

PSITTAScene

The Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Autumn 2014

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WORLD PARROT TRUST

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CONTENTS

- 2 From the Editor
Desi Milpacher
- 3 Cockatoos in Crisis
Western Australia's Black Cockatoos
- 8 The Adventures of Baloo
Great Green Macaw in Costa Rica
- 10 A Life in Pictures
Tribute to Luiz Claudio Marigo
- 13 A Long Walk
Patience the Grey Parrot's return to Africa
- 15 Bananas, the Survivor
Successful rescue of a wild chick
- 18 Lovebirds in the City
Parrots thriving in urban areas
- 20 Pet Pages: Why Adoption Makes Sense
- 22 PsittaNews
Parrot News and Events
WPT Contacts
- 24 Parrots in the Wild
Hyacinth Macaws

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FROM THE EDITOR

It is with joy and anticipation that I assume the role of Editor of *PsittaScene*, the World Parrot Trust's respected quarter-century old publication. I sit here writing this and reflect on the remarkable journey that has taken me from volunteer to Publications Editor for the WPT. It's a ride that at once amazes, inspires and slightly terrifies – and a journey I certainly didn't make alone. A devoted and talented group works for the WPT and the parrots, a posse of sorts that consists of people who are driven by their commitment and passion for psittacines of all sizes, shapes and colours. It is my honour and pleasure to continue to work with them.

I must tip my hat to my *PsittaScene* colleagues, Michelle and Karen, for their unrelenting work ethic and creative shine, and to former Editor Joanna Eckles, whose guidance and good humour was vital to our fledgling efforts. Jumping into the deep end of the publishing pool was never as fun as this. Our goal with our hallowed magazine is to continue to bring you, our loyal supporters, the same fascinating, uplifting and inspiring stories we've brought you for years and years. We'll bring you the good, the bad, and always the completely unvarnished truth about our work and what's happening to the parrots of the world. And we'll be sure to listen closely to you, our friends, and your parrot experiences and concerns.

Starting anew with a fuzzy, downy Editor (parrot analogy here) also invites the opportunity to try new and fuzzy-downy things with our magazine, and to that end we'll merrily come up with ideas to keep everyone engaged and informed. Variety is the spice of life as they say, and to start it off, in this issue we have uplifting stories of parrot rescue from Africa and Costa Rica, important work for Black Cockatoos in Australia, a lovely tribute to a renowned wildlife photographer, adoption of companion parrots, and lovebirds making a living in an American city...

So I now finish my letter, the first of many I hope, for years to come. And leap into the unknown with my WPT colleagues and friends with publishing gusto. 📧



Desi Milpacher,
Editor

ON OUR COVERS

FRONT **Carnaby's Black Cockatoo** (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*) in Tamala Park (Mindarie, Perth, Western Australia.) See **Cockatoos in Crisis**, page 4. © Georgina Steytler

BACK A pair of **Hyacinth Macaws** (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) in the spectacular Pink Trumpet Tree (*Tabebuia impetiginosa*) in the Pantanal, Brazil. © Luiz Claudio Marigo

“...the population could easily crash.
And that could happen any time now.”

[Carnaby's Black Cockatoo]



© Georgina Steytler

Cockatoos in Crisis

BY JESS LEE

Western Australia is home to a host of endemic species — plants, mammals and birds. Of the birds, six are parrots, including three different black cockatoos — Carnaby's, Baudin's and the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Populations of all three are declining.

Cockatoos in Crisis —

BirdLife Australia:
Threatened Black Cockatoo Program

By JESS LEE

OF THE CARNABY'S, BAUDIN'S AND FOREST RED-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO, the Carnaby's is foremost in the public eye, as flocks of the birds are regularly seen flying across the skies of Perth and surrounding suburbs during the non-breeding season. I often hear their distinctive wailing wy-lah calls as they flap slowly past my house.

Accordingly, it has become the most iconic of Western Australia's black cockatoos and is regarded as a 'flagship' species. As their breeding season approaches, the flocks of Carnaby's leave the city, heading inland to the Wheatbelt region where they nest in the dry eucalypt woodlands.

The other two species have a much lower public profile because they are not city dwellers — they are often called 'forest black cockatoos' because they prefer to breed and feed in the moist forests further south where fewer people see them.

Why take action?

The flocks of Carnaby's that fly over my home are not as large as they were in the past, and it's the same situation with the others, too. Their populations are all in decline as the habitat they rely on for nesting, feeding and roosting is being cleared. The situation may be even worse than we realise, as all three cockatoos are long-lived birds. If they live for many years without breeding successfully — meaning that few young birds are added to the population — it gives the false impression that leads some people to believe that the population is 'doing just fine'.

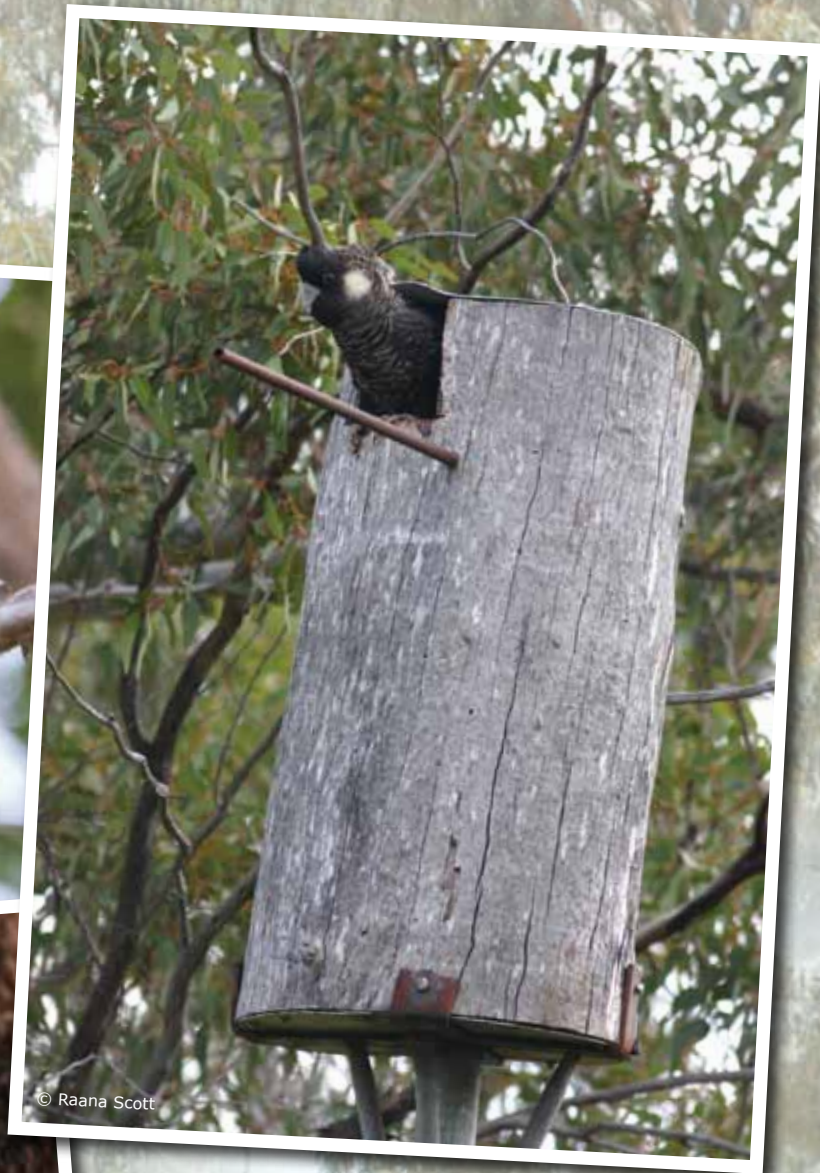
However, when the old birds eventually die, without young birds there to replace them, the population could easily crash. And that could happen any time now.

The project I work on — *BirdLife Australia's Threatened Black Cockatoo Program* — aims to conserve the birds and stem their decline by addressing the issues that threaten their survival.



© Keith Lightbody

© Eleanor Adams



© Raana Scott

© Raana Scott

Top left: Male Baudin's feeding on Marri seeds (*Corymbia calophylla*)
Top right: Female Carnaby's in artificial hollow
Bottom left: Carnaby's chick in the nest
Background: Volunteer surveyors during the 2014 Great Cocky Count

Conservation Status of Western Australia's Black Cockatoos

Current challenge: At the state level, the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*) and Baudin's Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus baudinii*) are both listed as 'Endangered' with the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo - a subspecies of the more widespread Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*) - listed as 'Vulnerable'. Nationally, the Carnaby's is 'Endangered', while the Baudin's and Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoos are 'Vulnerable'. The IUCN recognises Carnaby's and Baudin's Black Cockatoos as 'Endangered', while the Red-tailed Black Cockatoos are considered 'Least Concern'.

BirdLife Australia's Black Cockatoo Conservation

Here at *BirdLife Australia* we manage a program dedicated to saving threatened black cockatoos — the only such project run by a not-for-profit conservation organisation in Australia. We have a strong and proven track record in bird conservation. Based at *BirdLife Western Australia* in Perth, my role involves spending lots of time working with stakeholders and land managers so that together we can carry out our practical, on-ground, conservation actions. I also enjoy liaising with our large and informed network of volunteers. Some of our volunteers support the program by taking part in regular monitoring activities, especially the Great Cocky Count — our major annual event to monitor black cockatoo roost sites throughout southwestern Western Australia.

To ensure that our actions are effective, we receive scientific advice from technical groups and organisational support from *BirdLife Australia's* National Office in Melbourne. The objective of our project is to re-establish sustainable populations of threatened black cockatoos across southwestern Australia through a combination of research, monitoring and recovery activities. These activities include:

(a) Identifying priority habitat and increasing the number of critically important nesting, feeding and roosting trees; (b) Identifying conservation needs and addressing the gaps in our knowledge about the species' population and where it occurs; (c) Understanding the impacts of ongoing threats and how to mitigate them; (d) Increasing the connectivity of suitable habitat to enhance movements of black cockatoos; (e) Using education to increase awareness and appreciation of black cockatoos in communities across Western Australia; (f) Engaging landholders and community groups to get involved in on-ground recovery actions which build community ownership and community capacity to manage local landscapes for black cockatoos; and (g) Forming partnerships with stakeholders to share knowledge and advice to address ecological management issues and develop landscape-scale plans.

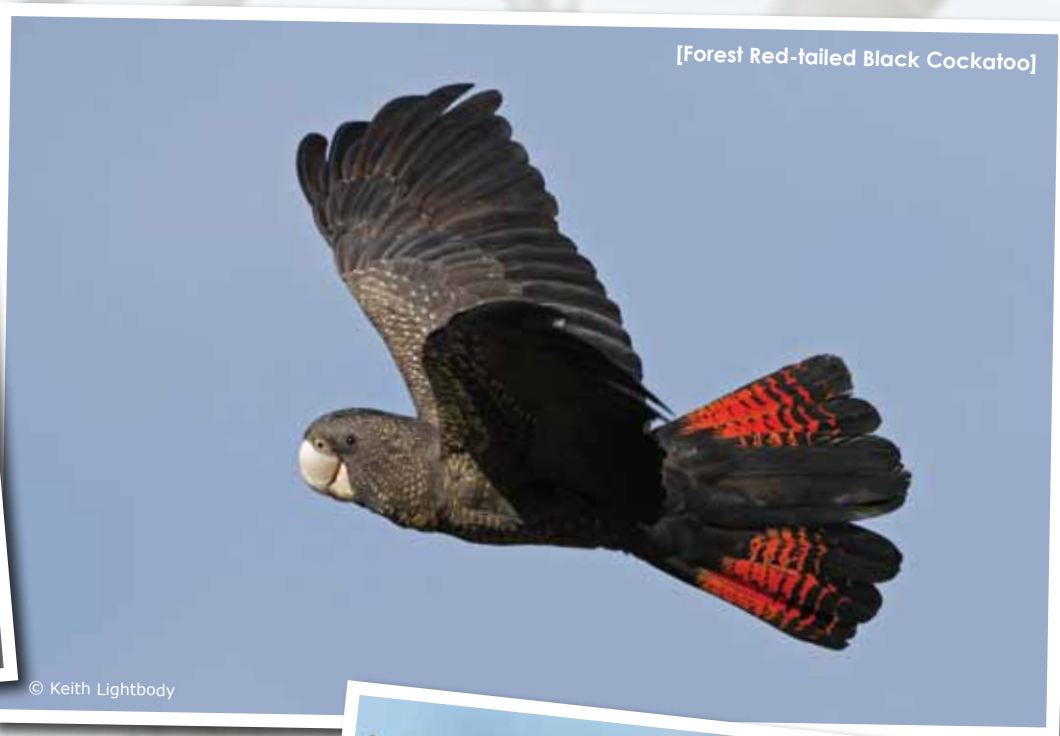
Our Story

I began working on *BirdLife Australia's* Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Recovery Project this year, but it's been running since 2000, and in that time it has seen the successful protection of 4,000 hectares of critical feeding, roosting and breeding habitat on private property, the erection of enough fences to exclude stock from another 2,000 hectares of remnant vegetation (with the owners' permission, of course!) and overseen the replanting of over 100 hectares of native bush. We've also repaired more than 200 nest hollows and provided plenty of artificial ones as well so that the cockatoos have somewhere to breed again.



To achieve this result we have worked closely with landholders, community groups, government, schools and natural resource-management bodies. It is vital that we get the message across about cockatoo conservation to the community as a whole, and we do this by regularly conducting workshops and field days, as well as via the media. Nevertheless, despite all of our crucial on-ground work, our statewide Great Cocky Count is when the plight of the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo is foremost in the community's mind. Held on 6 April, this year's GCC saw nearly 600 people take part, staking out over 300 potential roost sites from Geraldton in the north to Esperance in the east to count the number of Carnaby's Black Cockatoos that flew in to roost for the night. It is one of Australia's largest citizen science surveys and has been running for the past five years. It's developed into quite a social occasion, and there's nothing I enjoy more than moving around between the monitoring sites to meet with our enthusiastic volunteers.

We are using data generated by the Great Cocky Count to document patterns of abundance of Carnaby's Black Cockatoos on the coastal plains as well as to provide a minimum population estimate for the species in the region. And for the first time, the 2014 Great Cocky Count also included observations of the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*a subspecies of the more widespread Red-tailed Black Cockatoo*). This was a prelude to including all threatened black cockatoos in our conservation activities. In addition to the Great Cocky Count, we also mobilise our network of volunteers to monitor breeding and feeding activities of all of the black cockatoos in the South West.



The Forest Black Cockatoo Symposium, which was held in June this year, helped identify a number of gaps in our knowledge, as well as identifying ways to alleviate ongoing pressures on the cockatoos within forests that are used by many different (and sometimes competing) interests in southwestern Australia. These issues include the impact of habitat loss through mining and forestry, and the ongoing conflict between Baudin's Black Cockatoos and orchardists.

The results we achieve will go towards informing the wider community and recovery stakeholders on the plight of all three species, aid in identifying significant areas of crucial habitat and assist our understanding of the impacts of land-use on their ecology, and ultimately to conserve Western Australia's black cockatoos. Hopefully, with our help (and yours), the flocks of black cockatoos will continue flying past my house for years to come. ☐



Jess Lee is the Threatened Black Cockatoos Project Officer at *BirdLife Australia*. For more information on the Black Cockatoo Conservation Program, contact Jess at jess.lee@birdlife.org.au, or visit their website at: birdlife.org.au/projects/carnabys-black-cockatoo-recovery



the Adventures of Baloo

Article and photos © The Ara Project

*“I’ve got 3 birds here flying above
the property, squawking and playing!”*

THIS ENTHUSIASTIC CALL CAME FROM A NEIGHBOUR LIVING 3 KM from the macaw release site. These calls have become more frequent, and that is good news because with the community’s involvement we are able to monitor and protect Great Green Macaws in Costa Rica.

The Ara Project provides sanctuary for rescued and confiscated macaws for breeding and release into the wild at its breeding and reintroduction centres in Costa Rica.

Our first-ever reintroduction of Great Green Macaws (*Ara ambiguus*) raised in captivity was in August of 2011, with a second release occurring in 2012, and another in early 2014. The reintroduction station is located up on a ridge approximately 2 km from the Caribbean coast. The tendency of the first group we released was to fly down; most of these macaws ended up staying near the shoreline. We were worried that the macaws could be vulnerable to disturbance by people, but our concern quickly became an advantage. The coastal vegetation has abundant Beach Almond trees (*Terminalia catappa*) with plentiful nuts that the macaws learned to eat during their adaptation process in the flight aviary. Additionally, the local neighbours responded very positively, reporting the Great Green sightings to our staff. This area’s economy is driven by eco-tourism and most folks understand the importance of preserving natural resources and a healthy environment. Our releases have gone very well and the reporting is very helpful, and in some cases, vital.

Occasionally, the birds go on a bit of an adventure.

The Great Green Macaw, Baloo (RM145), was released in late April, 2014 from our reintroduction station in Manzanillo to join the more than 30 macaws that had already been released to fly free in our area. Shortly after his release,

Baloo disappeared. Generally upon first flying off, the macaws spend several days disoriented, perfecting flying techniques and getting their bearings until they find their way back to the reintroduction site aviary, usually guided by the already free flying birds. Ten days passed and we had neither seen nor received information about him. We were becoming concerned that Baloo might be lost and might not have the strength to make it back to the site where we maintain outside feeders and water to supplement their diet until these birds learn to survive on their own.

We put out an alert on our social networks, asking for sightings, and surprisingly we received a call from Kherson Ruiz, a biologist based south of the border in Panamá. Ruiz runs a conservation NGO program in the coastal San San-Pond Sak Wetland Reserve and he informed us that they had discovered a Great Green Macaw on the beach, weak and tangled in some debris.

They rescued the bird and brought him back to their centre, noting that he was run down and some of his feathers appeared damaged; they also observed a silver band on his foot with the number RM145. Kherson had heard about our reintroduction program and obtained our phone number through our vital community outreach program. We were elated and relieved! We gave him instructions on how to care for Baloo, but upon receiving photos and conversing further we decided it was best to bring him back to our release station to care for him.

Transporting an endangered species across international borders is no easy task, and nearly impossible to expedite under “normal” circumstances. We contacted our local Costa Rican Ministry of the Environment authorities while Kherson contacted the Panamanian ANAM authorities.

As both groups are active conservation NGOs* that have worked closely with our respective environmental ministries over the years, both governments' agencies enthusiastically agreed to facilitate Baloo's return to our Manzanillo station.

The Costa Rica – Panamá border region has several bi-lateral cooperation agreements, including a bi-national UNESCO protected area, Parque Amistad (Friendship Park). The Panamanian authorities offered to deliver the bird to the Costa Rican authorities at the Sixaola River border crossing. This action, however, did require quite a bit of coordination by phone, email and radio due to Baloo's remote location at San San and the challenge of determining a mutually convenient time. After a few days of organizing, the two delegations met on the bridge and the transfer was carried out successfully.

Baloo has now regained his strength at the pre-release aviary and is preparing for his next opportunity to fly free!

Although this was our first transnational experience of *The Ara Project's* reintroduction of captive Great Greens back into their natural habitat, we have had eight instances of birds being initially released that have required rescues. All have been successfully integrated into our growing flock flying free in the Talamanca region; one macaw required two initial rescues but for several months now he appears well adapted and continues to enjoy flying and feeding in the wild. ☐

**Association of Friends and Neighbors for the Coast and Nature (AAMVECONA) in Bocas del Toro, Panamá and The Ara Project (El Proyecto Ara) in Costa Rica.*



Baloo's team of rescuers (above), getting him on his way back to the safety of the pre-release aviary at Manzanilla, where he can recover for his next attempt at freedom (below).



A message of thanks

We are grateful for the broad community support we have received due to our outreach and education efforts. Local residents, tourists and birders marvel at the spectacular sights and sounds of these magnificent creatures. Great Greens were at one time common in our Central American Caribbean habitat, became virtually extinct in our southern zone, and now are being helped to fly free once again, contributing to the rich biodiversity of the area and delight of local communities. Our dedicated station staff and volunteers have greatly contributed to our success.

Enrique Pucci, Vice President
The Ara Project (www.thearaproject.org)



a Life in Pictures

Tribute to Luiz Claudio Marigo
by Dr. Charles Munn



1950 - 2014

LUIZ CLAUDIO MARIGO was the most enthusiastic, heart-on-your-sleeve lover of nature one could ever hope to meet.

I met Luiz Claudio in the late 1980's through our mutual friend, the late, great Brazilian conservationist Márcio Ayres, who helped create 3 million hectares of protected areas in the Brazilian Amazon.

Márcio showed me a spectacular portfolio of photos taken by this talented photographer in the Mamirauá Reserve in the late 1980's. Márcio ensured that Luiz Claudio had full access to all the amazing nature and conservation work that Márcio's large team worked on in the western Amazon of Brazil, and Luiz Claudio was the one person whom Márcio trusted to document it all. As I marveled at the extraordinary body of photos from that Amazonian reserve, I asked Márcio who this "Luiz Claudio Marigo" might be. Márcio told me that I should meet him, and that I should consider having Luiz Claudio visit the locations where I was busy creating national parks in the SW Amazon in Peru and Bolivia.

Soon Luiz Claudio contacted me in 1992, hoping to visit the rainforests of southern Peru. I invited him to visit my sites in Manu and Tambopata, Peru, and with the understanding that if he would give me good images of our sites and their



fauna, he and his charming — and very talented collaborator/wife, Cecilia — could stay for free at our ecotour lodges and biological stations. So, from 1992 on, Luiz Claudio, Cecilia and I enjoyed a special, unique relationship. Luiz Claudio and Cecilia visited a number of the world's leading macaw clay licks during his travels to my sites, and his images were essential for me to promote the wildlife and natural scenery.

To a significant extent, Luiz Claudio became one of the most accomplished parrot photographers in history, as he visited many of our parrot-rich locations in Peru and Bolivia,



[Charles Munn and Luiz Claudio]



[Green-winged Macaws at clay lick]



[Blue and Gold Macaws]

Photos © Luiz Claudio Marigo

photographing the world's rarest wild macaw, the Blue-throated Macaw. When I discovered the field location of that rare parrot - which had never been seen by a scientist when I first located it in August 1992 - Luiz Claudio was the only international photographer whom I invited to document this discovery.

In our last expedition together, we sailed in my new Jaguar Suites floating hotel from the shipyard in Caceres for 600 km down one huge river in the Pantanal and up another, until the ship arrived to the Jaguar Epicenter at the confluence of the Piquiri and the Cuiaba Rivers...

And that is where I am now, as I pen this story about my friendship with Luiz Claudio. Luiz documented the maiden voyage of my Jaguar Suites, and also visited my Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza a few weeks before, in August, to catch the perfect moment of flowering of the bright pink *Tabebuia* trees of the Pantanal. He had never seen this August flowering before in person, as his previous trips to the Pantanal had not coincided with this annual August event.

Luiz Claudio was one of the hardest working, most indefatigable, invariably upbeat and enthusiastic photographers with whom I have had the pleasure of working. More than

anything, he reminded me of a big kid; a full grown, highly accomplished nature photographer with an enormous body of spectacular imagery of the natural world, particularly of his native Brazil — but at the same time, with the unfettered gusto and *joie de vivre* that one typically sees in young boys who are just discovering the world. He was always ready for an adventure, always with camera at hand to document any natural scene or wildlife.

For the last 20 years, I have been describing my close friend Luiz Claudio Marigo as “Latin America’s most accomplished nature photographer”, and I am sure that that is the case. Now that he is gone, and we all miss him so much, I realize that certainly Luiz Claudio was the greatest nature photographer in the history of Latin America. I am not sure I will ever meet anyone else like him, with so much raw ebullience and love for nature. Fortunately, the towering achievement of his great body of nature photography will live on for decades, even centuries, and will continue to inspire generations to come in the love of nature in Brazil and all over Latin America. □

Charles Munn is the founder and CEO of SouthWild (southwild.com), South America's leading operator of ecotourism for conservation. SouthWild specializes in conserving wildlands by creating green jobs through showcasing spectacular animals, including Hyacinth Macaws, Giant Otters, Pumas, and Jaguars.

The World Parrot Trust has had the good fortune to receive many of Luiz Claudio Marigo's stunning photographs over the years. His work can be found in many of the resources produced by WPT, from websites to print publications, all in aid of our mission to conserve and protect parrots. We have deeply appreciated his contributions. Our sympathy goes to the Marigo family, for the world has indeed lost a marvelous treasure.



[Spix's Macaw]



[Hyacinth Macaws]

Photos © Luiz Claudio Marigo



[Blue-winged Macaws]

A Long Walk

For Patience and his friends, the wait was over; the time to enjoy once more the freedom of the African forest had finally come.

ON THE 27TH OF JUNE, THE LAST FEW GREY PARROTS (*Psittacus erithacus*) that were part of an illegal consignment of wild-caught parrots, confiscated as they entered Europe, were finally released on Ngamba island, Uganda (see *PsittaScene*, Winter 2013). These parrots, which likely originated in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, had entered Bulgaria via Lebanon, using falsified permits.

After their confiscation by Bulgarian customs there followed a ground-breaking effort, spear-headed by the World Parrot Trust, which saw their return to Africa and release on to a protected island in Lake Victoria. It was befitting that such an occasion was attended by renowned conservationist Dr. Jane Goodall. Best known for her work with primates, Dr. Goodall also has a life-long passion for parrots. She was visibly moved as she opened the aviary door and began a new chapter in the lives of these wild birds.

But for Patience and four other parrots, this unfortunately wasn't the end of their journey. It was clear when the time for release came

that these parrots weren't flying strongly enough to fend for themselves. The difficult decision was made to keep them back and provide more time to recover from their ordeal. Several were missing flight feathers and wouldn't be ready to fly until after moult. They were returned to the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC), a zoological park in nearby Entebbe, where they could be temporarily housed and receive expert care.

Meanwhile, out on Ngamba island, the released parrots were quickly getting used to their surroundings. Staff at the Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust (CSWCT) provided food at the aviary everyday and diligently monitored the numbers of parrots they saw. Numbers varied day-to-day but well over half the released birds regularly returned to feed. Hearteningly, the parrots were seen working together to chase away other birds from the feeding station, including much larger birds such as Pied crows.

Clearly, despite several years in captivity, their wild instincts had not been suppressed.


Patience, rewarded...

BY LATE SEPTEMBER, PATIENCE AND THE OTHER BIRDS HAD been moved back to Ngamba island and were getting used to their lush surroundings. Encircled by green vegetation and a cacophony of wild sounds, it's hard not to imagine their spirits lifted. The whistles of their former cage-mates now flying free no doubt buoyed them up.

With more space to fly they now had a chance to build the flight muscles they would need for soaring above the canopy. Although the released birds had begun to visit less frequently, staff at Ngamba observed them coming to “greet” those in the aviary every morning, perching on nearby trees. By now the released birds were regularly seen mixing and flying with a small group of wild birds and flying across the water to nearby and larger islands. All great indications of their long-term survival.

In the aviary the birds continued to improve their fitness, getting stronger and stronger. But, one morning disaster struck; one of the parrots had disappeared. Some detective work revealed that a water monitor lizard, presumably one of the impressive giants that live along the lake shore, had burrowed its way into the aviary. From the tracks in the earth the Ngamba staff deduced that the lizard had grabbed an unsuspecting parrot before returning to its burrow. This is just one of the challenges of working in a wildlife sanctuary teeming with life and we counted ourselves lucky that the outcome had not been worse.

Finally, the day came for the surviving parrots to be returned to the wild. The aviary door was opened at daybreak and by the afternoon the whistles from the free-flying birds had enticed them out. Indeed it had been a long, long walk to freedom but for Patience and his friends it was no doubt worth the wait.

This ground-breaking project was the result of hard work by numerous individuals and organisations committed to returning these parrots to the wild. The World Parrot Trust would like to extend its deep-felt gratitude to all those involved. In Uganda the CSWCT (Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust), UWEC (Uganda Wildlife Education Centre), JGI Uganda (Jane Goodall Institute Uganda) and UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority) deserve recognition for their pivotal contributions. The Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation and Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water were instrumental in their help. 

Article © Dr. Rowan Martin, Manager of the World Parrot Trust Africa Conservation Programme. www.parrots.org/africa



© Charles Bergman

Patience and his friends, prior to their long-awaited release back to the wild.



© Charles Bergman

Above, basking in the rays of newfound freedom. Below, the watchful sentry keeps a wary eye out for danger as the last of the surviving parrots finally attain their freedom, and rejoin their wild flock.



© Charles Bergman

Bananas, the Survivor

The return of a poached chick — and its successful re-adoption by its parents — provides a tangible and inspiring example of what can be achieved in conservation.

By Mohamed Henriques and Daniel Lopes



AS MANJACO CLIMBED THE TREE TO check out the marks left by an unwanted visitor, we were already guessing the worst: a parrot trapper had been there and found what he was searching for. What we couldn't guess was the way things were going to develop from there on.

The Bijagós archipelago, off the coast of Guinea-Bissau, supports one of the most remarkable populations of Timneh parrots (*Psittacus timneh*) (see *PsittaScene Winter 2013*). Elsewhere in their range in West Africa, breeding areas are poorly known and trapping and habitat loss have taken their toll on populations. While these threats are also present in the Bijagós islands, there is reason to hope for a brighter future.

The issues affecting Timnehs require immediate action. A partnership that has developed between the World Parrot Trust, the National Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) in Guinea-Bissau and Portuguese researchers to help the birds is ongoing. Following an initial small project, a

larger one was launched, financed by SOS (Save Our Species) and the MAVA Foundation.

In early 2014, we began a set of activities throughout the archipelago, centred around the João Vieira and Poilão Marine National Park. The main focus of the year's work was the monitoring of the reproductive cycle, improving information on the size and distribution of populations, and understanding habitat requirements both for reproduction and foraging. The involvement of local partners, including former parrot trappers in monitoring nests, was a key part of a strategy to build support for conservation and provide a critical presence in nesting areas, reducing poaching activities.

During the implementation of these activities in the field, the research team was confronted by an alarming situation when we noticed one of the cavities had been damaged. Sadly, after we climbed to the nest, our worst fears were confirmed: The nestling had disappeared! The National Park

staff quickly summoned meetings with the Bijagós community leaders. This triggered a series of unexpected events that led to the retrieval of the baby parrot. Five days after the parrot's absence was first noted, the chick arrived anonymously, left in a carton box hung in a palm tree. With little to no practice raising a baby parrot we were suddenly confronted with a disquieting situation: a nestling about seven to eight weeks old entirely dependent on us, very weakened and begging for food.

With very few local resources, we resorted to the knowledge of former trappers, now our collaborators, and to the advice of our friends at WPT and ISPA (University Institute – Portugal). The plan? To feed the nestling until he regained enough strength and then return it to its original nest and the care of his parents. It seemed a long shot. The menu? Simple: roasted peanuts (previously chewed by us), soft cooked rice with added palm oil and, the most appreciated element, bananas! This was the sweet fruit our baby parrot fell for and that is the reason it quickly became known as... **Bananas!**



Bananas in the first contact with the research team, before the trapping, being monitored for health and approximate age.

Banana's short-term home was a carton box with small holes, inside a quiet room with dimmed lights and regular feeds, two to three times a day. In the beginning, Bananas was uneasy and frightened, making hoarse alarm sounds when someone approached. However, soon he started to get used to our presence and more keen to eat. As days went by, the chick's condition improved and his stress level, although constant, reduced.

The day we felt Bananas was strong enough to return to his original nest quickly arrived. We put him in a fabric bag and one of our collaborators carefully climbed to the cavity and placed the chick inside. Then, we set up a camera so we could see if his parents would re-adopt him, or if we would need to raise him by hand. And, incredibly, there they were! Banana's parents were back, as if they had never left! So many days had passed (between 13 and 18) after

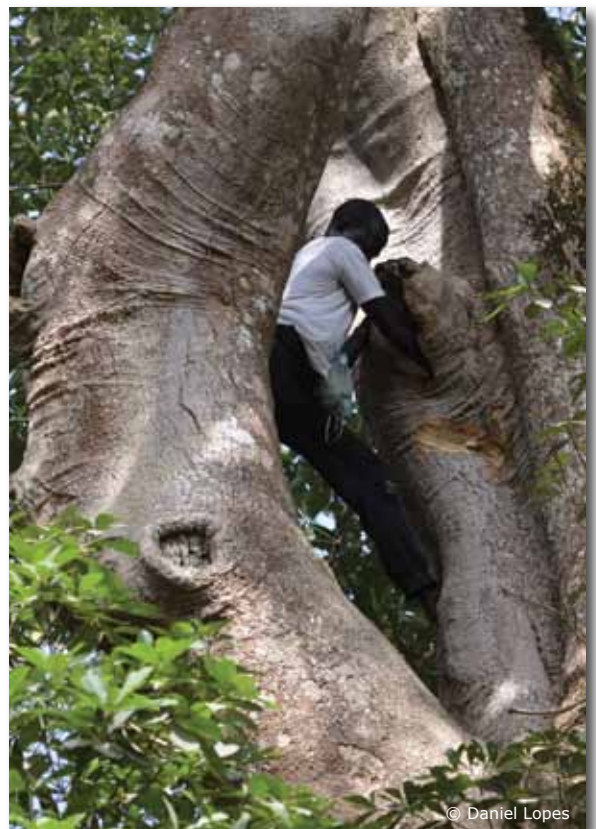
the disappearance of their chick! The camera footages revealed this touching reunion, bestowing the research team members with the joy and relief of a happy ending in a story of sadness and suffering for the baby parrot.

We monitored the nest continuously for about a week more and got to watch Bananas become a wonderful pre-fledged parrot. Finally, when we returned to the field, 21 days later, Bananas had fledged the nest, presumably flying with its parents, and learning life's skills such as where to forage and what to avoid.

The return of a poached chick, and its successful re-adoption by its parents, provides a tangible and inspiring example of what can be achieved in conservation. Bananas owes his freedom to the hard work of numerous individuals and local and international organisations, all working together for conservation.




Member of the local Bijagó community harvesting palm fruit (above). Seco climbing the tree the day after the re-introduction of Bananas back to the nest cavity, to check its overall condition (below).



*For each happy ending,
however, there are others
that aren't so lucky.*

There is much still to accomplish in the Bijagós and elsewhere. Although there are apparently fewer professional poachers than in previous years, recently conducted enquiries within local communities, as well as other nest poaching attempts that occurred this year, indicate the scale of the threat that exists.

For young locals facing high levels of poverty, the temptations of supplying the illegal wild animal market are considerable. Addressing this threat requires a multi-faceted approach, working with local communities to build grass-roots support for conservation while at the same time addressing the international trade that is taking parrots and other wildlife out of Africa. While making huge profits for middlemen and corrupt officials this trade leaves local communities increasingly impoverished. The entire system is unsustainable, and must be eliminated for the benefit of all. 

About the Authors:

Mohamed Henriques is a biologist from Guinea-Bissau. In addition to his conservation work on Timneh parrots he is also involved with projects on the Bijagós islands concerning marine turtles and marine birds.

Daniel Lopes is a biologist from the Faculty of Sciences at ISPA, currently studying for a Master's degree in Conservation Biology.



An adult Timneh parrot during counting and study of activity periods. (above). Photo taken with the Plotwatcher Pro camera, showing a nest with 3 chicks and an adult, on the Island of Meio (below).



This project is being implemented by IBAP with the coordination of Aissa Regalla and Castro Barbosa, in partnership with ISPA and the World Parrot Trust's Africa Conservation Programme. The 2014 team included the authors of this article, Guinea-Bissau ornithologist Hamilton Monteiro and the current Director of the PNMJVP (João Vieira and Poilão Marine National Park) Quintino Tchantchalam. Core funding has been provided by SOS and MAVA Foundation. SOS is a joint initiative of IUCN, the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank. Its objective is to ensure the long-term survival of threatened wildlife, their habitats and the people who depend on them. MAVA is a family-led, Swiss-based philanthropic foundation with an exclusive focus on the conservation of biodiversity.



Lovebirds in the city

Article and Photos © Kristan D. Godbeer



Originally from Southwest Africa, the Peach-faced Lovebird (*Agapornis roseicollis*) is a small parrot familiar to aviculturists and pet owners around the world. They have proven very popular and have thrived in captivity, resulting in a plethora of colour mutations.

These birds are very easy to maintain in captivity, doing well as pairs or as colonies, in cages or aviaries, and raising their young in simple nest boxes. Their relatively low price, easy maintenance, bright plumage and chirpy demeanor, has made them a common choice for beginner aviculturists. With so many kept in aviculture and as pets, it was inevitable that some escaped or were released.

Before moving to Arizona, USA, I visited many times to trek its canyons and mountains. I first came across the Phoenix area lovebirds fourteen years

ago in Mesa, when in a friend's yard. I instantly recognized their characteristic high pitched calls, we momentarily saw them fly rapidly overhead, and then they disappeared beyond the rooftops. I turned to my friend and said, "They were lovebirds; small parrots". She replied "Yes, they live here. You can see them around the valley". 'The Valley', is the local term for the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

Since that first encounter I have indeed seen them around the valley. The Gilbert Riparian Preserve is close to my home and is an excellent place to observe the lovebirds going about their daily business. The park is extremely popular for photographers, especially during the winter when the ponds are brimming with migrating wildfowl and wading birds. The lovebirds make an attractive photographic distraction. Flocks of up to twenty can be seen utilizing this park, feeding on the abundant leguminous Mesquite pods (*Prosopis spp.*).

Incidentally, lovebirds are not the only exotic species I have seen in the valley. Common starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*) are also established here. To my surprise, on one occasion I actually saw another African species, a Grey Go-away bird (*Corythaixoides concolor*) at the Gilbert Riparian Preserve. I caught some bewildered bird watchers flipping through their field guides in vain.

Why are they doing so well? As in their native land, the Phoenix lovebirds appear to stay close to water. This behaviour is similar to another population of introduced lovebirds, hybrid Yellow-collared (or Masked) Lovebirds x Fischer's Lovebirds (*Agapornis personata* x *A. fischeri*), which I saw skirting the edge of Lake Naivasha on a trip to Kenya. Though we are located in the Sonoran desert, water is abundant in the valley. Many homes have swimming pools, and sprinkler



(Left and above) Feral Peach-faced Lovebirds feeding on the pods of the native Screwbean Mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens* - Leguminosae), Riparian Preserve, Gilbert Arizona.

(Below) The Riparian Preserve in Gilbert, Arizona (Phoenix metropolitan area). Abundant water in landscaped parks and gardens provide a desert oasis for the introduced lovebirds.



Peach-faced Lovebird

Agapornis roseicollis

Habitat:

Found up to 1500m (4920 ft) in dry wooded areas, also sub-desert steppe, savanna woodland with sparse tree cover, woodland belts along rivers and cultivated land.

Wild Diet:

Mainly seeds including grasses, sunflower seeds, millet and maize.

Ecology:

Seen in groups of 5-20 birds but may form larger congregations of several hundred where grass seeds are ripening, or a water source. Groups of birds will huddle together on branches in cooler weather.

Did You Know?

Nesting material, especially bark, is carried by the female tucked into its rump feathers and placed in the nest.

systems for their lawns. There are golf courses, parks, sports grounds, and flood irrigation is commonplace. Furthermore, not only are the birds finding food from the city's landscaped plants, people are also feeding them. There are several videos on 'You Tube', where lovebirds can be seen frequenting backyard feeders along with Gambel's quail (*Callipepla gambelii*), House sparrows, and House finches (*Haemorbus mexicanus*).

What else do we really know about the Lovebirds of Phoenix? Since 1999 lovebird sightings have been mapped by Greg Clark, and can be viewed on the Internet at **Peach-faced Lovebird Range Expansion Data in Greater Phoenix, Arizona Area** (<http://tinyurl.com/azlovebird>).

The maps display the distribution of lovebirds and their nests. The population appears to be growing but little can be inferred about population growth rate, and range expansion. To remedy this, a survey was undertaken in

2010 by Arizona Field Ornithologists (AZFO) to ascertain the status of the lovebirds of the greater Phoenix area.

A subsequent report was written by Kurt A. Radamaker and Troy E. Corman, and published on the AZFO website. A total of 948 birds were detected, and it is estimated as many as 2500 lovebirds may be present. This should provide a baseline for future assessments. The population appears to be confined to the metropolitan area, and there is little evidence that they are expanding into the surrounding natural xeric desert habitat, though the authors concede more research is required.

Furthermore, the report makes no mention of any negative environmental impact, nothing that would justify a control program. It is suggested that because the lovebirds are numerous and widespread, a control program would likely be unsuccessful, and in the authors' opinion, misguided.

It appears that the lovebirds are thriving in the Phoenix area, and are enjoyed by many residents. It would be interesting to learn more about how these birds are interacting with the native fauna and flora, and whether they are able to expand along the region's limited natural waterways. The presence of an established lovebird population poses some interesting academic questions, which are certainly worth pursuing. □

About the author

Kristan D. Godbeer is a Zoologist/Wildlife Biologist who has worked in the spheres of field ornithology and professional aviculture in the UK, the Cayman Islands and the United States. He is a graduate of Bangor University (Wales), and received a postgraduate degree from Exeter University's Centre for Ecology and Conservation. Kristan currently lives in Chandler, Arizona, USA.

Why Adoption makes sense

An Interview with Ann Brooks of Phoenix Landing



Companion parrots can be long-lived. The sad reality is that many parrots will outlive their caregivers and need access to a succession of good homes. One way to help companion parrots is by educating people on their welfare issues, and encouraging adoption.

from the Community

Ann Brooks is one of the founders of *Phoenix Landing* (phoenixlanding.org), a nonprofit avian welfare organization in the United States.

Established in 2000 and active in several east coast states, *Phoenix Landing* has developed into an extensive network of volunteers to facilitate a foster and adoption program for parrots, and hosts a robust education program about parrot care to improve the quality-of-life for parrots in captivity.

Ann's goal is to ensure that *Phoenix Landing* is sustainable for decades to come, so that parrots will always have a safe place to land.

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AUDIO PODCAST!

Why Adoption Makes Sense
 Charlie Moores with Ann Brooks
www.parrots.org/podcasts

Why do you feel it is important for people to be realistic about how long they might be in the life of a parrot?

Phoenix Landing works with a lot of people, a lot of birds, and in many geographic areas. We don't know too many people who have had a (large) parrot for its entire life (assuming the parrot lives as long as it should), so clearly those birds have required a new home through adoption.

One of my least favourite terms often applied to parrots is "forever home". It is just unrealistic, especially for the long-lived parrots like Cockatoos, Amazons and Macaws, who can live to be 50 - 80 years of age depending on the species. Even parakeets can live 15-20 years! People may start with the best of intentions, but if a parrot is properly cared for, most people do not have the time, money, health or interest to care for it "forever."

Another term that is usually applied to birds looking for a new home is "rescue". This is a highly charged and negative term that implies the parrot has been a victim of neglect or abuse. Most parrots simply need a succession of homes, and all birds deserve for those to be good ones. This is why we

must all work together to make adoption a positive way to bring a bird into the family.

When someone is ready to adopt, do you ask them to acknowledge the reality that another home may be required in the future?

Yes! We build this into both our application and final adoption contract. Adopters are asked to keep in contact with us, so that when their adopted bird needs their next new home, we can ensure that it is also a good one. This keeps the bird under the protective umbrella of *Phoenix Landing*, and our hope is that they will go from good home to good home for their entire lives. In fact, because we're so rigorous about this, we are now rehoming more parrots already in our own system than taking in newer ones! We are fiercely dedicated for life to the birds that have already come into our care.

What skills do you suggest for perspective adopters?

I think the most valuable skill is a person's willingness to learn. No one is perfect, no one gets it right all the time. We want people to stay motivated and interested in improving the quality-of-life for the parrot(s) in their care.

One of our main goals is helping people to have proper **expectations** of a parrot. For example, if someone puts their hands inside a macaw or quaker's cage, the bird is likely to respond with behaviours that say "no, this is my personal space and I'll do anything to defend it." To which the general response tends to be, "this is an aggressive bird and I must get rid of it." The simple fix is to let the bird out of the cage before servicing it or trying to interact. We help people understand how to look at life from the parrot's point of view, so they can build a successful long-term relationship that works for both the people and, most especially, the bird.

We also look for people that understand taking care of a parrot is different from dogs and cats. Birds are unique, and often have more extensive needs than other pets. For example, our adoption fees are nothing compared to the annual costs of avian healthcare, toys and enrichment, healthy food, physical space (cages, play areas, aviaries), emergencies, etc. For larger birds, this can get be quite costly, so adopters are asked if they are financially able to make a commitment to a parrot.

And above all, patience! Learning to live successfully with a parrot can be very challenging. Problems are not solved overnight, but in most cases, a solution can be found. **Building trust** is the key ingredient to living harmoniously with a prey animal, and many people are not patient enough to build this kind of relationship.

A common misconception is a parrot that has previously bonded with a person will never bond with another caregiver. What do you say to that?

Parrots are extremely adaptable, resilient and intelligent, they have evolved this way in order to avoid predators and to forage for food. In the wild, they either live in large flocks or quickly find a new mate if needed - most species tend to

not live alone. If a bird has developed a social relationship with a human family, there is absolutely no reason why that bird shouldn't find success with another family. Most of the birds that come to *Phoenix Landing* are from loving homes where it is just no longer possible for them to stay; but even true "rescue" birds are likely to adapt if given an opportunity to thrive. I have yet to meet a parrot that was not adoptable, there is usually an appropriate family for each and every one. Overall, birds in good homes deserve to sustain their quality-of-life; birds in neglect and misery deserve to find a better place.

If someone would like to adopt but don't have access to Phoenix Landing directly, how might people find reputable organizations?

In the U.S., I would search the Internet for an organization in your area, or check with a local avian vet's office. Unfortunately, birds are now showing up in greater numbers at shelters as well. There are most certainly adoptable birds in your area.

Adoption needs to be one of the first things people consider when looking for a parrot, because almost every bird will need a succession of good homes. Parrots are resilient, adaptable, complex and capable of adjusting well to change. No matter where someone acquires a bird, the most important questions are: will they have proper expectations of that bird, and will they make every interaction a positive one that works for the parrot as well! ☐

Sandy and Selena © Paul M. Howey



Living with a parrot can be challenging, and requires dedication. Problems are not solved overnight, but in most cases a solution can be found.
Parrots shown here are some of the many available for adoption at Phoenix Landing.

Dovie © Paul M. Howey



EVENTS

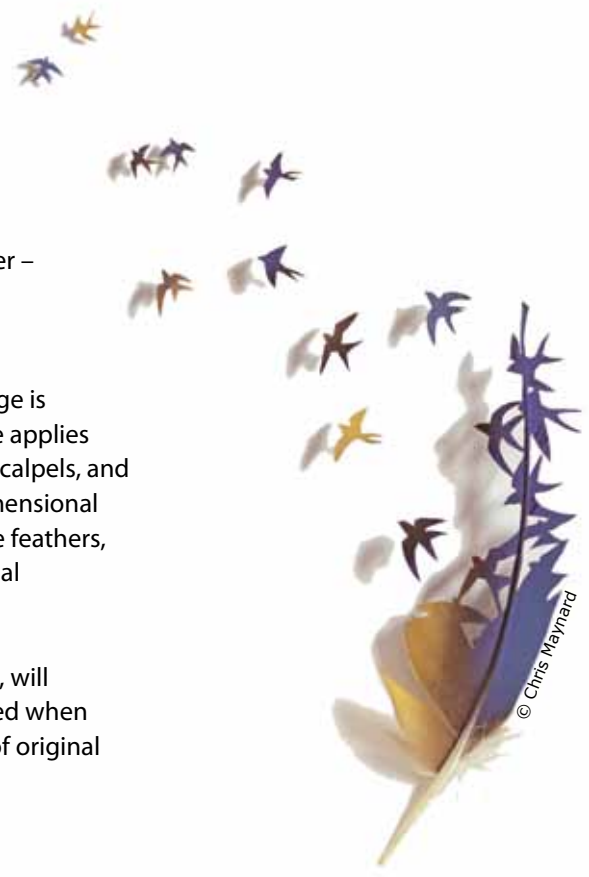
Artist Auction for Parrots

WPT is teaming up with artist Chris Maynard for a one-of-a-kind fundraiser – an auction of wildlife art that supports the Trust and its work.

Chris combines his scientific knowledge, his artistic sense, and his love of feathers in a new art form that is being recognized worldwide. His message is one of beauty, appreciation of life—especially birds and conservation. He applies various methods of art, design, and craft using surgery scissors, forceps, scalpels, and magnifiers to arrange feathers in shadowboxes in their original three-dimensional forms. Each of his pieces has an interesting story behind it courtesy of the feathers, the birds that grew and shed them, observations of the birds, and personal interactions with people associated with the feathers and birds.

A portion of the proceeds from the auction, **beginning in October 2014**, will support conservation work being done by the Trust. Register to be notified when the auction begins, and don't miss your chance to own an unique piece of original art that support parrots!

Register online at: www.parrots.org/auction



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NEWS

Avian Circovirus affecting Rainbow Lorikeets, may endanger other parrots



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Scientists at an Murdoch University are concerned that Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus deplanchii*) carrying avian circovirus (Psittacine beak and feather disease, PBF, or Avian AIDS) could infect populations of endangered New Caledonian parrots, such as the Uvea Parakeet (*Eunymphicus uvaensis*). The same virus is striking Rainbow Lorikeets on mainland Australia, in New South Wales. Research is ongoing.

Science Network: tinyurl.com/kw67e9z
Northern Star: tinyurl.com/mrjppqjx

Western Ground Parrot breeding program to be developed, critically endangered birds transferred to Perth Zoo

Seven critically endangered Western Ground parrots have been transferred to Perth Zoo, where it is hoped they will successfully breed. Environment officials estimate there are fewer than 140 of the birds left in the wild, confined to small locations across Cape Arid and Fitzgerald National Park in Australia.

Breeding the parrots in captivity may help the species' survival, and to that end, a handful of the birds have been taken to the zoo, where a newly built aviary awaits. A breeding program will be developed to aid ongoing recovery efforts for the wild population.

Esperance Express: tinyurl.com/o2v2nvp

Correction Notice

In our last *PsittaScene* issue (Summer 2014), in the article titled "The Rescue", we credited Eric Horstman as the photographer for the photos shown to the right.

In fact, Murray Cooper took the lovely photo of the two Great Green Macaw parents and juvenile (top right), and the macaw nest site in the trunk of a dying Pigeo tree.

Our sincerest apologies for the error. Find more of Mr. Cooper's stunning photography online at: www.murraycooperphoto.com



© Murray Cooper



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