

# PSITTAScene

The Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



# YEARS

Winter 2014

# PSITTAScene

WINTER 2014



## WORLD PARROT TRUST

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Printed by Brewers — Part of the Martin Luck Group  
Tel: 01326 563424

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I first learned of the World Parrot Trust in the mid 1990's, it struck me as a mature and productive organisation, with its own magazine and a growing network of far-flung conservation projects. I was in graduate school, my firstborn wasn't yet walking, and I was thrilled to be invited by the Trust to a 'summit' meeting in London to work on the first Parrot Action Plan. That seems like yesterday, but that same toddler just started his second year of college, and the Trust, well, we've grown up a lot too ... and with this issue of the *PsittaScene*, we're thrilled to be celebrating our 25th anniversary!

Naturally, it's impossible to summarize in one issue all the events, projects, and developments since Mike and Audrey Reynolds founded the Trust in 1989, but we'll do our best here to touch on the highlights to illustrate the scope and breadth of our history. Among the strengths of the WPT is the great diversity of people, organisational partners, and voices in our 'big tent' - our ranks of supporters and collaborators include companion parrot owners, scientists, veterinarians, welfare advocates, conservationists, breeders, behaviourists, governmental and non-governmental organisations - all are part of the Trust, they always have been, and hopefully they always will be. And with endless passion for parrots, a great number of people have volunteered countless hours on our behalf to run our international branches, translate *PsittaScene*, host events, run races, and otherwise find creative ways to help us all to save parrots.

Launched in the days of phones, snail mail, and faxes, the Trust truly hit its stride with the proliferation of the Internet - allowing instant (and free!) communications among trustees, staff, and remote field projects, as well as the publication and distribution of our educational materials to literally millions of parrot lovers world wide. How we'll be doing all this 25 years from now (in 2039!) I've no idea. But one thing is certain: the World Parrot Trust will still be, in the words of Mike Reynolds ...

**"... helping parrots to survive in the wild and to thrive in our homes."**

We hope you enjoy this special issue of *PsittaScene* looking back at an exciting and productive past, and we at the Trust also look forward to working with you to ensure a bright future for all parrots. □

Jamie Gilardi,  
Executive Director

## ON OUR COVERS

- FRONT **Parrot Collage** representing the 66 species of parrots helped by the WPT over 25 years.
- BACK **Slender-billed Conure** (*Enicognathus leptorhynchus*) taken 1 km north of Lago Llanquihue, 900 km south of Santiago, Chile. © Bent Pedersen

“ To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived - that is to have succeeded. ”

~ RALPH WALDO EMERSON



Mike and Alison



Mike and Audrey Reynolds & staff

**My** father Mike Reynolds often worked away at 'his book', putting a comic slant on the highlights of his journey from advertising man in London to bird conservationist in the far south west of England - we always loved the bits we got to read.

In honour of WPT's 25 year anniversary, I wanted to share with you a short excerpt from that book; it's a bit of fun and shows that he was immediately gripped by the beauty and charisma of the first parrots he saw.

Like others back in the 1960s, his first thoughts were not about the origin of birds to be seen in Britain, but it wasn't long before he was working on how to help parrots in need around the world.

And just to let you know, I eventually lost the lisp, but gained my father's love of the parrot family.



Mike, Audrey, Alison & Nick

*Alison*

Alison Hales  
Chairperson, World Parrot Trust

...**ESCAPE TO PARADISE**, page 4



All Photos © the Reynolds Family

# Escape to Paradise

PERSONAL WORK OF MIKE REYNOLDS  
*(Excerpt from his unfinished book)*

## **HOW DID THE BIRDS COME INTO THE PICTURE?**

Stealthily, that's how. It all began when our daughter number two, Alison, asked if she could have a canary. I have never been able to refuse Alison anything, and at seven she sported golden curls, freckles, a lisp, and a toothy smile that was quite irresistible. Soon we had a superbly vocal male canary singing his heart out in a small cage on our Elizabethan flagstone patio. After a while, the curls and teeth appeared in my

office as I typed out final demands for payment from recalcitrant toyshop owners. 'Ith it potherible for my canary Thpunky to have a wife?' I remember trying to resist, but the big blue eyes were brought into play and that was it. Later that day I went to see Jim, a retired groundsman at the local school, who had a shed full of canaries all breeding like mad in their little pot nests. Within six months I too had a shed full of canaries. Thpunky turned out to be well named, a prolific little

# “If man can save the parrots, he may yet save himself.”

~ MIKE REYNOLDS



devil who made light work of running a menage a trois. Canaries were everywhere, and we had to build a small outside aviary for the young birds we bred.



This led on to our keeping budgerigars, and then cockatiels, which at that time were slim twelve inch long grey birds with yellow faces for the males, but are now available in a multitude of colour variants. Slightly detached members of the cockatoo family, cockatiels have sweet voices and are very suitable for household pets and first attempts at breeding parrots.

I became fascinated by the challenge involved in persuading these birds to breed, and gradually more and more of my time went into these birdy activities. We had

always kept a few Maran hens for their beautiful chocolate brown eggs, but now we kept and bred Partridge Wyandotte bantams and took them to shows. I think the nicest group of people I have ever met has been the bantam crowd, perhaps because their birds have only modest value and the fancy is not tainted by commercial considerations. We also showed our canaries, with limited success. One of Thpunky's sons won a prize for novice canaries at the Tunbridge Wells show, but the importance of this show was that it had a class for parrots.

One of the exhibits was a pair of Eclectus Parrots, and when I saw them I was absolutely transfixed. These birds are about sixteen inches long, and remarkable for the fact that the two sexes are entirely different colours. So different are they that when first discovered in New Guinea they were thought to be two separate species. The male is mainly a brilliant vibrant light green, with blue and a little red on his wings. The female is an astonishing maroon colour, with some dark blue on her belly, and a band of gold at the end of her tail. Their feathers seem to blend smoothly together to give the impression of being a silky fabric rather than anything as coarse as feathers.

The two birds were understandably nervous in their small show cage, constantly turning around to try to relieve the stress they were experiencing in the crowded noisy hall. I asked the man showing them if they were for sale, but he said no. I watched the Eclectus Parrots for as long as I could, then went home with our show canaries, our prize rosette [ribbon], and a new obsession. The parrots had me in their spell.

**What is it about the parrots?** They are an ancient family of birds, pre-dating presumptuous man by many millions of years. From our earliest times we have kept parrots in our houses. Go to any major art gallery and you will see Scarlet Macaws and African Grey Parrots in pictures dating back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Romans kept parrots and valued them highly. Today there are 2.5 million budgerigars, which are parrots, in British homes, together with approximately 600,000 larger parrots. Do we keep seagulls, pigeons, ducks, ostriches, pelicans or even chickens in our living rooms? We do not, even if we are seriously eccentric. But in 3 million British homes and in 18 million American homes, a parrot is part of the household.

Most of the three hundred and thirty species of parrot are very colourful. They range in size from two inches long to thirty-six inches long. They are physically robust, and only their extreme toughness can have saved them during prolonged sea voyages in ancient times while they were on their way to be objects of interest and prestige in noble households.

For perhaps hundreds of years it was thought that parrots could exist without water. When one knows how crucial it is for parrots to have water for drinking and bathing it is dreadful to think of the suffering they have had to endure.





(Top left) Mike Reynolds with Joseph Forshaw and fledgling black cockatoo. (Top centre) Mike, Paul Butler of RARE and a St. Vincent Parrot, having a nibble at Mike's thumb. (Second from far right) Handfeeding a Kea at Paradise Park in 1983. (Far right) Mike, Cristiana Senni (pictured) and James Gilardi meet with the House of Lords in London to discuss a UK ban on wild bird imports. (Second from left) Mike and Pablo, Echo Parakeet.

Virtually any parrot is going to be more fulfilled if it has a mate, and if it lives in an aviary rather than a cramped cage.

One of my earliest parrotty experiences demonstrated these truths in an unforgettable way. We had gathered together four or five Amazon parrots, and it had occurred to me that there must be thousands of pet parrots being kept singly in small cages all around Britain. I placed an advertisement in *The Times*, asking for people with 'grumpy, lonely parrots to consider making them available for a breeding programme.'

Not a single reply came from this, except for a call from a Miss Betty Tay, who then wrote a pet column for the Daily Mirror. She sent a photographer to Sevenoaks to get a shot of the Reynolds family and their birds, and used this with a story about our 'parrot-dating agency'. That article opened the floodgates, and we had about two hundred letters, many offering aged pet parrots for breeding.

I spent a month driving all over Britain

collecting parrots: Amazons, African greys, cockatoos, and macaws. Rapidly we built new aviaries to accommodate these birds, and the yells and screams of our new friends echoed through our little Kentish valley. Fortunately our neighbours were all good-natured and tolerant, and not even the bizarre dawn chorus created anything other than amused comment at the frequent Sunday morning drinkies.

***Nobody should ever take on a parrot as a pet unless they are able to give it a lot of time and attention. To think of it as a similar responsibility to adopting a child is not going too far.***

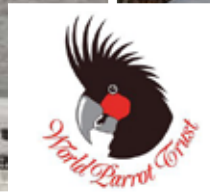
Knowing little about parrots, we simply put all the Amazons together, all the macaws together, and so on. Not surprisingly, the birds formed pairs in a matter of days. It was as though Alexander Selkirk had been magically transported from his solitude on a desert island to sharing a dressing room with the chorus at Radio City Music Hall. We didn't know what sex most of these

birds were, apart from those which might have laid eggs on the bottom of their cages, but one Blue-fronted Amazon, who came to us complete with the name 'Major Burwash', went into a frenzy of displaying and calling.

You could almost hear him saying to himself: 'Egad, surrounded by crumpet, spoilt for choice!' He finally fell in love with a Yellow-fronted Amazon - something we wouldn't allow nowadays as hybridising parrots is a very bad idea - and when transferred to a private aviary with a nestbox, they laid eggs, hatched them, and eventually raised two beautiful chicks.

This was our first breeding of the larger parrots, and as I watched the parents sitting proudly - all right, I know this is anthropomorphism, but I don't care - with their babies on the perch between them, I simply became more and more the captive of the parrots. We may think we are in control of them, but actually the reverse is true.

So there we were, with the ex-advertising



bigshot running a modest toy business from his house in Kent, keeping his family fed but without the luxuries of previous years, and coming to grips with a burgeoning collection of parrots in the one acre of garden. We had actually bred some parrots, which was unusual back then in 1969. If you are wondering how all these parrots were reaching the pet shops and bird dealers, the simple answer was that they were being caught in the wild, packed in crates and shipped off by air from Africa, the Far East, and South and Central America, to the markets in the West. They were regarded - and still are - by those in the trade as simply another commodity on which money can be made.

It is a fact that at least four parrots die en route for every one that reaches a pet owner. People who are in this trade have financial reasons to deny this, but I am personally satisfied, from reports given by respected field ornithologists and researchers, that it is indeed true.


In those early days of my involvement with exotic birds, I had no appreciation whatsoever of the moral aspects of

keeping birds in captivity. They were available, beautiful, interesting, and potentially capable of paying for their own upkeep. That was as far as I went - at the time.

A truly decisive event was a visit to Birdland, a remarkable establishment in the Cotswold village of Bourton-on-the-Water. A Cotswold builder and entrepreneur, Len Hill, had created this specialised bird zoo in a two acre walled garden in the centre of the village. Using local stone and exquisite taste, Len had built aviaries around the garden and filled them with the choicest and most stunningly beautiful birds: hummingbirds, toucans, touracos, hornbills, even the fabulous cock of the rock with its exotic orange crest.

Hyacinth macaws flew freely around, mingling with the thousands of visitors. Caribbean flamingos - the ones that are really pink- strutted and preened on the lawn in front of Chardwar, the ancient manor house, together with a flock of huge turkey-sized Victoria Crowned Pigeons from New Guinea. The penguin exhibit was then probably

the best in the world, allowing visitors to see King Penguins swimming under water. It was altogether a revelation, and despite my almost total ignorance of what it might take to look after such rare and vulnerable birds, I came away starting to figure out how we might be able to establish a Birdland of our own - in Cornwall.

Twenty years later I found a way to give something back to the parrots in the wild, from which I had learned so much - **and the World Parrot Trust was born.** 

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Mike Reynolds established Paradise Park in Hayle, Cornwall in 1973, and with his wife Audrey founded the World Parrot Trust (WPT) in 1989.

Paradise Park has since become a leading conservation and tourist attraction, while the WPT has gone on to help save over 66 species of parrot in 42 countries.

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# CELEBRATING 25 years

*...in Highlights*

As an organisation the World Parrot Trust has grown enormously in 25 years. We have been actively involved in many conservation projects for parrots since our beginnings in 1989, working in 42 countries with 66 species. With the many projects we have participated in there are standouts – those efforts that produced the biggest change, yielded the most important results or achieved a greater outcome, all for the parrots of the world.

We are passionate about protecting wild and companion parrots. We take immediate and direct action, relying on science, partnerships and outreach to achieve effective and lasting solutions.

Here we present some favourite highlights of the conservation, research, and education work of a quarter century, all of which has been made possible by the unwavering support of people like you. So we thank you, for 25 years of success, and look forward to many more years of fighting the good fight for parrots.







## IN Conservation

**THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED BLUE-THROATED MACAW** (*Ara glaucogularis*) numbers 110-130 in the wild. This species occurs only in the seasonally flooded savannahs in Llanos de Mojos in northern Bolivia, with populations concentrated east of the upper Río Mamoré, Beni. Declines of over 80% are suspected to have occurred until the 1980s, due to poaching for the wildlife trade. Loss of habitat, nest failure and extreme weather patterns have also taken their toll. In 1992 WPT aided the location of a small wild population.

Since that discovery, the Blue-throated Macaw Project, working with WPT and many collaborators, has made significant strides in understanding the reproductive and recovery difficulties of this species. The project has sought to: manage wild populations by monitoring breeding pairs, protect nests and nestlings, aid breeding by installing artificial nest boxes, conduct surveys to determine the birds' habits, release captive raised birds into areas where extinction has occurred, and build a captive breeding program in Bolivia. Researchers also plan to fully survey the population, determining numbers of wild pairs, juveniles and non-paired single birds, and use telemetry to monitor activity patterns of the birds.



## IN Reintroductions

One species that has been supported by reintroduction programs is the Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*). Once found throughout the entire Caribbean, the Great Green Macaw has seen its populations decline alarmingly in recent years due to poaching, hunting and deforestation. A census conducted in one area of Ecuador in 2010 found only 8 birds, with the current population in the entire country suspected to be 30-40 birds. Conservation efforts in Costa Rica have stabilized numbers to fewer than 300 birds and an estimated 25-35 breeding pairs remaining.

For more than a decade WPT has been providing support for the recovery of the Great Green Macaw by aiding in their confiscation from the wildlife trade, rescuing and rehabilitating confiscated birds, encouraging captive reproduction, releasing birds to the wild to supplement wild populations, and assisting with habitat restoration efforts. Along with supporting researchers in the early 1990s in their work to understand the ecological requirements of the Great Greens the Trust in 1999 provided funding to Fundacion ProBosque (Pro-Forest Foundation) for an honorary warden program to protect the macaws in Ecuador. In 2010, WPT partnered with The Ara Project in Costa Rica, and Fundación ProBosque and Fundación Ecológica Rescate Jambelí in Ecuador to help increase Great Green Macaw populations through captive breeding, rescue, release, and reforestation efforts.



## IN Research

The Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*) has a fragmented range in a small coastal area in Venezuela and the islands of Blanquilla, Margarita and Bonaire. It is now extinct on Aruba. On the islands there were 1,600 on Margarita in 2008, and 100 on La Blanquilla from 1996-1998. Between 1980 and 2000 the yearly population estimate averaged around 350 birds. January 2013 saw an increase to 865 individuals after a decade of conservation work. These parrots are listed as Vulnerable in the wild, threatened by capture for the wild bird trade, destruction of habitat for developments, persecution, degradation of natural vegetation for timber and charcoal, overgrazing of plants by goats and donkeys, reduction of natural food species diversity, destruction of nest sites, and predation by introduced mammals.

WPT has supported Dr. Sam Williams, Dr. Rowan Martin, and Echo-Bonaire's work for the Yellow-shouldered Amazon (Lora) for more than a decade. Beginning in 2002 WPT began supporting research and surveys on population and habitat use, the rescue, rehabilitation and release of parrots caught in the bird trade, protection and restoration of vital habitat for nesting and foraging, creation of an education campaign, management of nesting sites, continued research into breeding ecology, and the introduction of sustainable tourism. In August 2011, WPT funded the care for a number of Lora and other chicks when they were confiscated and sent to Echo, where they were hand-raised in preparation for release back into the wild. WPT also backed the genetics work of Adriana Rodríguez-Ferraro, of the Dept. of Biology of the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Population numbers of Yellow-shouldered Amazons on Bonaire have been increasing for the last decade.



## IN Awareness & Education

In 2011, with sponsorship provided by HUGO BOSS - BOSS Orange, WPT, Macaw Mountain Bird Park and Nature Reserve, the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History (IAAH), and the Copan Association began an effort to save Scarlet Macaws. Together these organisations have launched a multi-year plan to return Scarlet Macaws to the Parque Arqueologico Ruinas De Copan, a national park, UNESCO and Mayan Heritage Site. At this location, they have built rehabilitation facilities to prepare birds for release into the wild to support local populations.

In July 2011 the first release of Scarlet Macaws raised at Macaw Mountain took place at the Copan Ruinas. In anticipation of that release an engaging education program, 'Guaras en Libertad La Belleza Regresa', was begun in 2011 and thanks to the Copán Maya Foundation, Copan Association, Macaw Mountain and WPT, to date over 5,000 students have learned about the importance of macaw conservation and the wealth of wildlife that they share a home with. As of May 2014, the program includes a visit to Macaw Mountain for a more interactive experience, creating lifelong memories and deepening the children's commitment to macaw preservation. WPT has provided funding for hundreds of students to visit Macaw Mountain, and a Parrot Festival supported by Copan Maya Foundation has become an annual event.

# IN Wildlife Trade

Beginning in 2000 the WPT began to push for a complete ban on the import of wild-caught birds into the European Union, to eliminate this enormous threat facing parrots everywhere.

**1990s** - The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), RSPCA and Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) campaign to end wild bird imports into the EU. Key airlines ban bird shipments, European Parliament passes Resolution to end imports. Commission takes no action.

1992

**1992 - USA passes Wild Bird Conservation Act** - Bans imports of CITES listed birds, eliminating the world's largest market. The Act leads to declines in poaching, disease and smuggling and provides a model for others to follow.

1993

**1993** - WPT rescues and releases 700 Goffin's Cockatoos taken from trappers on Tanimbar in Indonesia, returning them back to the wild. This was the first time WPT took part in a confiscation and rescue effort.

2000

**Nov 2000** - WPT Trustee Cristiana Senni encourages founder Mike Reynolds to push for EU Trade Ban.

2001

**July 2001** - Parrot-poaching research, showing effectiveness of US Wild Bird Trade Ban, from 26 authors published in *Conservation Biology*.

**Oct 2001** - WPT launches Trade Ban petition.

**Dec 2001** - WPT initiates in-person meetings in the UK, Netherlands and Belgium with RSPB, Birdlife International, TRAFFIC, Friends of the Earth, Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, RSPCA, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), BirdsFirst and others. **This laid the groundwork for the developing coalition of NGOs calling for a permanent ban on wild bird imports.**

**Dec 2001** - WPT supports trade work in Indonesia; Indonesian NGO Profauna works on domestic and international bird trade which leads to the zeroing out of Indonesia's wild bird export quotas.

2002

**Jul 2002** - Switzerland proposes CITES parrot exemptions. World Zoo Association (WAZA) and others support removal of many parrots from CITES. IUCN asks WPT for views; WPT joins others in strongly opposing the weakening of CITES regulations, and the proposal does not pass.

**Oct 2002** - WPT and Defenders of Wildlife support proposals to add 3 parrots to Appendix I of CITES. Current data on threats and need for added protection convinces CITES delegates to uplist Yellow-naped and Yellow-headed Amazons, and Blue-headed Macaws, protecting them from legal trade.

2003

**Aug 2003** - Cristiana Senni of WPT delivers paper at CITES Animals Committee meeting highlighting unsustainable parrot harvest levels and destructive methods to the CITES Secretariat and to members of the EU Scientific Review Group in Geneva.

**Nov 2003** - Wild Bird Trade discussed in UK Parliament. MP Andrew George tables several parliamentary questions on the wild bird trade, which raises awareness at the political and public level.

2004

**Feb 2004 - Quarantine disease outbreak:** WPT reveals that Newcastle disease found in an Italian quarantine; neither vets nor international authorities notified as legally required.

**Apr 2004** - Baroness Miller tables Parliamentary Questions on bird trade and bird flu. First mention of the wild bird trade in the House of Lords; leads to close working relationship between Baroness Miller and WPT.

**Apr 2004 - WPT drafts Wild Bird Declaration.** Working in collaboration with the Defenders of Wildlife, WPT initiates formal process of asking the EU to take action on imports of wild birds.

**May 2004** - On World Parrot Day WPT delivers 30,000 signatures supporting a EU ban of wild bird imports to Prime Minister Tony Blair at 10 Downing St., London to extensive media coverage.

**Aug 2004** - WPT & Defenders of Wildlife seek to uplist 2 more parrot species and protect a third. Lilac-crowned Amazon and Yellow-crested Cockatoo added to Appendix I.

**Aug 2004** - WPT requests that the UK government take action on wild bird imports.

**Dec 2004 - Key publication shows dramatic declines in traded parrots in Nicaragua.** With the support of CITES-Nicaragua, Martin Lezama and colleague publish third parrot survey that shows 80% drop in some highly traded species in 10 years. This is the first result of its kind, showing unsustainable impacts of trade on parrots.

**Dec 2004** - WPT submits Wild Bird Declaration to EU Member States & the European Commission. Declaration is endorsed by over 230 NGOs.



Blue-fronted Amazon © Bowles/Erickson - amazonia.us



Red and Blue Lorikeets © Wehd Halaouate



## 2005

**Mar 2005 - WPT and Eurogroup expose lax quarantine.** Meetings raise concerns with Commission about poor implementation of EU quarantine rules. European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report commissioned less than two months later confirms concerns. Leads UK to request emergency action at EU level. **Inspires temporary ban on all wild bird imports into the EU in October.**

**Sep - Nov 2005 - H5N1 avian flu arrives in British quarantine.** In response, the EU, via Commissioner Markos Kyprianou, temporarily bans imports of live birds and bird products.

**Oct 2005 - Baroness Miller's questions force the UK government to address real issues of disease risk coming from the wild bird trade in a public and on-the-record setting.**

**Nov 2005 - Effects of temporary ban quickly apparent.** Harvesting in most countries stops rapidly; no further outbreaks to date of H5N1 in exotic birds imported to EU. Smuggling generally declines as predicted by WPT and campaigners.

**Nov 2005 - UK commissions Dimmock report on UK/EU quarantine.** Commission reviews quarantine procedures for wild birds imported to the UK and EU. First official recognition that large numbers of imported birds die in the trade chain. Highlights need for actions and solutions at EU level.

## 2006

**Jan 2006 - Study led by RSPB reviews 'nest take' in Old World parrots.** 19 researchers review parrot nesting success in relation to trade. This influential paper inspires RSPB support for permanent ban and helps EU accept earlier science drawing similar conclusions.

**Jan 2006 - Oryx publishes pro-trade argument and WPT rebuttal.** Pro-trade arguments articulated in public forum for the first time, WPT responds, defends Declaration, and makes the case for an outright ban as the most feasible and effective solution.

**Jan 2006 - RSPB supports permanent ban** in their *Birds* magazine. This clear position from the leading authority on bird conservation in Europe spurred the UK Government's changing position and that of the European partners of Birdlife International.

**Apr 2006 - Birdlife EU member organisations formally back import ban.** Representing the largest bird conservation organisations in the EU, their formal position in favour of a permanent import ban is highly influential to governments, the EU, and others involved in wildlife trade.

**May 2006 - WPT encourages bird-themed cards to be sent to Commissioner Kyprianou to thank him for his role in the temporary ban. Overwhelming response highlights the public's concern over the EU role in the fate of millions of wild birds.**

**July 2006 - British vets back ban.** British Veterinary Association (BVA) backs permanent ban, followed quickly by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). Widespread and public veterinary support helps lobby both UK and EU at key moments in last 6 months of campaign.

**Nov 2006 - EU commissioned EFSA report & opinion published.** Independent scientific panel concludes that disease and welfare risks associated with wild bird imports are high and of serious concern.

**Nov 2006 - Meeting with both EU Health & Environment - WPT and partners meet with DG SANCO (Health) and DG Envi (Environment) to discuss permanent ban and EFSA findings.**

**Dec 2006 - British PM Tony Blair calls for permanent import ban.** Tony Blair announces UK Government will call for permanent ban on imports of wild birds.

## 2007

**Jan 2007 - EU Commission announces permanent ban on wild bird imports to Europe.** Wild birds not permitted entry with few exceptions. Allows captive bred birds from select countries and tightens quarantines. Immediate consequences are seen in trapping countries. Overwhelmingly positive reaction is seen from groups from all around the world. Negative reaction from the CITES Secretariat. **Put into effect July 1, 2007.** Ban stops 2 million live birds from being imported annually, and eliminates associated mortality of 50% or higher, sparing a further 2 million.

## 2008

**2008-2009 - WPT aids campaigns to ban exports from Indonesia and Mexico.**

**Indonesia** - Initial focus on developing and funding partner ProFauna's efforts to draw attention to trade there, stop importations and prosecute violators trapping and trading protected species. Among many positive milestones is a campaign demonstration to urge the government to stop parrot smuggling.

**Mexico** - Educational and other efforts by Defenders of Wildlife begun, supported by WPT. In 2008, the Mexican government permanently outlaws the trapping and export of their native parrots.

## 2009+

**2009 - current** - In response to the urgent need to address the wild bird trade that still occurs in some countries the World Parrot Trust launches the **FlyFree initiative**, highlighting the destructive practice of capturing wild birds for the pet trade and gaining worldwide support to end it. Asia and the Middle East are two main areas still requiring focus to end legal and illegal trade. **FlyFree** encourages confiscations, helps law enforcement protect parrots, aids the rescue, rehabilitation and release of thousands of parrots into areas where they've gone extinct, and funds research in understanding the trade, region by region.



Grey Parrots © Sophie Mielvang

**25 Years of Conservation:**

# Wild-bird Trade | Then and Now

By Desi Milpacher

"Animals ripped from their habitat suffer, of course. They are smuggled in thermoses and nylon stockings, stuffed into toilet paper tubes, hair curlers and hubcaps. At one market in Ecuador, I was offered a parakeet. I asked the seller how I would get it on an airplane. "Give it vodka and put it in your pocket," he said. "It will be quiet." – *Charles Bergman, Smithsonian Magazine*

"It is impossible to work with parrots for any length of time without the trade in wild birds raising its ugly head. Whether you are in the deepest forest of the Amazon, the bleakest stretch of Australian outback, or a pet shop in London or Los Angeles, the long and treacherous tentacles of the trade are there in force." – *James Gilardi, PhD., Executive Director, World Parrot Trust*

**THE ABOVE QUOTES CLEARLY REVEAL THE BLEAKNESS AND prevalence of the trade – a terrible blend of loss and cruelty intertwined with the economics of desperately poor people and often corrupt officials. Over the last 25 years there has been hope, though, and successful action taken to combat the issues. In this article we will explore the highs, the lows, and the changes that have taken place in two-and-a-half decades of the wild bird trade.**

## **A History...**

Humans have a long and storied history with parrots. Some of the first companion birds were captured and kept in the earliest centuries by the Romans. In the mid-300s BC Macedonian ruler Alexander the Great was reputed to own what was to be later known as the Alexandrine Parakeet.

There is one account from 400 BC of a captive Plum-headed Parakeet that could mimic both Indian and Greek, kept by an Indian physician. Europeans began keeping them as a sign of status. In the Americas petroglyphs depicting parrots have been found, demonstrating that ancient people traded these birds. And skeletal remains of Scarlet Macaws have been found at burial sites in southern Arizona.

So for centuries people from all walks of life have kept and bred parrots for every reason from prestige, to making money, to companionship. Today, parrots are the third most popular companion animal, surpassed in numbers only by dogs and cats. The first New World trade in parrots probably occurred when European explorers brought back what is believed to be Hispaniolan Amazons traded from Carib Indians, which kept parrots as companions. From there it increased worldwide, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it has had a severely detrimental effect on wild parrot populations.

## 25 Years of Trading Parrots

The global trade in wildlife, legal and illegal, has taken a tremendous toll on wild populations in many countries. The US State Department estimates that it has become a multi-billion dollar a year industry, just after illegal drugs and firearms. A great deal of the trade involves parrots: Pain *et al.* in 2006 reported that 'Thirty-six per cent of the world's parrot species are listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as threatened or near threatened, and 55% of these are threatened to some degree by trade.' In the first study of its kind Lezama *et al.* reported an 80% decline in highly traded species in Nicaragua. Until 1992, when the Wild Bird Conservation Act was put in place, the US represented 80% of the international market for parrots from the Americas (Munn 2006).

From 1980 to 1992 278,000 Senegal parrots, 657,000 Fischer's lovebirds, 200,000 Ring-necked parakeets, 158,000 Mitred conures, 406,000 Blue-fronted Amazons, 108,000 White cockatoos were recorded in trade (Juniper and Parr, 1998), all of which was legal.

Perhaps not surprisingly this creates enormous welfare issues: cruel conditions during capture and transport, ill treatment, and death of up to 50% of birds from trapping to point of sale (Juniper and Parr, 1998).

As overwhelming as these numbers are to consider, they only measured legally sanctioned, international trade. Local and regional trade between countries in parrot-range states and the *illegal* poaching of parrots pushed the numbers ever higher.

This and concern for the welfare of individual birds has prompted action by conservation organisations and governments. A good part of this action has been to gather information about the trade to better understand how to fight it. A study completed in 2001 by Wright, Toft *et al.* analysed how '...poaching rates vary with geographic region, presence of active protection programs, conservation status and



Blue-fronted Amazons (*Amazona aestiva*) crammed into small cage, awaiting sale



Young Grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) taken from nest tree holes in Congo

economic value of a species, and passage of the U.S. Wild Bird Conservation Act.' The paper looked at 23 studies of Neotropical parrots covering over 4000 nest attempts in 21 species. And research by Pain *et al.* in 2006 examined '...data on parrot nest taken from ... studies from Africa, Asia and Australasia, including countries and sites with and without national and local parrot protection measures in place.' Both concluded that poaching was significantly lower at protected nest sites, and that the US Wild Bird Conservation Act largely eliminated shipments of birds to the US, a major importer. This was encouraging news for the conservation of parrots worldwide: it confirmed that protection of nest sites is effective in curbing the trade, and proved that trade bans work.





© Davide De Guz



© Sam Williams

(Top left) Veterinarian Davide de Guz repairs flight feathers prior to release. (Top right) Yellow-shouldered Amazon chicks (*Amazona barbadensis*) await treatment and feeding after rescue from poachers.

## A to Z: Global Shifts in Trade

WPT Executive Director Dr. James Gilardi wrote: ‘Since [1989], we have learned a great deal more about the trade, about how destructive these harvests can be to wild populations... On the positive side, we’ve learned about *what kinds of solutions to these problems work, and which ones do not.*’ To expand on what has worked: years of research have guided the World Parrot Trust (WPT), which has been at the forefront of a multi-country, multi-organisational fight against the wild parrot trade.

One person who has been central to the battle is Cristiana Senni, WPT’s Bird Trade Specialist. *PsittaScene* put these trade history questions to her:

**Q** How have attitudes about trapping wild parrots, from people in first world countries to those in third world countries, evolved in the last two-and-a-half decades?

There’s been a big change, undoubtedly due to the increased use of the Internet and the knowledge available. Twenty-five years ago, the notion that trading

wild caught birds was a bad idea was not common. Most people didn’t realise what parrot trapping entailed, and its impact on the conservation and welfare of birds.

The development of captive breeding has also contributed a lot to slowing down the demand because it provided a choice between buying a wild parrot or a captive-bred one, and most people now understand that there are no good reasons to want a wild bird as a companion. Sadly there are still the exceptions of a few breeders, who are still pining for wild imported birds!

Now we are also seeing more awareness in some countries where the birds naturally occur, mostly thanks to the information available through the web.

**Q** How much are trade bans helping? Are there drawbacks?

Trade bans have proven to be extremely effective in reducing trapping levels, as well as the illegal trade. One aspect that many people don’t realise is how much the legal trade facilitates the illegal trade. First, it provides an efficient infrastructure that is also exploited by traffickers. Then, a permit system that

is often bypassed through the use of forged or fake permits, that can allow the illegal movement of many thousands of parrots each year. Trade bans also prevent exports in excess of a country’s annual quotas, something that we have seen often, or exports miss-reporting the origins of the birds, for instance listing them as captive-bred when they are wild-caught.

**Q** How has CITES helped, or not?

Over the years, CITES has taken several measures to address some of the issues. However, it is not a system that can act swiftly and that can ensure compliance from all its members. There are many countries that are unable or unwilling to effectively enforce CITES, and the CITES Secretariat itself cannot prevent all the violations. Several parrot species have been uplisted to Appendix I, granting them more protection from the international trade, but I would sum up the CITES efforts as too little, too late.

*Dr. James Gilardi adds:* ‘CITES is designed to allow trade to continue, putting the burden of proof on those who seek to stop it (detriment findings). It has allowed a great deal of destructive trade.’

**Q** What are the attitudes of breeders – why do some still feel they need wild birds to maintain flock diversity and upkeep of certain species in captivity?

Yes, many still do, although not all. Wild birds are often less expensive than those that are captive bred, so that is definitely an incentive. There are also pet stores that, for the same reason, would like to be able to sell wild birds.

**Q** How has the Internet/social media helped to fuel/stem the trade?

Both really. The Internet is a powerful tool in many ways. It's a terrific resource that has helped raise the awareness of the impacts of the wild bird trade. But at the same time, it's also been a very efficient tool for the illegal wildlife trade, allowing people to advertise far and wide the trade of parrot species. On the other hand, the fact that many traffickers are revealing themselves and what they sell on the web is also a great advantage for the enforcement efforts.

**Q** How are countries (signatories to CITES, or not) dealing with trade? Is it different now than 25 years ago?

There have been more and more countries that have ceased wildlife exports, completely or partially, in Central and South America, Africa and Asia, as well as more countries banning imports, so we have seen a definite and strong improvement. Now there is also more attention on the illegal trade issues, pressuring countries to apply better enforcement efforts. But there's still a lot of ongoing illegal trade, and a long way to go.

**Q** Are there more alternatives to harvesting wild parrots now than then?

Definitely. Captive breeding has seen a huge increase in production and output that has helped, decreasing the demand for wild birds. Although the breeders themselves can generate a demand, captive breeding has reduced very much the demand for wild companion birds in Western countries.

**Q** What about disease concerns from the trade, now and then? New diseases?

The bacterial and viral concerns with importing any animals from the wild first appeared when commercial imports became larger and more regular. Early on, there were no quarantine requirements, they were established

when it was realised that wild birds can introduce some dangerous disease for poultry and humans (zoonosis).

We know that most of the avian diseases currently present in captive birds originated in the wild, and also that the quarantine establishments cannot prevent completely the introduction of diseases as shown by the EFSA report that led to the European import ban. *Author's note:* Karesh *et al.*, citing various sources, said in 2006: 'The threat of emerging infectious diseases spreading among people and other animals is rising, fueled by human activities ranging from the handling of bushmeat and the trade in exotic animals to the destruction of wild habitat'.

**Q** How has technology helped to monitor/stem the trade? How has it helped increase the trade, if at all?

That I know of, today we have microchip markings and the ability to perform more easily DNA tests to determine parentage. I believe that technologies are being developed that can also determine from which population originated an individual bird by examining isotopic signatures in feathers and tissue growth. I don't believe that any of them have been useful either to reduce or increase the trade, or for the illegal trade.



(Top left) Confiscated chicks, many with eyes not yet opened. (Top right) Grey parrots are trapped at bait in central Africa.



(Top left) Young wild Patagonian Conure (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*) rests on communal nesting cliff.  
 (Top right) Seized Patagonian Conures cling to sides of overcrowded cages prior to sale.

## A Major Victory

One gigantic shift that occurred in the last 25 years was the European Union Trade ban, enacted in 2007. WPT founder Mike Reynolds had voiced deep concerns about the impacts of the wild bird trade early on, and beginning in 2000 the Trust began to push for a complete ban on the import of wild-caught birds into the European Union. The research bore out the idea that a prohibition would be effective: Wright *et al.* concluded from their analyses that the passage of Wild Bird Conservation Act led to an impressive decline in illegal as well as legal trade, and showed that poaching was threatening parrots throughout the western hemisphere.

An earlier campaign to stop the wild bird trade began in the early 1990s, with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (RSPCA) and the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), all in the UK, leading the charge. Their effort produced mixed results: Key airlines banned bird shipments, and European Parliament passed a Resolution to end imports. But in the end the European Commission, the executive body of the European Union responsible for proposing legislation, took no action. Independently of that EU effort, a simultaneous drive in the USA led to the

passage of the Wild Bird Conservation Act (WBCA) in 1992, banning the import of CITES listed birds and effectively eliminating the world's largest market. About a decade later, *Nest Poaching in Neotropical Parrots* – a formative scientific paper by 26 scientific authors utilizing data from 23 parrot field studies – was published. The work pointed to, among other things, the effectiveness of the US ban, concluding that **poaching levels plummeted by more than 50% after the US stopped importing birds.**

At the beginning of this century, several conservation and welfare organizations joined forces to address wild bird imports to the EU with the goal of encouraging this growing block of nations to ban such imports. In late 2001, World Parrot Trust launched a Trade Ban petition, calling for an embargo on wild-bird imports into the European Union. Shortly after, we met with potential partners throughout the UK and Europe including the RSPB, Friends of the Earth, Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, RSPCA, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Defenders of Wildlife, Born Free and other organizations. Together, we laid the foundation for an international coalition to end the importation of wild birds to Europe.

Over the next six years, we held numerous conferences, petitions, panels

and reviews, highlighting welfare issues, biosecurity risks and the widespread conservation impacts of trade. In total, more than 230 organizations and tens of thousands of individuals participated in these efforts to demand an end to the EU's importation of wild birds.

In early 2005 came a defining moment: WPT and Eurogroup exposed lax quarantine in the European Union and a European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report later confirmed these concerns. As a result of the Wild Bird Declaration and pressuring the appropriate ministries in Brussels, among others, the EU charged their EFSA panel with the task of studying the welfare and biosecurity risks of importing birds into the EU.

Later that year avian flu was found in an imported bird held in a British quarantine. This led the UK to request emergency action at EU level – leading at first to a month-long temporary ban on all wild bird imports into the EU which was extended several times through 2006. Once the EFSA findings were published, Brussels finally had a sound scientific basis for a clear and prudent policy on bird trade. In January 2007 the EU Commission made it final: A permanent ban on the import of wild birds into Europe. The birds had finally won, **with a staggering drop in the number of wild birds traded around the world of over 90%, saving millions of birds each year.**



© Sam Williams

Fully recovered Amazons and Conures take flight after rehabilitation on island of Bonaire.

Since that time, we at the Trust have focused our trade stopping resources on the regional-level issues of the Mexican, African and Indonesian bird trades, which involve tens of thousands of birds, destined for the Middle East and Asia. In 2007 a detailed report on the illegal parrot trade by Defenders of Wildlife and Teyeliz found that 65,000 to 78,500 parrots and macaws are unlawfully captured each year, with heavy losses.

In 2008, the Mexican government permanently outlawed the trapping and export of their native parrots. In Indonesia, we continue to make progress on developing and funding in-country partners' efforts to draw attention to that trade, stop exports and prosecute violators trapping and trading protected species. In Africa, through our *FlyFree* program, we have supported the rehabilitation and release of thousands of confiscated African Grey parrots and we are actively working on ending all legal trade of this species in addition to supporting enforcement efforts.

### More Good News

While much has already been accomplished, there is still work to be done to protect wild parrots from legal and illegal exploitation. The good news is, we know better what we're dealing with: After decades of fieldwork and reaching out to local governments, organizations and people we are better armed to deal with the ongoing crisis of the wild bird trade. The trade bans have slowed the threat down considerably, removing first the USA market in the early 1990s, and then the massive EU market in 2007. This is encouraging news indeed, but with growing demand from within parrot range states as well as demand from the Middle East and Asia, there remains a great deal of work left to do if we want to protect all parrots from the threat of trade.

Much of our trade work at WPT is now focused on our *FlyFree* program: Expanding the capacity of enforcement personnel and wildlife rehabilitation organizations to confiscate, treat and release parrots, as a means to deter

traders and save many thousands of wild birds. Increasing confiscations and prosecution of trappers is helping to end systemic corruption. Education work focused locally, regionally and internationally also shifts public opinion. Employing former poachers to guard nests and habitat for on-site projects serves to take some of the economic pressure off local people. And finally, rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing healthy wild-trapped birds can help to restore populations decimated by the trade. Since 2005, we have helped over 18 parrot species in 12 countries through such rehabilitation and release efforts.

The trade in wild-caught parrots remains a challenge, but with knowledge and experience gained in the last two-and-a-half decades the WPT and dedicated partners around the world have been able to stop the vast majority of the wild parrot trade. As more information comes to light, and as more people become involved, educated and concerned, more parrots will escape this destructive and unsustainable practice. ☐

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# LOOKING FORWARD

## SAVING PARROTS IN THE NEXT QUARTER CENTURY

ALMOST FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF our existence WPT hit the ground running, and we have continued the sprint to save parrots ever since. Along the way we've experienced an evolution of method, a global sharing of ideas, and an effective way of reaching out to people... we've come a long way in two-and-a-half decades, and there are exciting new horizons to explore. Though we're 25 years old, we're just getting started, and just hitting our stride in helping the parrots of the world. Today we're bigger, better connected, and better armed to help parrots everywhere we work.

The WPT will continue to take the lead in parrot conservation. One main approach will be to increase the ability to help deal with the ongoing wild bird trade crisis – the EU trade ban and other prohibitions have helped a great deal, but local and regional trade continues. By focusing on enforcing existing laws, encouraging confiscations, and supporting in-country organisations that work to stem the trade we can


increase the number of birds saved from this unsustainable practice. This goes hand-in-hand with work on re-wilding areas where parrots have been eliminated – done through thoughtful reintroduction of confiscated and captive-raised birds. This is accomplished with many participants – local zoos, private individuals and NGOs – working in concert, country by country.

Technology will play an increasing role in confiscation and reintroduction. The use of pioneering tools and systems (telemetry, satellite tags, habitat surveys using drones, and genetic mapping, for instance) can all benefit the repopulation and monitoring process: knowing where a parrot has been and where it is going and is powerful knowledge that can help aid its survival.

WPT is always on the lookout for new and exciting ways to help wild and companion parrots, and encourages out of the box thinking, exploring the use of technology, and employing

social networks to connect, inform, and inspire people to act. Our world has become much smaller because of new interconnectedness and thus the ability to reach out to concerned and interested parrot people becomes as large as our imaginations.

We have always been quick to share information about wild and companion parrots, and now we are able to do so on a greater level via podcasts, websites, applications, webinars, and social media. The Trust will continue to be adaptable: we're always tailoring our work to apply essential resources to the challenges at hand, as each situation we encounter requires a unique set of solutions.

The years will speed by and the World Parrot Trust will continue to positively impact parrots, because there will always be parrots to protect, advocate for, and learn from. We thank you, valued reader and supporter, for continuing on along that journey with us. 



**● Conservation**

WPT has developed numerous actions, including breeding and reintroduction, to help boost wild parrot populations and protect habitat.

**● Wildlife Trade**

Actions WPT takes to halt the trade in wild caught parrots include aiding confiscations, rehabilitating and releasing parrots, and working with local governments to enforce anti-poaching laws.

**● Field Research**

The Trust supports studies on the ecology of parrot species and what threatens them in the wild to better develop solutions to protect them.

**● Awareness & Education**

WPT reaches out to local peoples, governments, and organisations to spread awareness about parrots in the wild and in captivity.





Hyacinth Macaw © World Parrot Trust



Yellow-shouldered Amazon © Sam Williams

# Programs & Projects

The World Parrot Trust (WPT) is devoted exclusively to protecting parrots, the most threatened group of birds on earth. Utilizing the expertise of leading parrot biologists and welfare experts, WPT delivers effective strategies to help parrots survive in the wild and thrive in captivity. WPT works in partnership with local and international NGOs, scientific institutions, local communities, individuals and governments around the globe. It represents the most comprehensive effort of its kind and has aided 66 species in 42 countries since 1989.



Grey Parrot © Musiime Muramura



Patagonian Conure © Mauricio Failla



Palm Cockatoo © Steve Murphy & Brian Venables



Blue-throated Macaw © José Antonio Díaz

# Unintended Victims | Lilian's Lovebirds

By Tiwonge Mzumara

***The practice of waterhole poisoning, where illegal hunters use pesticides to poison waterholes to catch animals for food, is devastating wildlife in a Malawi park. Lilian's Lovebirds are suffering from this indiscriminate killing.***

## **October 2006 was the time that I first learned of the silent killer in Liwonde National Park.**


While surveying mammals we found a small waterhole surrounded by dead birds. Among them were Red-winged starlings, Blue waxbills, Laughing doves, Cape turtle doves and a number of Lilian's Lovebirds (*Agapornis lilianae*).

Nearby was evidence of illegal hunters: a small fire place surrounded by feathers. The game scout who accompanied us explained that waterhole poisoning was decimating wildlife in the park. Illegal hunters use pesticides to poison waterholes in order to catch mammals and birds for food. Although Lilian's lovebirds are not targeted this indiscriminate approach takes a hefty toll on this Near-threatened species.

Knowing that parrots are among the world's most threatened birds, I enquired about the status of Lilian's lovebirds in other countries: Is poisoning happening elsewhere? If so what does this mean for the status of wild populations? No recent research existed on Lilian's lovebirds in the wild. This prompted me to initiate a study into the species in Liwonde National Park, in collaboration with researchers at the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa.

We carefully documented poisoning events, uncovering 4 to 8 incidents each year with 50 – 100 birds killed, a staggering amount in this small park. Lilian's lovebirds drink frequently which makes them even more susceptible to poisoning. The threat is higher in the dry season when the birds often congregate in large flocks of 100 – 200 individuals at available water sources.

Intensive law enforcement and scout patrols are some of the key ways to address this threat. There are certain areas that are repeatedly poisoned each year; such areas need to be targeted in patrols. Communities need to be educated about the dangers of eating poisoned bush meat. There is a need to assess this threat for Lilian's and other lovebirds populations in Africa.

In 2015, The World Parrot Trust's Africa Conservation Programme is launching new initiatives for Lilian's lovebirds in the core of their range in Zambia with the generous support of Pamela and Neville Isdell and the Isdell Family foundation and assistance of BirdWatch Zambia. 







© Bentley Palmer

## Lilian's Lovebird

*Agapornis lilianae*

**IUCN Status:** Near-threatened.

**Range:** S Tanzania, Zambia-Zimbabwe border district, NW Mozambique, S Malawi and SE Zambia to N Zimbabwe. Possibly introduced in Lundazi district, NE Zambia.

**Threat Summary:** This species has been threatened by persecution by farmers and capture for local and international wild bird trade.

**Did You Know?** The nest of Lilian's Lovebird is a bulky, domed structure with an entrance tube made from bark strips, twigs and stems.



### About the author

Tiwonge Mzumara is an Ornithologist at the national Museums of Malawi. This research was made possible with support of University of KwaZulu Natal, International Foundation for Science, Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi, BirdLife - International, African Bird Club, World Wide Fund for nature -EFN, National Research Foundation, various lovebird societies and many others.



© John Leverton

Citizen scientists survey Canberra's Gang-gang cockatoos



© Georgina Steylder

In November hundreds of Canberrans set out to discover where Australia's Gang-gang cockatoos breed. The Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG), which is currently mapping the regional distribution of the cockatoos, has charged citizen scientists with searching their gardens, worksites and other areas in order to fill in knowledge gaps about the birds' breeding and nesting habits. The public was encouraged to record the maximum number of cockatoos seen in a day within a hundred metres of a designated spot, as well as days when no birds were observed. Ornithologist Chris Davey noted there was a good response – over 4000 records received to date. The information collected would inform conservation plans, such as protection of suburban nesting trees. Along with the citizen counts, which happen quarterly, the group has a separate year-long tracking project. The Gang-gang cockatoo is listed as Vulnerable in New South Wales and Least Concern by IUCN.

ABC News : [tinyurl.com/kjsolly](http://tinyurl.com/kjsolly)  
COG: [canberrabirds.org.au/](http://canberrabirds.org.au/)

Sad Loss for Conservation as AWWP Loses its Founder



© AWWP

On November 9, 2014 the conservation world lost His Excellency, Sheikh Saoud bin Mohammed Bin Ali Al Thani, founder of Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation (AWWP). For over fifteen years, His Excellency was a unique voice in the world of rare and endangered parrots, one that will be missed by many in the conservation community. His creation of the visionary Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation in Qatar was an exemplary contribution, creating one of the world largest private breeding centers for threatened and endangered species. Due to the dedication of Sheikh Saoud and his professional staff, Al Wabra achieved unprecedented success in reproducing many species rarely found in captivity. In his passing the World Parrot Trust hopes that the work of Al Wabra can continue and grow to further achieve its founder's vision and build upon Sheikh Saoud's achievements in aiding the recovery of endangered species around the world.

AWWP: <http://awwp.alwabra.com/>

A photograph of a Great Green Macaw parrot. The parrot is shown in profile, facing left. It has bright green feathers, a red forehead, and a large, dark beak. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural habitat.

**WILL YOU BE  
HIS HERO?**

[parrots.org/hero](http://parrots.org/hero)

Great Green Macaw © Steve Milpacher

Online Podcast: Mimicking Wild Diets for Companion Parrots



With a few exceptions (Red-bellied, Lear's and Hyacinth Macaws which eat just one or two types of foods), the vast majority of parrots in the wild eat a highly diverse diet including virtually all plant parts like seeds, fruits, and nectar, but also flowers themselves, buds, bark, wood, and leaves.

Dr. James Gilardi shares his observations on how parrots feed in the wild, and discusses the idea of translating a wild parrot diet into healthy and stimulating food and browse for companion birds.

**LISTEN NOW** 

[www.parrots.org/podcasts](http://www.parrots.org/podcasts)



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