

PsittaScene



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HUGO BOSS helping parrots
Lory Conservation Network



www.psittascene.org

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Psitta Scene

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from the director

Looking through the smog over the endless sprawl of São Paulo from my 16th floor room it's easy to become discouraged about the future of nature conservation, especially for Brazil's many spectacular and threatened parrots. But as Dr. André Saidenberg (our Brazil representative) and I have been reminded in the past few days, there are many inspiring players and partners in parrot conservation here. They, along with the cheeky pair of feral *Brotogeris* Parakeets that perch briefly on my window sill, give us hope for the future of parrots in Brazil.

That hope radiates across the south Atlantic in Africa as well. It may seem a bit delusional to remain hopeful in the face of the tragic stories we're reporting from Africa ("Greys Make News", page 10) but viewed another way, there is progress. While we too are saddened by the suffering of any one of these birds, we try to take a longer view. By looking at the parrot confiscations over the course of decades, rather than years or single events we actually see positive indicators of reduced legal trade and increased enforcement of existing law. Each confiscation is, after all, an opportunity to deter future trade, and ideally, an opportunity to release these birds back to the wild where they belong.

We are thrilled that our FlyFree campaign has grown into such a powerful force for saving parrots. Effectively connecting our thousands of supporters with the day-to-day needs of parrots and our partners around the world, tackling the wild bird trade, parrot welfare and conservation goals, all at the same time. There are a lot of essential ingredients which go into making this work, but at the core it's the support from you, our members, donors, and volunteers which make it all possible and successful.

Thank you!

Jamie Gilardi
Director

on our covers

FRONT One of only a handful of his kind now living on Nusa Penida, near Bali, this Mitchell's Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus mitchelli*) gets his bearings immediately after release. This small island is an experimental haven for species decimated by trapping elsewhere. If numbers can grow safely here, future translocations are possible (See page 6). © JDG

BACK Great news: Though highly endangered, the Vinaceous Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*) is commonly rescued from illegal wildlife traffickers. This bird is one of 13 that were confiscated, rehabilitated and released into a national park in southern Brazil where the species had been extirpated. A radio collar will help track its progress. © André Saidenberg

RESPECT THE PARROT

PARROTS.ORG/BOSSORANGE

MYPARROTDESIGN.COM

WPT and HUGO BOSS

Working Together for
Parrot Conservation



SOPHISTICATED. FULL OF CHARACTER. EXTRAORDINARY.

That's how many people describe parrots. So it's no surprise that a parrot should be chosen by fashion leader HUGO BOSS to represent a new direction for their BOSS Orange collection. How this decision relates to saving parrots however, might come as a pleasant surprise.

International Design Contest

Under the guidance of BOSS Orange Creative Director Eyan Allen, an international T-shirt design competition was launched last spring on the social networking site Facebook. Drawing inspiration from a parrot-themed T-shirt already in the BOSS Orange collection, participants were asked to design an original, unique tee. More than 1,200 ideas were submitted from more than 60 different countries.

The winner of the contest was 25-year-old Esteban Lalama, a graphic designer from Ecuador. Out of the 30 very best submissions, Eyan Allen chose the design he found most inspiring for the BOSS Orange T-shirt: "We could already see Esteban's design as a piece within the BOSS Orange collection. I like the fact that he took the parrot and distilled it to an abstract, giving it a very modern twist." Lalama spent a day at HUGO BOSS in Germany with Eyan Allen and the BOSS Orange Creative Team. Together they chose the material and colours for his winning tee and followed its technical realisation.

Love your Tee. Respect the Parrot.

With the production of this special edition T-shirt, **BOSS Orange** has been inspired to do more to **save parrots**. Starting this spring, they are launching an international "Respect the Parrot" campaign online and in more than 60 countries where BOSS Orange fashions are found. Designed to build awareness, empathy and support for endangered parrots, this campaign has been accompanied by a second extraordinary step - the sponsorship of WPT projects in Bolivia, Costa Rica and Honduras with the generous contribution of €50,000 (US\$68,000 or £42,000).

Saving Parrots in Central and South America

With this grant the WPT is initiating two exciting new projects to restore the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) to areas of its former range in Central America. We are also deepening our commitment to saving the Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*) in Bolivia.



"Parrots in Freedom, Beauty Returns" (Honduras)

Once widespread, the Scarlet Macaw is now regionally extinct in much of its former range. Working with the Macaw Mountain Bird Park and Nature Reserve and Asociación Copan, and the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History (IHAH), WPT will develop a rehabilitation and release facility at the Parque Arqueológico Ruinas De Copan, a National Park and Mayan Heritage Site. We hope to see Scarlet Macaws once again fill the skies there, much as they did during the times of this great ancient civilisation.

“The Blue-throated Macaw is a Critically Endangered species and one of the rarest birds on earth. The support of BOSS Orange will further our field studies and help fund important conservation actions needed to ensure the survival of the species”
- Dr. James Gilardi, WPT Executive Director

“We are enthusiastic to receive the support of BOSS Orange. With their sponsorship of this work, they are proving to be a true friend of the parrots”
- Steve Milpacher, WPT Director of Business Development

Trials & Triumphs of Boss & Orange (Costa Rica)

WPT is partnering with The ARA Project to return Scarlet Macaws to Tiskita Biological Reserve in the Osa Conservation Area. Joining more than 80 other recently released macaws will be two very special birds - Boss and Orange. Boss was poached from his nest at 10 days of age, sold and rescued just in time; Orange was raised in captivity. Both are set for release in the summer of 2011.

The World's Rarest Wild Macaws (Bolivia)

The Blue-throated Macaw is one of the most endangered of all wild parrots with just over one hundred individuals in the wild. Since 2002, WPT has been working with an international team of conservationists and biologists to save this species from extinction. Sponsorship provided by BOSS Orange will further efforts to assist nesting birds, to ensure the survival of their offspring and to better understand the species' delicate ecology and unique habitat.



The gorgeous new "Parrot T-shirt" will be featured as a special edition in the BOSS Orange Spring/Summer 2011 collection and online at the BOSS Orange website.

Thank You



© Flávio Mota

Because of the outstanding generosity of many supporters, donors, and foundations we are able to continue our work. We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to those who have contributed to World Parrot Trust projects in the past few months.

Special Sponsors, we thank you:

Special thanks to the **HUGO BOSS Corporation**. Their sponsorship through their BOSS Orange brand will have a tremendous impact on our programs to save macaws in Honduras, Costa Rica and Bolivia (see pages 3-4).

For ongoing support, we thank you:

- The **International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators (IAATE)** for their continued support of our Blue-throated Macaw project with a US\$2,500 grant.
- Dave Kramer of **DJ Feathers Aviary** whose annual event "Pictures With Santa", raised over US\$1,000 (£617) and attracted dozens of new WPT members.
- **Carol Cipriano and husband Gary** for their outstanding dedication to ensuring the success of WPT's Annual Parrot Lover's Cruise.
- Steve Martin and his team at **Natural Encounters Inc. (NEI)** for their continued efforts now including the sale of 200 Blue-throated Macaw T-shirts at their free-flight bird show at the State Fair of Texas.
- And for their outstanding contributions: Albertino Abela, The Eleanor Dees Foundation, Bill and Jeri Goodman and Bill and Terry Pelster.

For fighting trade, we thank you:

- The 230+ individual donors who have contributed over US\$62,000 (£38,000) to our FlyFree campaign (Autumn 2010).
- The **American Federation of Aviculture** for their financial support to assist with the rescue, rehabilitation and release of 300+ Amazon parrots in Brazil.
- The **Folke H. Peterson Foundation** for their generous annual grants which provide essential assistance to further our work to end the wild bird trade and return parrots to the wild.
- For their extraordinary generosity: Claudia Bauer, Alain Breyer, The Bungie Foundation, Ricardo Charles, Carol and Gary Cipriano, W. Leon and Vicki Dunlap, Michael C. Frieders, Twila Frieders, Per-Anders Jorgensen, Ellen C. Kale, Evet Loewen, Jean M. McNeill, Alan Merkel, Peter Molesworth, P.R. Norris, Nadia Semczuk, Ake Strandberg and Fran Vogel.

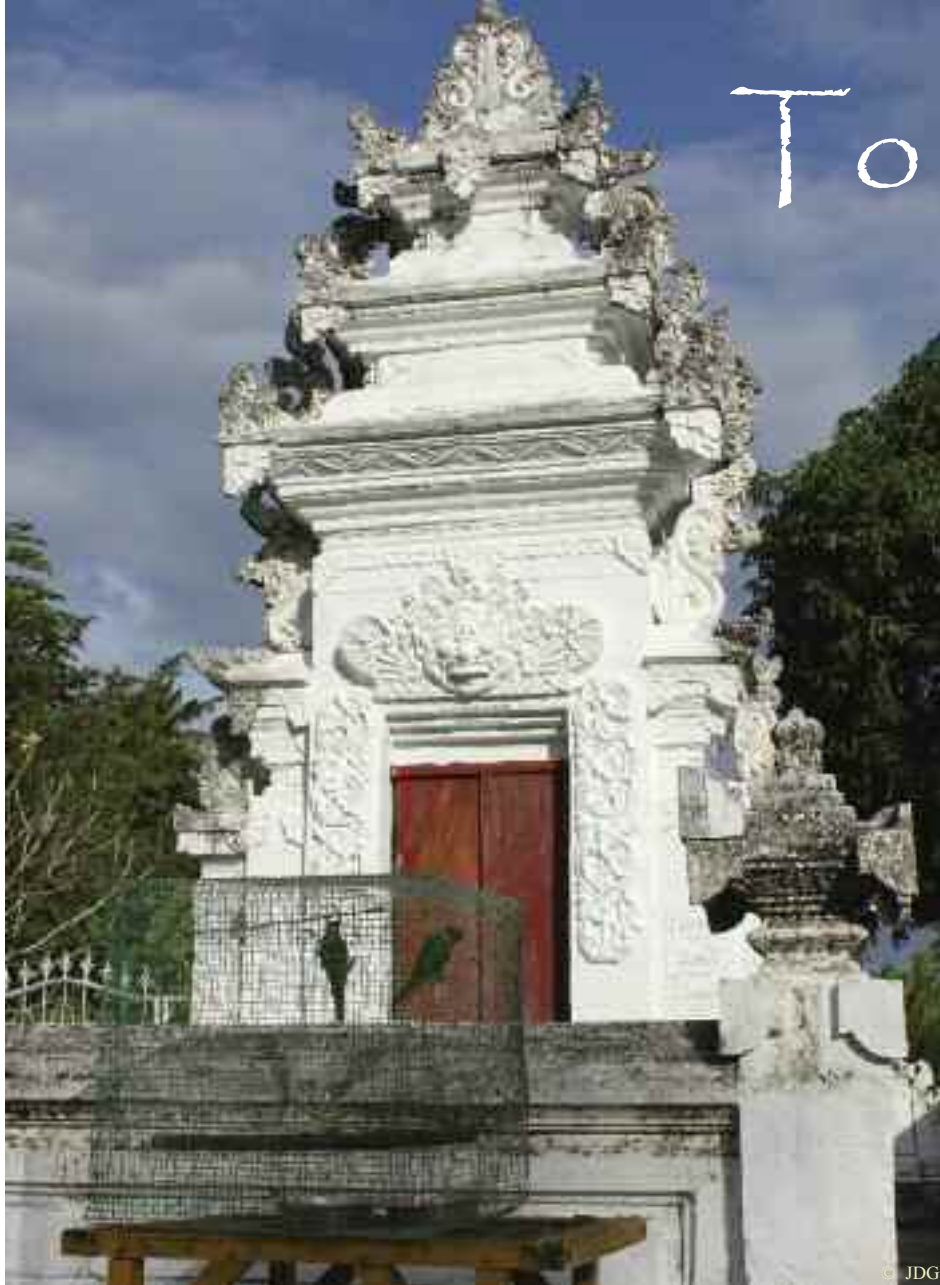
For the Grey parrots, we thank you:

- The 220+ individual donors who made contributions to help rehabilitate recently confiscated Grey Parrots.
- And for their notable generosity: Victoria Brundritt, V. Gialias, Julie Kapato, Ellen Selden and Jennifer White.

We can't say it enough:

Thank You

“ The World Parrot Trust is one of my highest personal priorities in terms of charitable giving for avian conservation. Please consider my donation as a continuing vote of confidence in your work. It gives me a great sense of satisfaction to help you achieve your goals. ”
- Evet Loewen, WPT member since 2005



To Wing on a

The two caged Mitchell's Lorikeets sat on alert as the priest slowly moved around them, made offerings, waved incense and chanted – a poignant ritual befitting the occasion. In time, the cage was quietly opened and the two birds flew immediately to freedom.

For years, our Indonesian partner, the Friends of the National Park Foundation (FNPF), has been developing a clever conservation programme akin to the New Zealander's use of offshore islands to rescue threatened birds from extinction. Their director, I Gede Nyoman Bayu Wirayudha (better known as "Bayu") has conducted several wildly successful releases of the Bali Starling (*Leucopsar rothschildi*) on a small island to the south of Bali called Nusa Penida. They are now starting releases of the critically threatened Yellow-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*) and the Java Sparrow (*Padda oryzivora*) as well. By working with many of the communities on the island to raise conservation awareness and helping local people with reforestation of their habitats, Bayu and his team are creating a well protected sanctuary for these rare birds. Some are native to the island, like the cockatoo, and others are not, but Nusa Penida is a safe place to release them initially. Once their numbers build up there, the birds can then be translocated back to the main islands of Bali, Java, and Lombok.

For over ten years, Bayu has been breeding Mitchell's Lorikeets and occasionally acquiring birds from traders so they aren't lost into the pet trade. In April 2008, the FNPF (www.fnpf.org) team released three Mitchell's on Nusa Penida to see how they would fare in that environment, particularly in terms of whether they were able to find sufficient food.

Lory Conservation Network

The Lory Conservation Network (LCN) was formed by the World Parrot Trust in 2009 with the specific goal of connecting zoos, bird parks and lory exhibits around the world to build effective conservation programmes and save some of the most endangered birds in the world – the lories.

Members of the network partner with parrot enthusiasts, researchers, local communities and government leaders to save these amazingly diverse birds.

Three LCN projects are featured here. "To Wing on a Prayer" is WPT Director Dr. James Gilardi's story of the release of a pair of rare Mitchell's Lorikeets, a subspecies of the Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) in Indonesia.

The stories that follow portray the experiences of two Master's students whose research in the Cook Islands was supported by the LCN this past year. Their reports, on the Blue Lorikeet (*Vini peruviana*) and the Rimatara or Kuhl's Lorikeet (*Vini kuhlii*), are summarised here and available, in their entirety, online.

[Read More](#)

www.savelories.org/projects

Prayer

By Jamie Gilardi



© Photos by JDG



One bird, which had only one foot, disappeared in the first week. The other two were seen frequently for well over a year, apparently doing well in what are now mostly coconut plantations with small patches of secondary forest scattered about. Over the past four months, only one bird has been seen in the release area. It's not known if the second bird dispersed or died.

This past year, the FNPF acquired two young Mitchell's between six months and a year of age. They appeared to be strong fliers and therefore good candidates for release. On the 13th of July 2010, I joined the FNPF team in Bali. We took a "fast" ferry for about 60 mins across the choppy waters to Nusa Penida followed by a short drive to their bird sanctuary where these birds were being held. They also had several pairs of adult Mitchell's and dozens of Bali Mynahs both in captivity and in the wild.

Bayu had already made all the arrangements for the release which took place in a large Hindu temple very close to the bird facility. The local priest presided over a special pre-release ceremony which involved about forty minutes of chanting, making numerous offerings, incense burning and other rituals. Once the ceremony was over, we set up the cameras and Bayu and the Priest together opened the cage. The birds immediately flew into the nearby trees. Both appeared to be strong flyers, and although they were separate at first, they called constantly and flew together within minutes of the release. We soon heard the wild bird calling in the distance.

(P6) After months of preparation, two Mitchell's Lorikeets await release on a small island in Indonesia. They joined one remaining wild bird released with 2 others in 2008. Post-release (ABOVE) their continued survival (and visits for nectar) bring hope for future releases to their former range.

During the hours after the release, we saw the two released birds flying into the coconut palms and other trees, preening and sampling various bits of leaves and flowers.

I stayed on for two more days, monitoring the released lorikeets in the mornings, and spending my two evenings there across the island with the last four remaining Yellow-crested Cockatoos on the island (three wild females and one released male). The morning after the release, both lorikeets were staying within 100 meters (330 ft) of the temple. They were flying strongly, sampling fruits, flowers, and seeds, and staying close together. The following morning there were two Mitchell's Lorikeets in the trees above the sanctuary, one of the released birds and the one wild bird which has been in the wild for over two years now. They were coming and going and seemed quite happy to have access to nectar provided by the sanctuary. It was unclear what the status of the third bird was, but we've supported one of the FNPF staff to track their post-release activities. As we go to print we've gotten news from Bayu that his team has seen five Mitchell's together, indicating that all of the released birds survived. We certainly hope they are in fact thriving.

The Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) is native to hundreds of islands through Indonesia, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia, and much of northern and eastern Australia. It is also a hyper-variable species with some 20 recognised subspecies – more than any other parrot. The Mitchell's Lorikeet (*T. h. mitchelli* above) is one of them and is actually the most westerly distributed of the entire lorikeet family. It was historically found only on the Indonesian islands of Lombok and Bali. In recent decades, capture for the pet trade has eliminated all these birds from the popular tourist island of Bali, and has left populations on Lombok very low, possibly with tens to hundreds of individuals remaining on the forested volcanoes there. The birds on Lombok are currently unprotected, continue to be trapped, and they sometimes show up in bird markets, especially in Bali.



Cyclone Survival

By Kimberley Jennings

As I touched down on the tiny atoll of Aitutaki in the Cook Islands I couldn't believe my eyes. It is a quintessential "desert island" where sparkling white sand beaches are set against lush green foliage and a never ending blue sky. Aitutaki is literally a jewel shining in the middle of the South Pacific. It is surrounded by the most stunning lagoon in varying shades of vibrant aquamarine. My eyes ached from the onslaught of colour, especially since I'd just left a dull grey Yorkshire summer behind.

I was in the Cook Islands as part of my Masters course at the University of Leeds, UK. The Cook Islands Natural Heritage Trust and the World Parrot Trust both supported me in my research on the population and ecology of the Blue Lorikeet (*Vini peruviana*).

While Aitutaki appeared utterly flawless to my untrained eye, it was in fact, still recovering from a devastating cyclone which hit the island in February 2010. Gusts up to 80-100 km/h (50-62 mph) blasted over the tiny atoll and destroyed many houses and much of the island's precious vegetation. Disturbances like this can have a significant impact on small, fragmented populations like the Blue Lorikeet's.



The Blue Lorikeet is sacred to the Cook Islanders and fondly referred to as the "Nun Bird." The population is hanging on despite a devastating cyclone in 2010.

The focus of my research was to quantify how many lorikeets survived and if the cyclone affected their behavioural ecology. Aitutaki is of paramount importance as it is home to the world's largest Blue Lorikeet breeding population.

I spent my first few days finding my way around the island by bike. I promptly gave that up after falling off head first down a hill! One bandaged hand and leg later, I limped off early one morning on my first transect route. I hadn't even made it out the garden surrounding my lodge when two energetic and loud lorikeets flew across my path.

So far so good...at least two had survived! Over the next few weeks, I found if I sat quietly on my veranda, lorikeets would feed on the flowering plants right in front of me. Witnessing their intricate feeding behaviour was an unbelievable experience. The birds have short necks and cannot reach the nectar hidden in the tubular flowers. Instead they nip the bottom and use their long tongues to gather food. I've seen a lorikeet visit ten or more flowers on a single hibiscus tree.

I believe this behaviour helped the remaining Blue Lorikeets survive. My research showed that the birds moved away from their primary food sources of coconut, banana, mango and kapok flowers in favour of smaller, more herbaceous plants which began to re-flower relatively quickly after the cyclone damaged the island.

The good news is the Blue Lorikeet has survived. The bad news is that the direct hit by Cyclone Pat caused the loss of over 50% of the population, leaving an estimated 1,448 birds. The demographics of the population were completely altered as virtually all the juvenile birds were killed.

Despite the clear catastrophic impact Cyclone Pat caused, behavioural observations reveal that the lorikeet has benefited from being a habitat generalist. While their distribution, habitat and feeding preferences have changed, a relatively large proportion of the population survived the cyclone and there is every chance the population will increase in number again.



Invasions and Reintroductions

By Rachael Heptonstall

After 28 hours of flying and 3 aeroplane changes, I arrived on the stunning tropical Cook Island of Atiu on 27th May 2010. This was to be my home for 6 weeks while I carried out research for my MSc project at University of Leeds, UK. I would be studying the distribution and abundance of the Common Myna Bird (*Acridotheres tristis*) following an eradication programme launched by Gerald McCormack, Director of the Cook Islands Natural Heritage Trust, the previous year. Mynas were brought to Aitu in the early 1900's to control agricultural pest insects and have since become pests themselves.

In April 2007 twenty seven Rimatara Lorikeets (*Vini kublī*), "Kura" as they're known on Atiu, were reintroduced to the island from Rimatara, French Polynesia. Within two months of their release four had flown to the nearby island of Miti'aro leaving 23 on Atiu. Fossil evidence suggests the Kura resided on Atiu prior to the 1820's but were extirpated through the exploitation of their colourful feathers for ceremonial use.

Mynas had been observed harassing and attacking adult and juvenile Kura at their nests. The eradication programme was introduced to reduce the population size of the mynas and give the



© Peter Odekerken

Kura a couple of (peaceful) nesting seasons to establish their population on Aitu.

As no one had estimated the lorikeet population since 2007 I decided to survey their numbers in conjunction with the myna survey.

Due to the potentially irregular distribution of lorikeets during daylight hours, I tested four methods to estimate the birds' distribution and abundance. I chose to use a Group Observation Count using pupils from the local Enuamanu school. A large team of people was split into 10 pairs. Each pair was

dropped off at a popular lorikeet feeding site at roughly the same time to ensure that the birds recorded at each location were different individuals. I further reduced the possibility of double counting by selecting locations that were spread far apart. The recorded counts from 2 days of observations were 104 and 111 respectively, which suggests that the lorikeet population has increased successfully from 23.

The logistics only allowed for simple observation counts so results obtained on the lorikeet population may not be as reliable as we had hoped. Still, the count does suggest with some confidence that there has been a significant increase in population size. The presence of healthy juvenile lorikeets confirms that lorikeets are breeding successfully on Atiu.

Incidentally, the results of the myna survey showed an overall reduction in the Common Myna population from approximately 6,000 birds before the eradication programme to just over 3,100 a year later. Future assessments of Myna, Kura and pest insect populations as well as comprehensive habitat assessment are recommended.

This was a wonderful experience, enhanced by the warmth and generosity of people of the Cook Islands, especially Atiu, a number of whom will remain lifetime friends and colleagues.



© Rachael Heptonstall

The stunning Kuhl's or Rimatara Lorikeet was reintroduced to the island of Atiu in 2007. From 23 individuals the population has increased successfully despite interference by introduced mynahs (inset).





© Uganda Wildlife Education Centre

Greys make News

Three vehicles carrying crates labelled “motorcycle parts” were stopped and inspected on the border between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda in equatorial Africa. The crates actually contained live African Grey Parrots. When discovered the smugglers jumped into two of the cars and fled. They left behind one vehicle and about 150 parrots.

African Greys (*Psittacus erithacus*) continue to make headlines across central Africa with a spate of confiscations, seizures and trade reports in the past few months. Most of the recent news is coming out of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Cameroon.

Uganda. The birds left behind at the border checkpoint were the lucky ones. They were sent immediately to the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC) where they were greeted by a knowledgeable and prepared staff. Immediate emergency support and veterinary care was provided by Dr. Noel Arinteireho and his staff – a rare situation in this part of the world, perhaps impossible just 6 months previous.

For the World Parrot Trust, this preparedness has been one key part of our FlyFree mission. In working to end the wild bird trade and return parrots to the wild we need partners on the ground, ready for

action, when and where the need arises. Just three months before this seizure, Dr. Arinteireho had been part of a WPT veterinary team immersed in African Grey parrots at the Lwiro Sanctuary in the DRC. There, he joined Dr. Gino Conzo and Dr. Davide De Guz to provide specialised treatment for over 500 confiscated Greys (See *PsittaScene* 22.4, Nov 2010). Drs. Conzo and Guz were sent to Lwiro from Italy by the World Parrot Trust, supported by donations received through our FlyFree campaign.

Although UWEC has taken in small numbers of confiscated Greys in the past – they did not at this time have appropriate aviary spaces to handle the 125+ birds that survived this seizure. Upon hearing of their plight, the WPT immediately sent funds for the birds’ care and construction of rehabilitation aviaries, as well as leg bands to assist with future identification. As it turns out, it was not a moment too soon. Less than 2 weeks later another 140 Greys from a separate confiscation joined the border birds at

the Centre. That shipment was also destined for illegal export, most likely to the Middle East or Asian markets.

Instead, the birds remain in Uganda where the African Grey is now extinct from much of its former range. We hope that in the coming months these birds can be released into one or more of the areas they once lived. That feat could signal the beginning of an important recovery of this beleaguered species in parts of its historic range.





© Photos by Limbe Wildlife Sanctuary



In Cameroon, another large confiscation of 700 birds pushes the Limbe Wildlife Center, another WPT partner in our FlyFree campaign, over the 2,000 mark in African Grey Parrots received for rehabilitation and release in just one year.

Unfortunately, as the majority of the birds were getting strong enough for release, armed men arrived at Lwiro and took possession of them over the protests of the sanctuary staff. It appeared that this was a Ministry of the Environment raid and that the birds were given back to the original traders. We're now working closely with partners to alert authorities in DRC, CITES and Interpol, in hopes that some of the birds may be reclaimed. Our WPT-Africa branch is on alert should any of these banded birds be imported there.

To the best of our knowledge, the Congo 500 remain in DRC awaiting export. The facility at Lwiro is ready, willing and able to take them back or to take in more confiscated birds in the future. It is the only facility of its kind in the country and that, we hope, will motivate additional enforcement.

The tragic turn in this story underscores just how difficult it is to work in this part of the world and just how high the stakes are in the international wildlife trafficking world. Clearly there is a long way to go before the birds have a reasonable degree of protection here.

South Africa. Elsewhere in DRC, a shipment of over 700 African Greys nearly all perished during a flight to Durban in South Africa. The circumstances regarding their deaths remain a mystery as other animals onboard the same flight lived. The results of autopsies on the

dead birds have proven inconclusive. The airline has abdicated responsibility for the deaths and the parties involved are now embroiled in a legal battle. News of the deaths has been widely publicized in South Africa mostly due to the efforts of WPT Africa's Dr. Steve Boyes. As a result of this tragic case and the publicity surrounding it, the WPT has launched an online petition to encourage the South African government to cease trade in all wild caught birds. It is one of the few remaining countries still involved in trade. WPT supporters can sign the petition at: www.parrots.org/petition.

Cameroon. After the armed seizure and airline tragedy in DRC, another confiscation of 700 greys in Cameroon seemed commonplace. The third large seizure here in just one year occurred in early December 2010 and was made possible by Cameroon's Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA).



The birds were bound for Nigeria and found in typical appalling conditions: crammed in 11 small crates with 16 cm (6 in.) of headroom. They had no food or water and 48 were dead on arrival. Because of this confiscation, two influential dealers were arrested and a warrant was issued for a third individual.

In a recent report released by the WWF, Ofir Drori, Director of LAGA, stated, "This is a very, very lucrative trade. The margin of illegal revenue from trade in this species is very high – sometimes more than trade in ivory, which has a better international profile..."

The surviving birds were sent to the Limbe Wildlife Centre. The centre, which last year received about 1,500 Grey Parrots, still had 150 birds recuperating from those two previous seizures. With existing enclosure space limited, the Limbe staff planned and built an entirely new set of flight cages at a neighbouring botanical garden. Those cages are now full of recovering parrots.

From our FlyFree campaign Limbe received \$5,000 in emergency funds, a large collection of specialised medication and bands (rings) for 1,000 birds. We are especially gratified to see how our initial work, investment, and technical support has enabled our partners LAGA, Limbe and UWEC to take such immediate and effective action to aid these newest victims of the wild bird trade.





© Steve Martin

CRUISING THE CARIBBEAN *the Parrot Lover's Cruise*

BY JOHN GEARY

“Ahoj, mateys!” called our swashbuckling tour guide as we gathered at the cruise ship terminal. “All aboard for the Second Annual World Parrot Trust Parrot Lover’s Cruise!”

Well, I guess it really didn’t start out that way. There was no swashbuckling – just an excited group of travelers from all over North America and the UK. Our common thread, and what called us to book passage on this seven-day Caribbean cruise, was a shared passion for parrots. The beauty of this trip was the specific activities designed to help us indulge that parrot passion. Not only would we be educated about parrots in the wild, but our travel dollars would be put to good use on their behalf.

Steve Milpacher, WPT’s Director of Business Development, credits parrot enthusiast and travel coordinator Carol Cipriano with dreaming up the Parrot Lovers Cruise. She wanted to offer companion parrot lovers the opportunity to see wild parrots in their natural habitat, while also helping parrot conservation.

Despite having companion parrots in their homes, many of the group’s members had never seen parrots in the wild. That would change, and quickly.

PORT EXCURSION: *Puerto Rican Parrots*

Before the ship left harbour in Puerto Rico, we got our first opportunity to see wild parrots during a visit to Rio Abajo State Forest, one of two sites that host active conservation programs for Puerto Rican Parrots (*Amazona vittata*). The Puerto Rican Department of Natural and Environmental Resources oversees the project at Rio Abajo. The other, at El Yunque, is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This parrot is almost extinct in the wild with 86 wild birds split between El Yunque and Rio Abajo.

An hour long bus ride took us into the park, and the captive breeding facility. There we met Ricardo Valentin and Ivan Llerandi, the project leaders. After Valentin gave us an introductory talk about the project, we headed out to see the flights where the birds go prior to being radio-collared and released into the wild.



© Photos by Steve Milpacher

PUERTO RICO: A VIP tour of the Forest Service’s Puerto Rican Parrot project was a thrill for parrot lovers before they even left port.



BONAIRE: Brown-throated Conures perched on the best available perch (L) while on ARUBA: a slightly different subspecies is at home in the trees.

We tramped along the trail, passing feeding areas and nest boxes, listening for sounds and inhaling the scents of the surrounding forest. Then we heard the raucous cries of the parrots. Moments later, we entered a clearing and huge flight cages loomed up before us. Here we learned about the release procedures and looked at the radio tracking collars. Then to our great pleasure, we got the chance to take photos of the birds from inside the large cages.

After our photo session we headed back to the breeding area. On the way we were treated to an incredible sight: a small group of wild parrots zooming through the forest. Although I've been fortunate to see parrots in the wild before, this was the first time many in the group had ever encountered wild, free-flying parrots in their rainforest habitat. And for any true parrot lover, whether it's your first or 51st time, the thrill of seeing wild parrots never seems to dissipate.

All too soon, it was time to go. We drove back into San Juan, boarded the ship and set sail – looking forward to our first island stop in two days time.

ON BOARD LEARNING: *Parrots*

Our first day at sea saw us listening to a pair of very informative and entertaining speakers. Steve Milpacher of the World Parrot Trust spoke about the Trust: its origin, goals, and current projects. Since many of the people on the cruise were not members of the Trust, this talk proved to be very educational.

In the afternoon, we spent several hours watching videos, asking questions and hearing about how we can better live with companion parrots at home from Steve Martin of Natural Encounters (www.naturalencounters.com).

MORE EXCURSIONS: *Aruba & Bonaire*

Our first scheduled island parrot-watching stop was supposed to be Bonaire. However, a few of us

were really lucky during a hiking tour through Aruba's Arikok National Park. When we spotted Brown-throated Conures (*Aratinga pertinax*) perched on top of some cactus.

On to Bonaire with Sam Williams, the head of the island's Parrot Watch Project (www.echobonaire.org) and our guide for the day. We learned about the Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*) project and some of the conservation issues facing the birds and caught a glimpse of several wild parrots. To add to the mood, "Oscar," Sam's pal and the project's unofficial mascot, entertained us on the bus during our jaunt around the island.

FINAL EXCURSION: *Into the green*

Our next parrot tour stop was quite a contrast. While Bonaire was very desert-like and dry, Dominica boasted lush tropical rainforests. The island certainly takes the welfare of its parrots



DOMINICA: Red-necked Amazons (L). BONAIRE: The group learned about Yellow-shouldered Amazons from Sam Williams and "Oscar."



© Steve Martin

GRENADA: Up close and personal with a Mona Monkey.

seriously – how many countries actually feature a parrot prominently on their national flag?

There are two parrot species endemic to the island: the Sisserou or Imperial Amazon (*Amazona imperialis*) and the Red-necked Amazon (*Amazona araucana*). We spent several hours hiking through the lush, humid forest, and a few of us did manage to hear and briefly spot a few Red-necked Amazons while tramping down the trail, then again at a lookout, with the use of binoculars. But our best view came at the end of our hike. As we exited the forest trail, one of the guides from the park headquarters pointed up into a grove of trees. There, perched up on a tree along the road, a pair posed for us. Isn't that just like parrots? We looked all over the jungle – only to find them waiting back at the road for us.

We never did find an Imperial Amazon...

THE LAST DAY: Auction benefits WPT

The final full day of our cruise brought plenty of laughter, a few tears and some melancholy feelings. Carol Cipriano, the tour organizer, ran an auction of donated parrot-related items, with the proceeds going to the Trust.

But of course, many were already planning next year's trip and looking forward to seeing more wild parrots on a different cruise... Mexico, Belize and Honduras anyone?

John Geary is a full-time professional freelance writer/photographer based in Vancouver, where he lives with Congo African Greys Nikki and Coco, and a Yellow-headed Amazon named Einstein. He has watched wild parrots in Ecuador, Peru, the Cayman Islands, Belize and the islands on this cruise.



BRAZIL 1

MAY 28 - JUNE 6

Last Chance!

Picture yourself:

- Watching Green-wing Macaws as they circle and scream in the spectacular ecosystem known as the Hole of the Parrots
- Enjoying fresh fruit and coffee on the veranda of a beautiful ecolodge, surrounded by the soothing sounds of tropical birds
- Immersed among Hyacinth Macaws as they preen each other and wrestle over the choicest of palm nuts just a few feet away
- In a blind overlooking a nest of giant Jabiru Storks or on a riverbank watching a family of Giant Otters frolic playfully
- Sharing stories, sights and adventures with an intimate group of like-minded travelers from throughout the world

Presented by the World Parrot Trust and organized by the experts at Tropical Nature Travel, this unique excursion will take you to some of the very best wildlife-viewing sites in the world. You will travel with WPT's Joanna Eckles and enjoy the knowledge and insight of expert local guides at each location.

You'll spend 7 days touring choice locations in southern Brazil, selected specifically for the abundance of large macaws, many parrots, unique wildlife and spectacular scenery. An optional 5-day extension takes you north with a local guide to Hyacinth Valley and Greenwing Lodge. There you will see these unforgettable macaws as well as the famous Tufted Capuchin Monkeys, whose antics and problem-solving skills will delight you.

It'll be an unforgettable trip with something for everyone. Your travel helps support the conservation efforts of the World Parrot Trust.

PARROT LOVER'S CRUISE


OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 6


LEARN TOGETHER - EXPLORE TOGETHER - ENJOY TOGETHER


Join us on the 3rd Annual Parrot Lover's Cruise sailing from Tampa, Florida with stops in Mexico, Belize and Honduras.

Our speakers this year will be Dr. Susan Friedman, well-known avian behaviour specialist and the World Parrot Trust's Joanna Eckles. We'll enjoy educational presentations and custom shore excursions.


Don't miss this opportunity to meet other parrot lovers from all over the world. You'll come back with many new friends.


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Blue-naped Parrots

By Quentin Phillipps

Photos by Honor Phillipps

The Blue-naped Parrot (*Tanygambus lucionensis*) is found throughout the Philippine Islands. This once common parrot is now very scarce throughout most of its range and small populations only survive where they are safe from trapping. Whilst researching our recent book the *Phillipps' Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo* we visited most of the Bornean islands on which the Blue-naped Parrot has historically been recorded to survey its current status.

Despite its overall scarcity this parrot is well known to bird watchers because of a feral population of around 40 birds at Tanjong Aru beach in the northern part of Borneo. This population originates from a flock of 12 birds which I kept in an aviary there and released when I left for the UK in 1971.

[Read More](#) ▶

www.parrots.org/blue-napes



New Amazon Foundation

By Sam Williams

Parrot numbers are up on Bonaire! The Yellow-shouldered Amazon Parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*) is considered Vulnerable to the threat of extinction by the IUCN. There are several isolated populations scattered across mainland Venezuela and four Caribbean islands. In Venezuela intense poaching is widespread and causing declines.

On Bonaire we can proudly report the parrot population is recovering from an average of around 350 between 1980 and 2000, to around 800 in 2010. The island's political situation is favourable and the residents have a hopeful future for this species. We recently started a non-profit foundation, Echo, to help us make sure the parrots are protected.

[Read More](#) ▶

www.echobonaire.org





In memory of

Paul Igag

February 24, 1964 -
October 29, 2010

© Andrew Mack

Paul Igag was Papua New Guinea's first home-grown ornithologist. He was one of the first scientific staff at the young Research and Conservation Foundation of PNG and touched many people around the world. He was a generous man and a superb teacher. Science in PNG and the many colleagues and collaborators who Paul supported now face a tragic loss after his sudden death from a heart attack at age 46.

Paul's passion for mist-netting birds began during field work in 1996. He went to Australia in 1999 with experience studying Eclectus Parrots (*Eclectus roratus*), Palm Cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*) and Vulturine Parrots (*Pionopsitta vulturina*) in PNG. He added considerable information to the biology of these little-known species (*PsittaScene* May 2002) and his Masters thesis contained some of the first data on the reproductive biology of large parrots in New Guinea. He had an unrivalled ability to engage with landowners in a way that was built on mutual respect. He learned the local languages and spent countless hours living and working with the people so he could better understand the social and cultural impacts on their forests. Paul helped establish a Trained Local Observer programme and system of conservation-based income generation as an alternative to an economy based on more destructive resource extraction.

He was a founding member of the PNG Institute for Biological Research Inc. – an organisation that aims to train PNG biologists and integrate traditional knowledge and customs with modern concepts of conservation. Paul was tutor and mentor for literally dozens of biology students studying both in PNG and overseas, who affectionately knew him as Uncle Paul.

Paul's love for wildlife and wild places was palpable. He was a first rate biologist with superb field skills. On Cape York, Paul built scaffolding out of saplings and vines to help us inspect Palm Cockatoo nest trees that we had no other way of reaching. Paul played down his own skills in characteristic style, instead deferring his own skills to those of the local PNG landowners that he said had taught him so much.

The strength of Paul's conservation work was built upon his personality. He saw the positive side of every situation and in every person. And he had the most infectious laugh. When he laughed, everyone else laughed. He was liked and admired by everyone who met him. And yet when required, Paul had an uncanny ability to instantly analyse conflict and deal with it with deeply considered mediation. He masterfully brought people together, so much so, that the local landowners in the Crater Mountain area wanted Paul to be their elected local political member.

Paul's life ended suddenly and prematurely on 29th October. He was 46. He is survived by a large and loving family, including 6 beautiful children. For the people who knew Paul, his passing has been felt like an earthquake whose shock-waves will reverberate for a generation. He was the most genuine and kind-hearted person that you are ever likely to meet. And his contribution to conservation in PNG remains immeasurable.

Banak Gamui, Rob Heinsobn, Sarah Legge, Andrew Mack, Steve Murphy, Daniel Swan and Miriam Supuma



A scholarship fund has been created to support the education and training of the young biologists who will follow in Paul's footsteps.

Donations can be made via:
<http://www.pngibr.org/donate.htm>.

Even a small donation helps!
Students cannot afford field guides, binoculars and other tools needed for field biology in Papua New Guinea.



© Robin Smith

[Read More](#) ▶

www.paul-igag.virtual-memorials.com/

Psitta News

Parrotnews

Legendary Kakapo dies at age 80

Mr Richard Henry was a conservationist credited with pioneering work to save the Kakapo species after it nearly went extinct due to invading stoats, rats and cats.

The Kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*) is unique among parrots in that it is flightless, nocturnal, and herbivorous. It's also the heaviest member of the parrot family, and one of the world's longest-living birds (See *PsittaScene* Nov. 2010). Richard Henry began ad-hoc conservation of the species in 1890 but it wasn't until a formally-defined Kakapo Recovery Plan was initiated in 1989 that the species' numbers began to recover.

The Kakapo 'Richard Henry' was discovered in 1975, when the species was feared extinct. He was swiftly moved to Maud Island, accessible only by conservationists and scientists. More birds, including females, were discovered on Stewart Island in 1977, and they were also moved to Maud Island. Richard Henry offered crucial biodiversity to the small population. His death marks the end of an era in Kakapo conservation, and also represents the first time that a Kakapo has been known to have died of natural causes. His legacy remains, however. During the 2008-09 breeding season, the numbers of Kakapo rose above 100 for the first time since monitoring began, and by February 2010 were at 122. Each one has a name.

Source: By Duncan Geere www.wired.co.uk



© Gideon Climo



African Grey Species Split

The recent reclassification of Congo Grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus erithacus*, above left) and Timneh Grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus timneh*, above right) into two separate species based on their genetic and physiological differences could have important and exciting conservation consequences. As a result of this reclassification, the status of each species will need to be independently evaluated, and may afford each species further protection from international conventions that restrict the trade in threatened and endangered species.



© Brent Barrett

Western Ground Parrot genetic research

New data on Ground Parrots (*Pezoporus wallicus*) supports the recognition of the Western Ground Parrot as a species, *P. flaviventris*.

Elevation of Western Ground Parrots to species status has important conservation implications. The population has steadily declined over the past 20 years. Most (ca. 100) are confined to a single national park. Currently, the main threats are thought to be wildfire and predation by introduced species, although some past declines have occurred without any obvious cause. Their newly-found evolutionary distinctness, and their rapid and continuing decline without full understanding of the mechanism makes Western Ground Parrots one of the world's most threatened bird species.

Source: *Conservation Genet* 11 November 2010



Palmaward

Dr. Gino Conzo

In November 2010, Dr. Gino Conzo was awarded the WPT Palm Award. This award is in recognition for his tremendous support to the World Parrot Trust during our campaign in the EU to stop the imports of wild birds. The award also recognizes Dr. Conzo for his hands-on work in Cameroon and in the Democratic Republic of Congo to assess and care for huge numbers of confiscated African Grey parrots. The Palm statue is by Frans van den Ven. It is a special casting in a limited edition on occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the World Parrot Trust. It is engraved with the following: "In honour of exemplary service on behalf of parrots their conservation and welfare awarded to Dr. Gino Conzo by the World Parrot Trust." This is the first Palm Award awarded by the Trust.

Source: *Cristiana Senni*

Thankyou

Belgian Parrot Day

The Belgian Parrot Society and related groups organized a Parrot Day on 10 October 2010 at the Olmense Zoo. World Parrot Trust-Benelux presented a talk highlighting our 12 years organizing Parrot Symposia, our Jubilee Book publication and our involvement with the Lear's Macaw project. Each visitor contributed €1 for a total of €200 (\$275 US, £170).

Many thanks to the Belgium Parrot Societies, especially to Mr. Emmanuel Tak, who made this day such a success.

Ruud Vonk- chairman WPT-Benelux





Parrots of Australia on DVD

One-seventh of all parrot species – over 50 in total – are found in Australia. Film-maker and parrot enthusiast Don Kimball ably covers almost all of them in four disks – no mean feat in this mostly hostile environment, where daytime temperatures can reach an intolerable 45°C (113°F). One can almost feel the desert-scrub heat and scorching winds most of these parrots endure as the film makes its way from New South Wales all the way out to Western Australia. These disks are welcome viewing for anyone but especially so for those who have an Australian parrot in their family. Amazing parrots, great footage, gorgeous scenery – a wonderful set of DVDs all-around.

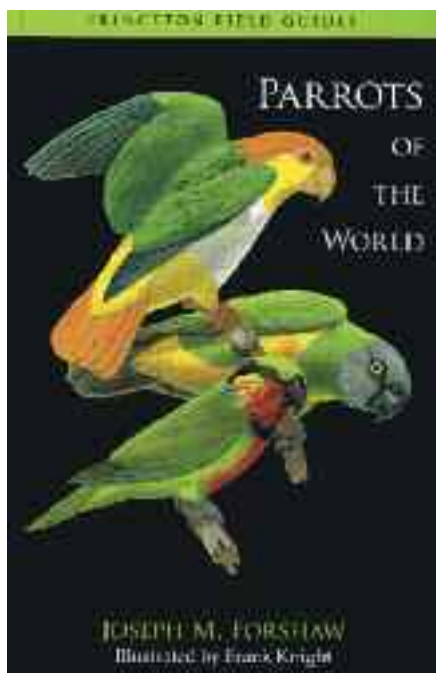
£37.50/US\$50 incl. shipping ■ www.parrots.org/ozdvd

Parrots of the World

By Joseph Forshaw ■ Review by Desi Milpacher

I seldom dance a jig when I receive a book in the mail, but I did so with this one. *Parrots of the World*, the latest in the highly anticipated Joseph Forshaw series of parrot books, is the bee's knees. Of tremendous value, this colourful volume is specifically designed for field use, nicely condensed down from the 2006 book. The species are arranged geographically, by genus, with the range map along side Frank Knight's lovely illustrations. Each entry also highlights the species' status in the wild and has a brief physical description of each adult bird. Other details, such as English and scientific nomenclature, and habitat and ecology, appear at the beginning of the book in the references and introduction. "Endangered and critically endangered" status birds are helpfully highlighted in red. All of this and its nice compact size make it a must-have book. I can safely say I will enjoy referencing this book, as WPT's director Jamie Gilardi once put it, "to a dog-eared state for decades to come."

For a review of the previous edition see *PsittaScene* August 2006.



£17.49/US\$29.95 excl. shipping ■ www.parrots.org/potw

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Parrots in the Wild

