws settle onto a rest station during a show. **Right:** A Yellow-shouldered Amazon collects coins for WPT conservation.

The Park is home to over 130 bird species, as well as Red Pandas, Red Squirrels, Asian Otters and a posse of domesticated pygmy goats, sheep, and rabbits. Every morning Keepers arrive knowing they have busy days ahead of them. Summer and winter the birds and mammals have complex feeding regimes, along with daily cleaning and regular enclosure maintenance.

Red Squirrel, threatened by invasive Grey Squirrels, for release.

With the 'Red Panda Experience' a lucky participant, for a fee, gets to be up close and personal with one of the Red Pandas trained to meet visitors. There's nothing quite like it, and best of all the encounter has raised over £12,500 towards the charity Red Panda Network.

And critically, the World Parrot Trust has been given the most support as it was established at the Park by the late Mike Reynolds in 1989.

"I am very proud of the dedicated animal care team and the work they do. Not just with the animals and birds, but also interacting with visitors, especially during the flying displays and feeding events."

These are great opportunities to pass on important information about some very rare and endangered species and how we can all help make a difference in the fight to save them from extinction."

*~ David Woolcock,
Paradise Park Curator*

Mealtimes are especially brisk: in the kitchen the Keepers chop fruit and veg to suit large or small beaks; they also prepare dry and sprouted seeds, a variety of nuts, specialist pelleted foods, nectar and a range of meats, all to suit the needs of their special charges. These are put into row on row of stainless steel dishes lined up on long tables. Vital extra enrichment includes chewable toys made from natural items, unusual vegetables such as heads of lettuce, Brussels sprouts or figs and fresh branches, flowers and berries.

Clearly, wildlife conservation is topmost on everyone's minds after caring for the animals. The Park is involved in a number of projects, such as the decades-long commitment to the Red-billed Chough (a member of the crow family), and breeding the native

The Blue-throated Macaw, a Bolivian endemic, has found a firm friend in Paradise Park, which has been breeding it for several years. Six young macaws hatched at the facility travelled to Bolivia in 2013 as part of the decades-long project to bolster the tiny wild population.

In 2015, the Park received a pair of Grey-breasted Conures from Chester Zoo as part of a breeding program; five chicks hatched in their first season and new pairings with unrelated birds have taken place. The beautiful Mitchell's Lorikeet has thrived to create a strong breeding group, and a productive pair of Yellow-crested Cockatoos have contributed greatly to the captive population.

Many of Paradise Park's birds are on mutual breeding exchanges with other collections. All of the Park's birds are entered into an international database which helps ensure, genetically speaking, that the right birds get partnered together - diversity is the key to a healthy population.

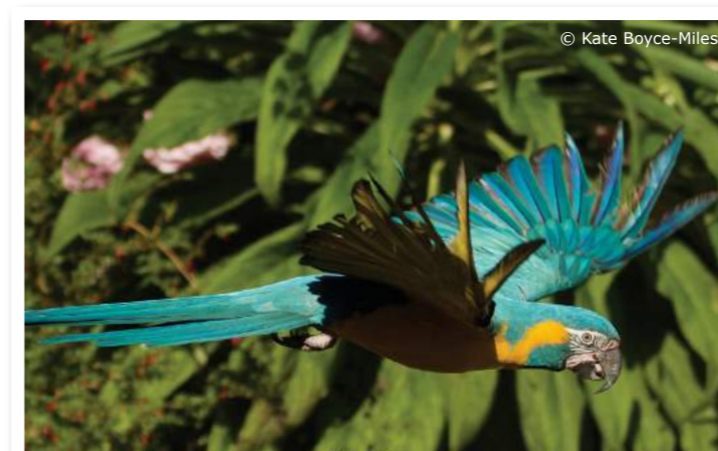
Educating the public about wildlife is year-round but most notably, from Easter all through the summer season, the Park has an afternoon

Free Flying Bird Show where visitors get the thrill of seeing expertly trained birds engage in natural behaviours. The staff develop strong bonds with the birds, giving them health checks and going through routines for them to prepare for their starring roles as ambassadors for their species.

Cockatoos, conures, keas, choughs, kookaburras and owls take part in engaging the audience about individual birds, their characters, native habitats, conservation, and unique adaptations. In another demonstration, several determined Roseate Cockatoos, or Galahs, and Yellow-shouldered Amazons fly to pick up a coin from a member of the audience, then go back to the

presenters to deposit it into a charity box. It has taken 30 years but over £90,000 has been given to the World Parrot Trust at these shows. And, in a stunning finale, a group of screeching macaws sets off together, in tandem, to circle high above the awestruck crowd.

At the end of the day visitors leave with their need to connect with animals and nature having been met. Final feeds and checks take place as the Park's residents settle down for the evening. Another day looking after these incredible beings and delighting and enlightening visitors is done. Tomorrow the inspirational work begins again. 📺



A Blue-throated Macaw, part of the free-flying show, glides around the picnic area.

Paradise Park's Conservation Projects

Operation Chough: Conservation project established at Paradise Park in 1987.

World Parrot Trust (WPT): Founded in 1989, WPT has supported projects for more than 70 species of parrot in 42 countries.

Barn Owl Project Cornwall: Collaboration with Cornwall Bird Watching and Preservation Society.

Red Squirrel Project: Captive breeding project to help establish more breeding groups within Cornish collections for eventual release.

Red Panda Network: Has established the world's first protected area dedicated to Red Pandas in eastern Nepal.

Blue-throated Macaw Project: A pioneering effort to save the Critically Endangered Blue-throated Macaw.

Learn more on the website: paradisepark.org.uk

Read the *PsittaScene* article **Escape to Paradise - The Origins of Paradise Park and the WPT:** tinyurl.com/y3he5txy



MSHINDI THE SURVIVOR:

Rescued Grey Parrots thriving in the wild send a message of hope

Article by Rowan Martin, PhD
Photos © Elaine Henley

IN THE EARLY 2010s, THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF GREY PARROTS WERE BEING TRAPPED IN THE WILD, STUFFED INTO BOXES AND SENT TO BREEDERS AND PET DEALERS AROUND THE WORLD. UGANDA WAS ONE OF THE MANY COUNTRIES THROUGH WHICH WILD PARROTS FLOWED OUT OF AFRICA TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AND IN 2011, THE UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY (UWA) TOOK DECISIVE ACTION LEADING TO TWO SEIZURES EACH OF OVER 100 GREY PARROTS.

THROUGH THE **FLYFREE** PROGRAMME, World Parrot Trust supported UWA and the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre (UWEC) in developing a rehabilitation plan, providing technical support and emergency funding for the construction of temporary aviaries.

Following quarantine, medication and health checks, the parrots judged fit for return to the wild were released by UWA and UWEC in Kibale National Park, a protected area of lowland forest in western Uganda. Following standard practice, each bird was

fitted with a leg ring so that they could be monitored as they made their way in the wild.

Now fast forward eight years to an eco-lodge, the Chimpanzee House, on the edge of the forest just a few kilometres from where these parrots were released. A group of parrot enthusiasts on a tour to view Grey Parrots are snapping photos of a handsome flock gorging on palm fruit. Imagine the excitement when one of the parrots was spotted sporting a ring. Elaine Henley, a Clinical Animal Behaviourist who took the photo, chose to name

this individual **Mshindi** - Swahili for **"Survivor"**.

It's incredible to think what this parrot has been through. Plucked from his forest home, Mshindi had been stuffed in an overcrowded box and transported hundreds of kilometres before being rescued, held as evidence, quarantined, rehabilitated and then given a second chance in the wild.

Once free Mshindi then faced all the usual trials of being a wild parrot - escaping predators, finding food and navigating parrot society. **A survivor indeed!**

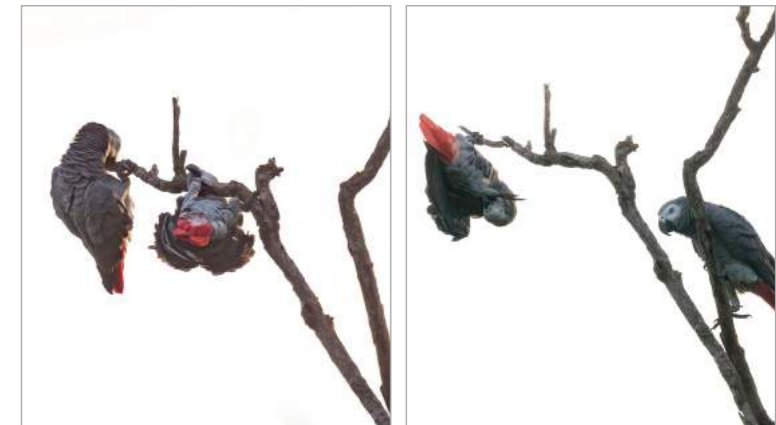
Dr Julius Kasigwa, a vet with UWEC who played a key part in the rescue operation, was thrilled at the news. "It's as if he's saying 'Here I am; still alive and enjoying nature, see my ring, eating the fruits of nature'"

A week later, WPT Africa Programme Director Dr. Rowan Martin visited the site as a guest expert on a Grey Parrot tour led by Elaine Henley. A parrot with a leg ring was spotted again; instead of stuffing its face with palm fruit, this time it was cavorting with another bird, playing and preening and looking every bit a part of a well-bonded pair. **Not just surviving - but thriving.**

Subsequent research has made use of video footage gleaned from previous visitors to the same spot and has revealed that multiple ringed birds have been showing up in the same tree for some years. Information like this is vital for building a picture for how parrots seized from illegal trade are faring in the wild, and informing how rescued parrots can best be managed.

The project, along with a further release in 2013, received a huge amount of media attention in Uganda and provided a unique opportunity to communicate messages to the general public about the devastating impact of the trade. Similar to other East African countries, it is illegal to keep Grey Parrots as pets in Uganda and there have been no large seizures of Grey Parrots in Uganda in recent years. In 2016 Uganda stood alongside other range states from across East, Central and West Africa in calling for the transfer of Grey Parrots to CITES Appendix I. This long overdue move placed tight restrictions on the international trade and ended all commercial trade of wild parrots.

The sight of Mshindi posing defiantly is not just a tribute to the hard work invested by UWEC, UWA and many others in rescuing these parrots in Uganda but also to those who have been working across Africa to end the trade and protect habitat for these fantastic birds. 📍



Top: Survivor Mshindi takes flight.
Middle: Mshindi bonding with another parrot.
Bottom: The 'Shades of Grey' tour visits a small eco tourism enterprise in the Ssesse Islands.

Acknowledgements

WPT would like to say a big thank you to Elaine Henley and Lori DeLeo of Shades of Grey Parrot Tours and Johnnie and Agnes Kamugisha, for their support for WPT, their efforts to protect Grey Parrots in Uganda and their diligent observations which led to this discovery.

NEWS

Parrots returned to the wild in Bolivia

On December 17, 2019 fifteen Blue-and-yellow Macaws (*Ara ararauna*), one Red-and-green Macaw (*Ara chloropterus*), 12 Canary-winged Parakeets (*Brotogeris chiriri*) and three White-eyed Conures (*Psittacara leucophthalmus*) were released back to the wild in Bolivia after an intensive 20-month rehabilitation by the Biodiversity Staff of the Santa Cruz Government, with permanent support from WPT and partner Fundación CLB - Parrot Conservation Bolivia.

The birds had been confiscated from illegal trade nearly two years ago and had been sent to the CLB facility. In attendance at the release was the Minister of Environment María Elva Pinkert, the Director of Protected Areas of the Santa Cruz Government Juan Carlos Añez Chávez, the head of the Wildlife Rescue Project of the Secretary of Environment of Santa Cruz Government Raul Rojas, and Alejandra Rojas Iriarte of the Fundación CLB Board of Directors.



© Dirección Recursos Naturales Gobierno Autónomo Departamental Santa Cruz

Why do parrots waste so much food?

'The extent, frequency and ecological functions of food wasting by parrots,' a study recently published in Nature Research's Scientific Reports by lead author Esther Sebastián-González and eleven researchers from six different institutions including WPT partner Fundación CLB - Parrot Conservation Bolivia, found that food wasting is a widespread behaviour found in the parrot species they studied. Their research has also shown that 86 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and fish feed on wasted food (either intact or half-opened) by parrots, and that 28 different species potentially acted as secondary dispersers of wasted fruits and seeds.

Read more:
tinyurl.com/uymcm7



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EVENTS

Think Parrots 2020
Sunday 14th June 2020
Kempton Park Racecourse,
Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, UK TW16 5AQ



Back for another year, the popular *Think Parrots* event is always an excellent gathering for those who are passionate about parrots and want to provide the best care for their birds. This year's event will once again see exhibitors offering a wide range of parrot goods and services, masterclasses and of course the free flight shows throughout the day. Don't miss out, get your tickets now!

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PARROTS IN THE WILD:

Peach-faced Lovebird

(Agapornis roseicollis)

The Peach (or Rosy) faced Lovebird's native range is southwestern Africa, but in the last four decades the species has become naturalised in the US. Photographer Corey Raffel spotted these two birds, either an adult feeding a youngster or two adults allofeeding, in Phoenix, Arizona. Here there's no evidence that the introduced parrots have affected native wildlife.

Photo © Corey Raffel



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***PsittaScene* Magazine** is the quarterly publication of the World Parrot Trust (WPT). Members receive a printed copy delivered by post.

Each issue has regular updates on the work being carried out by WPT, reports from the field, as well as topics to help parrot owners better understand their complex feathered companions.

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- Important parrot news from around the world, inspirational travel ideas, and much more!

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