

PSITTASCENE

Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Summer 2017



WORLD PARROT TRUST

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ABOUT THE WPT

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

As a leader in parrot conservation and welfare, the World Parrot Trust works with researchers, local organisations, communities, and governments to encourage effective solutions that save parrots.

Since 1989 the WPT has grown to become a global force that moves quickly to address urgent issues and support long-term projects for parrots. WPT has led projects in 42 countries for 66 species of parrot.

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ON THE COVER

There are fourteen races of the **Brown-throated Conure** (*Eupsittula pertinax*) found throughout the Neotropics. This individual, subspecies *xanthogenia*, was photographed on Bonaire skillfully navigating the ferocious spines of a giant pipe cactus.

Learn more about this parrot's island home and one local organisation's efforts to preserve its special dry forest.

Read more on Page 12, **Restoring Bonaire**.

Photo © Birthe & Bent Pedersen



A message from... the Editor

I'm sitting here writing this and thinking about how surprising pictures are. Photography, when well executed, can convey many emotions, thoughts and ideas.

One of the great things about working to save parrots is the pictures we receive from talented and dedicated photographers all over the world. Along with the colours and diversity there is joy, sorrow, and regular everyday parrot life in these works of art. There are huge flocks of Budgerigars flying in tandem to some invisible force, and Rainbow lorikeets foraging in flowering trees. Amazons, macaws and parakeets meet at clay licks. And, we see the solemn face of a Kakapo, shyly peering up at us from the green undergrowth. These extraordinary images amaze us here at WPT.

In this issue of *PsittaScene* you'll find a lot of these incredible, story-telling pictures. The reforesting of an island. The second-chance-at-life rescue and rehabilitation of parrots. The entertaining of companion birds. Each of these photographs tells a tale you won't soon forget.

We hope you are as inspired as we are.



Desi

Desi Milpacher,
WPT Publications Editor



Hyacinth Macaws © Charles Bergman

What will be your legacy?

Let your dedication to parrots live on.

Leaving a legacy gift to the World Parrot Trust through your estate may be one of the easiest and most fulfilling contributions you will ever make.

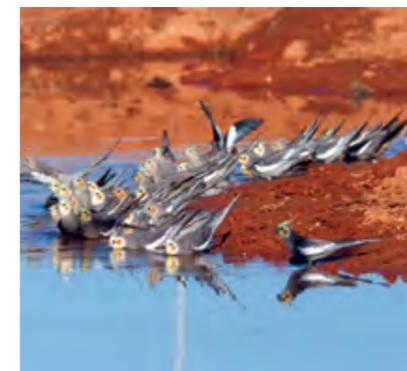
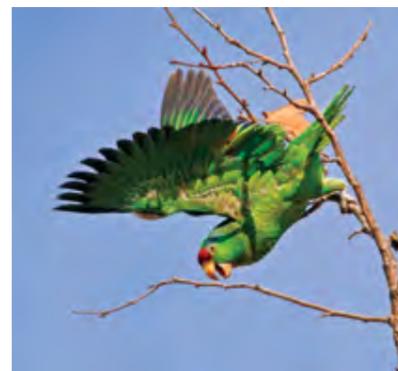
Visit our website at parrots.org/legacy or contact an office nearest you (see page 23.)

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WORLD PARROT TRUST

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Hope for Fighting Bolivian Trade: Wild Parrots Conservation Centre (CREA)

ARTICLE BY THE WORLD PARROT TRUST
ALL PHOTOS © CREA



Canary-winged Parakeets in the CREA outdoor aviary.



(left) Hand-feeding rescued chicks. (top right) Confiscated Canary-winged Parakeets arrive at CREA. (bottom right) Outdoor aviary for building flight strength and skills.



THE METROPOLIS OF SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA, at a population of 2 million, is a steamy mixture of verdant rainforest and carnival atmosphere. La Paz, on the other hand, is a city perched on the Andes Altiplano plateau at some 12,000 feet, where the air is both arid and thin.

The two cities are quite different from one another in these respects, but there is one thing they share: both receive large numbers of locally caught parrots.

Bolivia has a vigorous trade in wildlife, with most of the trapped parrots ending up in these two cities. In many Latin American countries people keep parrots as companions, much like people in North America and Europe keep dogs and cats.

In Bolivia, to supply this demand local people trap parrots, and visiting middlemen buy them to sell at large animal markets in the big cities for a profit.

But Bolivian law is clear: all wildlife resources are the property of the State. Local people may use these resources when authorisation is given in the form of licenses or permits, however, the government does not allow the trapping and trade of parrots.

Eighty percent of the local wildlife trade in Bolivia involves parrot species, some greatly endangered in the wild. This trade is especially hard on the chicks being trapped for sale as pets. Thankfully, there are many ways to stop the trade at different levels.

One of the cities working hard on the problem is Santa Cruz, under the umbrella of the Natural Resources Direction. As a result, there are confiscations of nearly 700 parrots a year in Santa Cruz alone, with higher numbers occurring across the country.

As a result, existing rescue centres in Bolivia are overwhelmed, and not all birds that *could* be confiscated *are*, due to the sheer lack of space to house them. These rescues are always full and do not have the luxury of planning for new arrivals or how to manage them afterward.

The situation makes the new facility at Santa Cruz sorely needed: 2,500 parrots potentially making their way through the rehabilitation system *each year* is not out of the question.

In 2016 the local government of Santa Cruz sought to change that.

In mid-2016 The Wild Parrots Conservation Centre (CREA) was established in an unlikely location: 1.3 hectares of abandoned petroleum company infrastructure on Santa Cruz Departmental Government property.

CREA is operated by an alliance of the Bolivian Parrots Conservation Foundation (CLB) and the Departmental Government of Santa Cruz, under the guidance of the Natural Resources Direction (DIRENA). The First Attention Wildlife Centre (CAD) is nearby, which serves as a receiving station for incoming birds. The main objective of CREA is to rehabilitate confiscated parrots and release

them back into the wild in the most efficient way possible, with the aim of reducing the gridlock that currently exists in the rescue and rehabilitation stream.

Equally important tasks include developing environmental education activities at CREA and in the city of Santa Cruz, participating in research with captive parrots, focussing on creating guidelines in the areas of parrot rehabilitation, captive care, release and post-release population monitoring, and training law enforcement to fight more effectively against parrot trade countrywide.

The current rescue/rehabilitation process works like this: first, any animals confiscated by the Bolivian government arrive at the CAD,

where they stay for about 20 days before they are sent to a rescue centre in Santa Cruz. There are four other rescues in the city; none of them currently has a rehabilitation and release procedure for parrots.

This particular obstacle has now been eliminated, thanks to the creation of the new CREA and the CAD receiving/quarantine being in close proximity.

From a time, cost and management perspective the entire rehabilitation process will be sped up considerably, thereby allowing more birds to be taken in and cared for when needed.

Once the birds have finished their quarantine at the CAD, they are sent to another isolation area at the CREA for further observation.



(top) Chestnut-fronted Macaw enjoys fruit chunks. (bottom left) Canary-winged Parakeet chicks huddle together for comfort. (bottom right) A frail-looking Blue-fronted Amazon awaits care.

The CREA is well equipped: busy with rooms and flights, it has rehabilitation aviaries, a handfeeding room/nursery for parrot chicks, a veterinary treatment room, and a food preparation kitchen.

Currently, the centre is housing 145 parrots comprising seven different species: Dusky-headed Parakeet (*Aratinga weddellii*), Canary-winged Parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*), White-eyed Parakeet (*Psittacara leucophthalma*), Blue-headed Parakeet (*Psittacara acuticaudatus*),

Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*), Blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*) and Chestnut-fronted Macaw (*Ara severus*).

The effort of housing, feeding and rehabilitating parrots requires money and resources. The centre has had ongoing technical and financial support from partner organisation World Parrot Trust, and initial support provided by the Folke Peterson Foundation and Boguth-Jonak-Stiftung for infrastructure.



(left) Trays of food for the birds at the CREA. For now, supplies are purchased in stores, but soon will include native foods as part of the learning and rehabilitation process. (right) Canary-winged Parakeets feast in the rehabilitation aviary.

Ongoing funding will come from a number of sources including:

- **International volunteer program:** Encouraging volunteers to help with all the activities, as well as generate a source of income into the centre. Volunteers will take care of parrot rehabilitation and parrot chicks on a 24-hour schedule, produce the vegetables and other foods for the birds, and more.
- **Tourism:** Partnering with different companies to bring tourists to the CREA for a fee. A future building includes a viewing tunnel where visitors to the centre can view the parrots, unobserved, during the rehabilitation process.
- **Merchandising:** Sale of t-shirts, key-chains and other collectibles for a profit at local Santa Cruz stores and gift shop at the CREA.
- **Donations and raffles:** Holding yearly raffles for prizes and distributing collection tins for donations in hotels, hostels and private companies, as well as at the CREA.
- **Training courses and workshops:** Hosting year-round seminars and courses at the CREA, highlighting topics on parrot conservation and captive management, training for use of GPS and field tools for conservation and research, and instruction on guiding and bird-watching.
- **Nursery:** Producing plants for reforestation of private lands, as well as gardening for private residences.

In sum, the operation of the CREA and its ancillary activities will add urgently needed facilities to an overtaxed parrot confiscation and rehabilitation system. It will also provide a central location where scientists, locals and visitors alike can help shape the future of wild parrots in Bolivia. ■

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Story in a Feather

The Remarkable Art of Chris Maynard

Chris Maynard is an artist who has a fascination with feathers and flying. You can see it in his life's passion: he soars, in an earthbound way, working with an ethereal art form – feather sculpture.

Maynard's mother was a professional artist who involved him early on in creative projects. One of his first memories is of the two of them making a cloth book with paintings of dragons for his little sisters.

He began to work with feathers when he was twelve. Weaving his strong backgrounds in biology and ecology into his art, he tells their individual stories with delicate precision and realism.

To Maynard, each feather is a tiny bit of perfection - a marvel of engineering and nature.

"Feathers mark nature's pinnacle of achievement: the intersection of function and beauty. They make flight possible, insulate against water, sun and wind, and their colors and patterns help them hide and attract mates," he says.

Acquiring feathers is not as simple as going out into the backyard and collecting them. The feathers of native birds (save some game birds) are not legal to own in the United States because of the North American Migratory Bird Act, introduced decades ago to prevent

people from harvesting birds to supply the fashion hat trade. The ones Maynard uses are from private aviaries and zoos, and come from birds that are not endemic to the United States.

To prepare a feather for sculpting, he cleans and stabilizes it with a process he developed using glues and pressure.



Painstakingly fixing a cut feather to a piece of foam board.



His favorite tools for his work are tiny ophthalmic surgical scissors, forceps, and magnifying glasses he inherited from his father, an eye surgeon.

Once he has a design plan for the feather, he begins a process that requires the most delicate of touches: slicing and shaping the minute curves and patterns of the piece. He achieves different effects depending on the type of feather, be it stiff flight primaries or the more pliant tail shafts, always preserving the original color of the feather.

A story slowly emerges during the cutting, placing and gluing of the feathers onto the background.



Images © Chris Maynard | Featherfolio.com

Lastly, he uses insect pins to suspend the cutouts above the canvas to create depth and shadows behind the feathers.

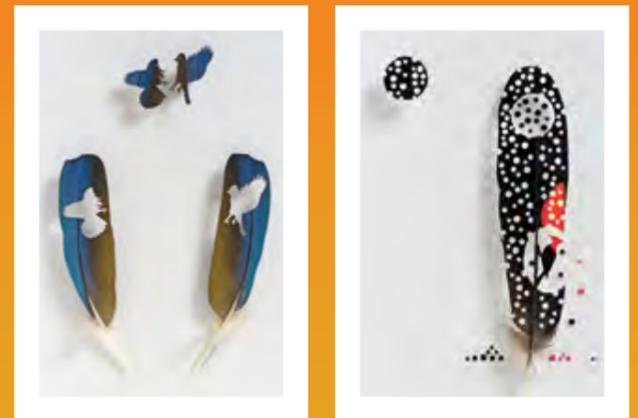
The end result is breathtaking. Many others think so, too: his unique feather shadowboxes are recognized and sought after by art collectors, bird lovers, and other interested people from around the world. Maynard's resumé overflows with showings of his art in prestigious locations all over North America. He has had private commissions throughout the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, Spain, Australia, and Japan.

"I love life and all its forms, its mysteries, and awesomeness. Feathers capture many aspects of life," he says. "My work with feathers gives me a satisfying perch from which to view the world."

Chris Maynard's art is truly a celebration of life. 📷

To see more of Chris' work, including a video of his creation process, visit his website at Featherfolio.com.

Auction for Conservation



WPT is thrilled to announce we are teaming up with artist Chris Maynard for a special fundraiser – an online auction featuring two original sculptures and 10 exclusive prints.

Beginning this fall, a portion of sale proceeds will support parrot conservation efforts by *The Ara Project* in Costa Rica.

Register to be notified when the auction begins:

parrots.org/auction

Restoring Bonaire:

Ensuring the survival of species that rely on the dry forest

In the Caribbean, the island of Bonaire is as physically harsh as it is beautiful. Situated off the coast of Venezuela, the leeward island's ecosystem is at a disadvantage on a number of fronts – from constant drying winds and heat to human disturbance of one form or another.

But the plants and parrots that live here are resilient.

BONAIRE IS HOME TO MANY plants and animals, including two endangered flowering shrub species, and parrots such as Yellow-shouldered Amazons (*Amazona barbadensis*) and Brown-throated Conures (*Eupsittula pertinax*).

There are also several species found here and nowhere else in the world. They have evolved to live on this special dry forested island, withstanding extreme climate, and more recently, the felling of the island's trees, competition from non-native species and overgrazing by livestock. Dry forest habitats are among the least researched and conserved habitats in the world, and yet

they account for about half of the earth's forested area. On Bonaire, most of the dry forest ecosystem is dominated by only a few tree species, with few mature large trees remaining and a number of near-extinct native species. Fewer large trees means less rainfall is retained in the environment, adding to the pervasive dryness.

The resulting loss of plant diversity is thought to drive Yellow-shouldered Amazons to forage in urban areas, which leads to conflict with fruit growers. A local organisation has begun the work to restore and balance this fragile ecosystem.

Echo, a WPT partner for nearly two decades, is a small and energetic non-profit foundation whose mission is to safeguard the future of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon on Bonaire, which holds the only population of these parrots outside of Venezuela.

Echo's Habitat Restoration and Reforestation program, funded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs from the Netherlands and the Openbaar Licham Bonaire, seeks to recover and re-establish dozens of tree species native to the island.

It's an ambitious project that will potentially benefit every living being on the island.



(top left) Seed pods from the Divi-divi Tree (*Caesalpinia coriaria*). The Divi-divi (**inset**) often gets bent by strong winds, making it difficult to reach full growth height (9m/ 29ft).

(middle left) Close-up of the Wayaka tree (*Guaiacum officinale*). The green and brown pattern of its bark makes for a striking patchwork appearance.

(bottom left) Yellow-shouldered Amazon enjoying the bounty of a Mespil (*Mespilus germanica*) tree.

(top right) Yellow-shouldered Amazons enjoying a treat of Kibrahacha flowers (*Tabebuia billbergii*).

(middle right) Wayaka in bloom.

(bottom right) Wayaka fruit. Its bright red inner pulp is a favourite food for Bonairean wildlife.

PHOTOS © ECHO



PLANTING PROCESS - STEP 1: Gathering (top left) Depending on the species, seeds can be collected year-round on Bonaire in many stages of ripeness - some can be green; others can be mature and dry. **STEP 2: Preparing** Preparation of the seeds for planting differs between species and may involve removing the seed pod or coating as well as filing, soaking, or drying the seed. **STEP 3: Sowing (top right)** Once the seeds are ready they are planted in small trays at Echo's plant nursery. The seeds are watered regularly until they sprout. **STEP 4: Transplanting (bottom)** As the seedling grows, it is replanted into a larger pot to allow for healthy root growth. PHOTOS © ECHO

STEP 5: Planting (top left) Once the tree grows large enough, it is taken to one of Echo's reforestation areas around the island. A hole is dug, organic compost is added, and the tree is carefully planted. **Step 6: Watering (bottom left)** The new trees are watered twice a week by hand until they are established and new growth is present. The watering is then reduced to once a week until the trees can survive independently, which can take up to a year. **(right)** Cactus provides a sustainable fencing material while protecting new trees from grazing by wild goats and donkeys. PHOTOS © ECHO

WHY PLANT TREES?

Trees give the earth oxygen, filter airborne pollutants, provide habitat and food sources for hundreds of species, enrich the soil, protect against erosion, and help to keep the planet cool.

The reforestation program will add to the global vegetation canopy, through a variety of species, to the tune of over 20,000 seedlings. These will be planted over the duration of the program.

Tree planting benefits the people in Bonaire as well. These group activities encourage local community participation and cooperation, and will ultimately

produce a positive climate impact, improve local agriculture and nourish soils, and increase plant resiliency against climate change.

Native plants that wildlife currently forages on will be re-established – Yellow-shouldered Amazons in particular love Kalbas (*Crescentia cujete*) and Hoba (*Spondias mombin*) fruits, along with seed pods of the Oliba (*Capparis odoratissima*).

Reforestation is a complex process. There are a number of general steps to cultivation and planting: gathering viable seeds of select species, preparing and germinating them, repotting to promote root growth,

growing the seedling, planting, tagging, GPS monitoring, and maintenance. Echo has been charged with a large-scale reforestation project with the goal of protecting ten fenced 'exclusion areas' on public land. Since September of 2016 the Dutch armed forces have assisted Echo in the development of these special zones. Each area measures approximately one-hectare and is specifically designed to prevent exotic herbivores (goats, donkeys and pigs) from getting in and devouring the plants.

The team collects baseline data about the trees being planted out, so that their growth can be charted over time.

Planting the seedlings is optimal in September or October, as the wet season begins.

It's the maintenance of these precious plants that presents the greatest challenge to volunteers and staff: water has to be brought in, each seedling is watered by hand, the ground is difficult to dig in (most is limestone rock from dead coral), and working in the heat is physically exhausting.

After planting, the seedlings are watered twice weekly until they show new growth and water retention is apparent in the soil, at which time watering is reduced to once a week and eventually tapered off altogether.

So far the results look very promising. In 2016 Echo successfully completed three of ten proposed one-hectare fenced areas for the protection and restoration of Bonaire's dry forest.

In total, close to 3,000 trees were planted out in a massive effort over the 2016-2017 rainy season. Volunteers, local business and community groups came out for four organized tree planting events to help the Echo team.

Over 20 different species of trees were planted and, as of March 2017, the team was delighted to report that the vast majority of them are doing well and showing growth.

A RESTORED BONAIRE...

As time goes on, the benefits to the island will become enormous – restoration of plants and trees forms the very foundation of a healthy ecosystem. Yellow-shouldered Amazons, parakeets, and other animals will live better lives in this dry, windy little corner of paradise. 🌳

 Learn more about Echo online at: echobonaire.org

Special thanks to:
Netherlands Forces in the Caribbean, Openbaar Lichaam Bonaire, Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands, Vogelbescherming Nederland, STINAPA, and to long-term partner Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)



CUBAN AMAZON

(Amazona leucocephala)

Situated in the Ciénaga de Zapata Biosphere Reserve on the island nation of Cuba, Zapata Swamp is home to a wide diversity of plants and animals, including the Cuban Amazon. These eye-catching parrots are generally found in groups feasting on leaf buds, cones, tender shoots, fruit, and seeds. Their world population is threatened by severe habitat loss and trapping for the wild bird trade.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER:

WPT Scientific Advisor Roger Wilkinson is the former Head of Conservation and Science and at Chester Zoo. He has a BSc in Zoology and a PhD from Southampton University, considerable field experience, and has authored scientific papers in ornithology, bird behaviour and ecology.



IUCN Near Threatened, CITES Appendix I



THE PARROT THAT CHEWS

A chewing, climbing, foraging parrot is a happy one, and that's half of the battle of keeping birds healthy.

AS WE KNOW, WILD PARROTS ARE VERY BUSY creatures, searching for and then dismantling foodstuffs in order to get at the choicest and healthiest morsels they need for survival.

In their natural ranges parrots ingest bark, leaves, and other debris; they also strip vegetation and chew wood to build nests. In certain parts of the world, parrots take clay soils to get minerals and to neutralise toxins from seeds they eat. So, instinctively parrots want to work for their living; they *expect* to.

Companion parrots have no such outlet for these wild tendencies, so boredom (and its attendant

problems) can result. They often find themselves at the mercy of their human's schedules: a certain time to eat, a specific time for a bath, and playtime.

If we, as their keepers, can replicate items found in the wild with puzzles, toys, preening items, and browse for them to keep busy with during our absence, then to some degree these intelligent animals can be kept mentally and physically occupied.

Keeping parrots busy with toys and browse and closely supervising any out-of-cage excursions will also distract them from chewing on household items that *aren't* safe,

like electrical cords and window blinds. Plus, a healthy parrot (with no underlying issues) provided with safe chewing opportunities should never need to have its beak trimmed.

A Chewing Parrot is a Happy Parrot

Above all, most parrots *love* to chew. Their beaks and tongues are built for plucking and manipulating, and their brains are curious. Other than plowing through their breakfast and dinner there isn't much else for a companion parrot to do, so, the daylight hours should be otherwise filled with exercise and toys to stimulate natural behaviours.

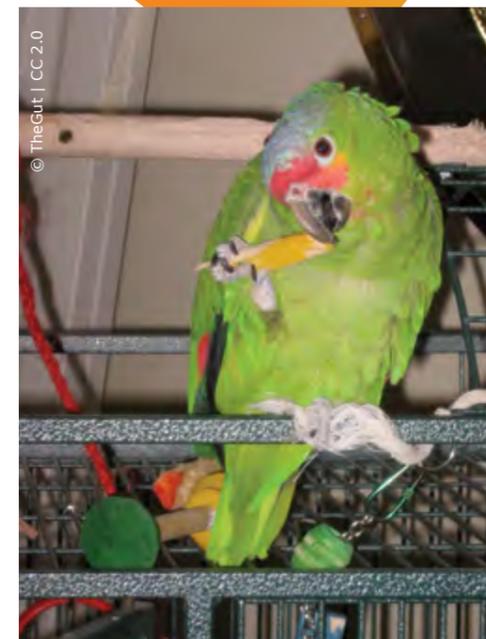
Here are some safe and easy ideas for keeping beaks busy:

- **Natural branches** – grapevine, fir, dogwood, birch, pine, poplar, and willow provide good browse and perches. Remove any sticky sap or wild animal contaminated parts, and make sure the branches are not sprayed with pesticides or have fungus or mould. Avoid branches near busy roads, as they will have been exposed to salt, grease, oil and other pollutants.
- **Natural pine cones** – pick clean, new and debris free. Bake at 200 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes to heat-sterilize. Shut off oven and let sit with door closed for 2 hours to cool off and dry further. Stuff with food items or other chewables.
- **Paper towel rolls** – cut off any signs of glue and stuff with food items or paper.
- **Dried corncobs** – make sure they are free of pests and mould.
- **Paper cups** – unwaxed and plain for stringing on existing toys.
- **Small brown paper sacks** – fill with other toys or food items and fold shut.
- **Wood scraps** – make sure they are untreated and have no nails, screws or staples. Bird safe wood options include balsa, pine, and fir.
- **Dried woven palm leaves, sea grass, corn husks** – weave them in and out of cage wire, tie onto perches, or stuff into other chewables.
- **Woven baskets and shapes** – make sure they're natural and untreated and contain safe material, such as willow or grapevine.
- **Basket-style coffee filters (unbleached paper)** – string into existing or new toys, or fill several layers with nuts and seeds, tie closed and suspend from cage wire or favourite perch.
- **Wire-free wooden clothes pins** – unstained and unpainted.
- **Wooden spoons** – drill a hole and attach to toys.
- **Food items** – kale, chard and other greens, apples, carrots and tops, patty pans (small squash-like vegetables), pomegranate pieces, zucchini chunks, sweet or hot peppers (with seeds).
- **Ink-free boxes or cardboard** (clean) – hide other toys or food items in these.
- **Egg cartons** (cardboard, that contained intact eggs, with none broken) – cut up into smaller pieces for foot toys or fill cups up with other items.
- **Dried coconut shell** – hollowed out for playing with the fibres, or including chewables on the inside.

The items mentioned above are just a start. Remember, safety first - when introducing a new toy always supervise the activity at first to make sure nothing goes awry. Then sit back and watch them enjoy. *(And hopefully leave your window and floor trim alone!)* 📺



a toy
DESTROYED
is a toy
ENJOYED!





It is unusual to write about my mother as it's my father who gets credited for the initiatives in parrot welfare and conservation achieved during their lifetimes. But they were a team, and she was right there as they made choices which led them to create a parrot charity called the World Parrot Trust.

~ Tribute by Alison Hales

How it started

Audrey Pearse met Mike Reynolds in a jazz club in central London. Both lived in south London with the Second World War, evacuation, and food rationing featuring prominently during their early years. They married in 1954, moving about 30 miles south to Sevenoaks with Mike commuting to London every day to work in an advertising agency. Us four children were born and Audrey was kept busy raising us, looking after our dogs, hens and the garden, and ferrying us around in her bright yellow mini. For family holidays we set off to the far south west of England, and Cornwall became a favourite place.

Cornwall and parrots

In the late 1960s Mike gave up advertising and started his own toy company. Audrey worked with him on this rather madcap idea, travelling to trade fairs to find distributors for the products. We already had pet canaries, but Mike's office was now at home so it was easy for him to keep other birds. That was when 'Major' the Orange-winged Amazon Parrot came to live with us... my parents had started their journey into the world of parrots!

Then two things happened: a visit to a bird garden and an article in the Daily Mirror newspaper. At 'Birdland' my father saw a way to realise several dreams in one: start his own bird garden, earn a living, and live in Cornwall. The newspaper described how he had offered homes to 'grumpy parrots' and 'moody macaws'. He was 38 and this was the first time he expressed a lasting concern: "Unfortunately, many imported parrots intended as pets are so ill-treated and mishandled they never make satisfactory companions. Because they become grumpy, they eke out their lives in the solitary confinement of undersized prisons." They made a bold plan to change their lives: houses were sold and bought, schools sought, and the move to Cornwall undertaken.



Finding their paradise

My parents found 'Glanmor' in Hayle, a Victorian house with a sheltered walled garden and enough space to create a perfect bird garden. It was Mike's love of parrots that started the sequence of events. It was Audrey's support which turned the dream into reality.

Not everything went swimmingly, and it took two years to get planning permission, but aviaries were built and birds installed. Commercial greenhouses became the shop and café, and these were Audrey's domain. She took on multiple roles, including making thousands of sandwiches and buying for the gift shop - she was skilled at negotiating with wholesalers to get the payment terms. It was a steep learning curve, but my parents stuck with their plan. Gradually Bird Paradise became known for breeding rare birds and grew into a popular local attraction.

Early Days and The World Parrot Trust

In the first few years I remember Mac and Alice, the Scarlet Macaws which flew at liberty for two decades, raising their chicks in a roof-top nest. Herbert, the beautiful Palm Cockatoo and Woody, the chatty St. Vincent Amazon, Buffon's Macaws, Golden Conures, and pairs of Bali Starlings and White-eared Pheasants were all there. The Bird in Hand pub was opened and, when an otter enclosure was added, 'Bird Paradise' changed to 'Paradise Park'.

Then in 1989, the World Parrot Trust charity was established at the Park. Mike spent hours on the phone to 'parrot people' around the world, working out the best way to help parrots in need.

They travelled to parrot conventions together, with Audrey manning the World Parrot Trust stand to help spread the word. At a meeting in Cincinnati they met Carl Jones from the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, and WPT's first project became saving the critically endangered Echo Parakeet. Paul Butler of RARE was also there, which led to three Educational Buses being built and shipped from Cornwall to the Caribbean to play their part in helping the St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Imperial and Red-necked Amazons.

The World Parrot Trust became a very large part of their lives. They put a lot of energy and ingenuity into making it successful to help more threatened parrots around the world.

In 2007, after 51 years of marriage, Mike died. Although life couldn't be the same Audrey picked herself up, keeping up with friends and family nearby and far flung. Her health was up and down, but she had an optimism which we loved. Just a few weeks before she died, she was around the Park on her scooter chatting with people and parrots.

This is how I remember them, with happy memories of the choices they made together, the laughs, and glasses of wine we shared. ☺

Alism



A mural celebrating Australia's endangered birds includes many parrots



© Ian Currie

A giant painting featuring Australia's most endangered birds has appeared in Preston, a suburb of Melbourne. Commissioned by the non-profit group The Nature Conservancy, the beautiful artwork was installed by Melbourne artists Conrad Bizjak and Chris Hancock.

The 100sq. metre mural features a diversity of colourful native birds considered threatened, including the Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*), Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*), and Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*). Conservancy director Rich Gilmore hopes the mural serves as a reminder of the wonders of the natural world in Australia. "...we set out to create something beautiful that inspires people to conserve nature, while adding to the rich history of public art in Melbourne's north," he noted.

Read more at:
tinyurl.com/yb39pzhc

Cockatoos keep their tools safe

There are few animal species which have so far been found to use tools on a regular basis. Even fewer make their own tools. But Goffin's Cockatoos (*Cacatua goffiniana*) can do both, while seemingly lacking a genetic adaptation for tool use. And, recent research has found another amazing adaptation: the birds hang onto their tools while feeding, not dropping them until the last of five difficult-to-obtain food rewards has been retrieved.

Read more at:
tinyurl.com/kmceypy

Poachers using academic journals to locate endangered species

A new twist in the ongoing battle against illegal trade has surfaced: poachers using online scientific journals and academic papers to determine the locations of endangered species. It's a development that has at least one prominent biologist worried: Biology professor David Lindenmayer, from the Australian National University (ANU), has said that the locations of rare Australian species like the Night Parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*) should be kept a secret to prevent poachers and amateur wildlife enthusiasts contributing to their dwindling numbers. Prof Lindenmayer has called for academics to omit the specifics of where a species lives in future peer-reviewed articles to help ensure their survival.

Read more at:
tinyurl.com/yaqju67t

BOOK REVIEW

Avian Cognition: Exploring the intelligence, behaviour and individuality of birds

Reviewed by: Gregory Kohn,
New Mexico State University

Hardcover: 535 pages
Publisher: CRC Press



Until recently the term "bird brain" was synonymous with stupidity. Nowadays we know better. From pigeons that can differentiate van Gogh from Monet paintings, to crows that make tools, recognize faces, and hold grudges, to parrots that comprehend some aspects of language, it seems the more and more we watch birds, the more clever they become. And it is careful observations of birds that are at the heart of Debra Herrmann's book "Avian Cognition: Exploring the intelligence, behaviour and individuality of birds".

The complexity of bird behaviour means that you only need a pair of binoculars, the right motivation and time, and you are bound to uncover something new. Debra's book shines in providing detailed day-to-day observations of individual behaviour in both the wild and captive setting. Nonetheless, her scientific interpretations of such behaviours are often lacking in substance.

The first chapter provides a general overview of basic scientific concepts, and provides the author's own, and often eccentric, perspective on cognition, culture, and consciousness. This section should be approached with skepticism, as it fails to cite the large existing scientific literature on these topics, and draws from non-primary sources. The heart of the book is in the subsequent chapters. Each chapter focuses on a select few species, and contains information on each species natural history, behavior and cognitive traits. The behavioural anecdotes are intriguing and fun to read, and capture the pioneering spirit of the first ethologists. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the behaviour often extends beyond what the observations allow. Bird-lovers, from amateur birdwatchers to professional ornithologists, will enjoy book for its wonderful descriptions of behaviour. However, those interested in learning about the science of avian cognition should look at the many other books on the topic. 📖

OPPORTUNITIES

Call for Volunteers

WPT partner Echo is doing important work for parrots in Bonaire, and they always need volunteers to help! If you have time to spare, take a look at the open positions by visiting their website, and see if you have what it takes:

echobonaire.org/volunteer

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**PARROTS IN THE WILD:
Yellow-eared Parrot
(*Ognorhynchus icterotis*)**

“As we descended...back towards Jardín, we unexpectedly lucked into a group of at least a dozen birds feeding at eye level in a fruiting tree on a steep slope below us.”

The Yellow-eared Parrot has made a remarkable return from the brink of extinction in its native Colombia, having suffered from the loss of 150-foot tall wax palms important to its survival. The Catholic Church had used fronds from the trees for its traditional Palm Sunday celebrations, but now Andean parishes have altered the practice slightly by blessing palm seedlings instead, sparing the mature trees.

Photo © **Manfred Kusch**