

# Psitta



# Scene

*The World Parrot Trust*

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## Visiting the Hyacinth Macaw Conservation Site

Southern Piauí State, Brazil. A Brief Report to the World Parrot Trust and the International Aviculturists Society by Wm. Richard Porter, MD

### INTRODUCTION

The largest native population of the endangered Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* is located in the Pantanal region of Brazil.

This population is largely protected on huge cattle estates and as long as they have become of value to the land owners as tourist attractions, their welfare is relatively secure. The next largest remaining population is located over a drier area including the Southern portion of the Piauí State of Brazil. Kaytee Avian Foundation, *World Parrot Trust* and the International Aviculturists Society have been funding efforts to protect this population since photos and video pertinent to its rediscovery were presented by Dr. Charles Munn at the 1995 and 1996 IAS

Conventions. Dr. Heather Bowles presented additional information from this population at the 1997 IAS Convention. The reader is referred to those Proceedings for additional history and background information.

In this conservation effort, the basic premise is to offer former trappers an alternative income-producing lifestyle protecting the birds. Early efforts were directed toward utilizing a tractor to prepare ground for subsistence farming and employing former trappers as wardens. In order to provide a sustainable source of income to provide protection for this area,

development of this area as a site for ecotourism has been considered.

Kaytee Avian Foundation sponsored an Ecotour to this site in order to raise funds for this project and to evaluate the financial viability of long-term ecotourism as a sustainable source of funding. Accordingly this report will include more information on the travel than might otherwise be noted.

### TRAVEL

The group of eighteen going on the tour was split into two groups, one leaving for Brazil out of Atlanta and a second leaving out of Miami. This was arranged by the travel agent and Varig airlines such that there would be no problems in accommodating our group as flights run pretty full. Even so, Varig

oversold their flights and left seven out of the eight of us departing Miami at the gate. Despite our confirmed reservations and threehour advance check in, we spent an enjoyable first day of our trip touring Miami's Kmart and Fairchild Gardens while awaiting a flight the following night. Not to fear, our luggage made the flight even though we didn't. (Others travelling to this area may wish to consider alternative flight arrangements as Varig is quite casual regarding seat assignments, reservations and to date has not seen fit to respond to our letters.) Upon arriving Sao Paulo, we fortunately made a connection to Brasilia in time to catch the once daily flight to Barreras, joining the rest of our group. Several days later the

checked baggage caught up with us.

Upon arriving Barreras in early afternoon, the group ate at a local cafeteria and rode in taxis for several hours to the Chapada das Mangabeiras. At this point we transferred to a flat bed truck as the "road" was impassable for automobiles. Even though it was several hours after dark and many had been without sleep for the preceding 24 hours, there was no sleeping on the truck as we viewed the habitat by spotlight on the last hour to the camp.

Arriving at the camp we were greeted with a filling meal and individual huts for each couple complete with mattresses, new sheets and unneeded mosquito netting. Sleeping arrangements were quite comfortable.



10 Hyacinths feeding as seen from blind.

Photo: W. R. Porter

“psittacine

(sit'ã sîn) Belonging or allied to the parrots; parrot-like”

*If we can save the parrots, we may yet save ourselves* © WPT



**EDITOR:**

Rosemary Low,  
P.O.Box 100,  
Mansfield,Notts  
United Kingdom  
NG20 9NZ

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Birders on a morning walk (L-R: Doug Trent, Paula Fox, Terry Fox). Photo: L. Porter

**HABITAT AND FOODS**

Overall the area would probably be best described as a plateau of dry forest surrounded by cliffs. Most trees were less than 7 meters in height and grasses grow between the trees. There were areas of increased moisture with stands of Buritii palms *Mauritia flexuosa*. Although the Hyacinths will work in the young fronds and may at times eat a portion of the fruit of these palms, we did not observe them eating any of the fruit although it was available. In this area the Hyacinths nest in the cliffs, eat in the early morning and again in mid to late afternoon. At the time of our visit, the macaws were roosting at night in remote palm trees. The former trappers identified five primary foods the macaws eat. The two primary palm nuts the hyacinths eat are "Piacava" and "Catole". Another palm nut eaten (though not in season during this visit) is "Tutum" which has a somewhat smaller nut. They also eat the fruit of the "Jatoba" tree (resembling a large fat overgrown green bean) as well as the fruit of the "Sapucaia" (approximately a 6 cm eggplant type fruit with a tough shell containing edible seeds.) By far the most important of these appear to be the "Catole" and "Piacava or Piassava".

No claims are made as to the accuracy of the spelling of these common names nor to taxonomic abilities of the writer. Many different species of palms are called by these common names. In this area the growth habit of these later two is a subterranean trunk with the fronds emerging at ground level and the nuts growing up on a stem six inches or so above ground level. I believe the "Catole" in this area to be *Attalea exigua* (Field Guide to Palms of the Amazons page 161) and the "Piacava or Piassava" to be

*Attalea eichleri* (Palms of the Amazon) although they could certainly be another similar species. These do not appear to be *Syagrus comosa* or *Attalea funifera* as they are reported in other areas. The "Catole" fruit is 1-2 seeded oblovoid 4-6 cm long and 3-5 cm in diameter. The "Piassava" fruit is similar in shape, often slightly smaller, with multiple (4-7) endosperm per fruit. The "Piassava" seemed to grow in areas that were closer to water than the "Catole". Although some nuts of both were in evidence in June, the "Piassava" was more common with the "Catole" nuts being more immature and reported to ripen during the "egging season" (September through December). It would appear to be much easier and a lot less work for a Hyacinth to chew through the mesocarp of the "Catole" to get the one or two large seeds rather than work through the additional hard fibrous material separating the multiple seed of the "Piassava".

These palm trees grow in areas where the grass is periodically set on fire. With their underground growth habit they survive the fires, and indeed the fires may play a role in eliminating some of their plant competition. When there is a column of smoke, the macaws seem to be attracted and apparently like the partially roasted nuts. Perhaps the cleared areas make it easier to find the nuts without the risk of predation and perhaps the roasting or burning makes it easier to get to the seed in the nut. Apparently the burning of an area to attract the macaws is a technique utilised by trappers for years.

The birds feed on the ground searching for these fruits although they may pick up one, two or three nuts and fly to a surrounding tree to shell and eat same. We observed birds picking up nuts, flying to a

"Jatoba" tree to shell and eat, and eat leaves of the "Jatoba" between bites of the nuts.

**CAMP ROUTINE**

Over the next five days, a portion of our group would go to the blind each dawn till midday and a second shift would go from midday to dusk. The first group to the blind saw in excess of sixty Hyacinths and the number declined over succeeding days, probably secondary to the foot traffic between camp and the blind. Others would go birding, drive in a truck to other areas in the locality to view additional wildlife, eat and sleep.

Holding down the hammocks was a tough job but someone had to do it.

We were told some of the birds feeding at the blind had flown some twenty miles. At the blind some macaws clearly knew we were present. Once they started feeding, they did not seem to be bothered by camera noise. Family groups would come to the feeding site, usually with one and occasionally two offspring. One parent would typically remain high in a nearby tree while the youngsters were coming to the ground to feed. One afternoon after feeding in a nearby "Jatoba" tree, we observed two adults copulating with two younger birds watching. Late in the afternoons the birds would often gather in a distant bare-limbed tree before departing their separate ways to roost.

**NEST SITES**

During the nesting season, the macaws utilise holes and caves in the cliffs overlooking the dry forest. As this was not the nesting season and there were no birds to disturb, the former trappers demonstrated how effortlessly they could climb the cliffs and inspect some of the nest sites. Only a few from our group chose to demonstrate their athletic prowess. Nest caves are quite variable in size. The entrance and cave size varies from openings big enough to accommodate a person to caves and entrances so small the macaws have to back in.

**DISCUSSION WITH THE FORMER TRAPPERS TURNED WARDENS**

Lourival Lima is a well respected man in his village. He owns land, cattle, vehicles, a house and has several employees. For many years Lourival made a substantial portion of his living trapping and selling parrots as had his father before him. He indicates birds have been trapped in this area for at least 50-60 years and he has been trapping since age nine. He would



Hyacinth nesting cliffs, with intrepid climber.

Photo: L. Porter

trap birds utilising different methods in areas several days away as well as harvest babies from the nest cliffs near his home.

The following is excerpted from notes from conversations with Lorival and one of his workers, Raimondo, over several days.

*How often do the parents feed the babies in the wild?* The male feeds the female with hatchlings at least 3 meals per day. The female does not leave the nest for ten days or so after the babies are born. After that both the parents feed. Both parents fly back to the nest site with huge packed crops.

*How and what did you feed the babies taken from the nests?*

Ideal formula consisted of 50 - 60% "Catole" nut, corn flour, milk and water. The temperature of the formula is slightly above body temperature but not too hot to burn. Cannot be too hot or cold.

*Do pairs return to the same nest site year after year?*

Yes, many pairs return to the same nest hole year after year. We know because of unique calls, behaviour between birds and behaviour around humans.

Some nest holes fail early and a pair might try 3-4 different nest holes within a kilometre.

*Do the birds excavate the holes?*

Some birds do a good portion of the excavation. The cliffs are a form of sandstone and the birds scour and chew in their cave.

*Where do they roost at night (out of the nesting season)?*

They roost in palm trees at night. Usually one pair sleeps in a palm, usually in the same tree night after night.

*How long do the youngsters stay and fly with the parents?*

At least a year. At the cliffs youngsters may be observed with parents as they nest.

*When do they start laying?*

Earliest "egging" is in August. Babies are usually present in October. Some birds are still

"egging" in December.

*When do they fledge and when do parents stop feeding?*

They usually fledge in March or April and are fed for at least 5 months after fledging. Birds probably fledge at three to four months.

*What is the primary food in nest season?*

The "Catole" palm nut is the primary food in the "egging" season. Also the "Piassava" which requires more water.

*When do juveniles reach maturity and select mates?*

They seem to be at least a year and a half before reaching maturity. Then they tend to disappear or disperse.

*How far from the cliffs to the feeding areas?*

Approximately 30 kilometres.

*Is there dominance between pairs?*

Only dominance seems to be exhibited at the nest site area. Fighting between pairs for nest sites has been observed. In trees the birds may displace each other but they are not really fighting.

*How close are nest holes?*

Once observed Greenwing and Hyacinth pair three meters between

holes. There is about a hundred meters between the closest Hyacinth nests. They have a landing pattern to come into the nest and it is perceived to be a pattern to avoid interference between nests.

*Is there a shortage of nest holes?*

No.

*What makes the most successful nest holes?*

Narrow entrance to nest site with deep hole — several feet.

With babies, both parents land simultaneously, one enters and the other watches at the entrance for 3-4 minutes.

*Do hyacinths nest in palms?*

Have always nested in cliffs. If no cliffs they use palms. Near Barrerras they nest in Burritii palms as there are no cliffs.

*What are their predators?*

Large birds of prey can take the babies.

*What is the current incidence of trapping?*

Heard of someone trapping about 8 hours away. Someone is buying and sending out. Mentioned another town where someone was buying.

## HYACINTH NEEDS

We can probably best protect this population of Hyacinth Macaws by securing a large area of habitat and protecting the birds from poaching. The areas in which the Hyacinths feed and roost is poor and is used primarily for cattle. Land can probably be purchased for approximately \$15-\$20 per acre although the flight range of these birds is so great that a lot of land would have to be purchased to be effective. The growth of those palms and other trees upon which they feed could be encouraged. Cattle at low density could be pastured on this land without detriment and could help offset the cost of protecting the area. Land would need to be held through a Brazilian NGO. There would have

to be stringent safeguards to assure the long term use of the land for the benefit of the birds. WPT has funded the initial formation of such a Brazilian NGO (BioBrasil) although I have received no confirmation of the ultimate government approval of same.

## ECOTOURISM AND THE HYACINTH SITE?

Competition is keen for tourists seeking wildlife. Ease of travel, excellent food, and scenic accommodations are standard for safari type trips. Multiple species of wildlife and other attractions are the norm.

Although it would certainly be possible to build an airstrip and lodge on one of the mesas with a spectacular view, it would require considerable investment. There is additional wildlife in the area which could be attracted. A beautiful valley with a small river is nearby and has tourism potential.

At present, travel to this site is quite time consuming and it is doubtful this area can compete for the tourist dollar except for the few diehard Hyacinth aficionados. I do not think it realistic to assume ecotourism to be a significant source of income for the protection of the Hyacinths without major changes. Others may have different opinions.

## CONCLUSION

On a personal note this was a wonderful trip! Thanks to Kaytee for putting it together and inviting us. The people at the site could not have been nicer. Additionally we enjoyed a great group with which to share the experience. I left with far better understanding of the environment and a greater appreciation for this magnificent parrot, the Hyacinth Macaw.



A small group of hyacinths feeding.

Photo: W.R. Porter

# A Letter From Cornwall by Michael Reynolds

For those of our members who may not know, the county of Cornwall is one of the most beautiful places in Britain. Three hundred miles southwest of London, its unspoilt coastline and fabulous beaches have made it a favourite holiday location for generations of Britons, and in recent years, many Europeans also. Like other remote and slightly raffish places (Key West, Kauai?), it tends to attract people who are reacting against some more demanding set of circumstances, perhaps seeking a simpler way of life.

## A LITTLE HISTORY

So it was for me and my family in 1971, when we found a fine old Victorian house with a walled garden and fourteen acres of land, close to the fishing village - and tourist honeypot - of St. Ives. Like many aviculturists before and since, we thought how great it would be to finance our hobby by creating a small bird garden, open to the public. In our case, we would aim to specialise in endangered species, although we weren't too sure where these birds were to come from. I won't trouble you with details of our difficulties in getting planning permission, raising funding, and learning how to please our visitors. Every new venture has to face and overcome such obstacles. The fact is that our 'Bird Paradise' opened in 1973, has thrived through many vicissitudes and recessions, and is now in its twenty fifth year. We changed the name to 'Paradise Park' in 1980 when we started to keep mammals such as otters and marmosets; this name makes us sound more like a funfair than a serious conservation centre, but we seem to be stuck with it.

The years went by, we enjoyed our

birds, especially the parrots, and each year we ploughed back any available funds into improving our small park. We soon learned, however, that we would always be limited by the very short summer season in Cornwall, and the competition from no less than 300 other tourist attractions in our tiny county. There was no way we would ever become a Walsrode or Loro Parque. Did we mind? Not at all. We had a great little family business that gave us a pleasant kind of life.

## EXPLOITATION OF THE PARROTS

And yet, we became increasingly aware of the exploitation of the parrots, and the fact that very little was being done to help them. Could we, from our Cornish backwater, do anything worthwhile? We decided we had to try, and so The World Parrot Trust was launched in 1989. There's no need for me to describe the aims of the trust or the work it has done, since this is covered by the information on page 15 of this PsittaScene newsletter. Something that has surprised me, however, is that many of our members visit us, some coming from the other side of the world. Others ask for news about Paradise Park, and that is why I am writing this letter.

Our curator, David Woolcock, keeps impeccable records of our animals, and he reports that our collection currently consists of 578 birds of 154 species. Over the years we have bred 120 species, quite a few to multiple generations. We strive to breed every bird here, otherwise, why keep them? If we find we can't achieve success with a particular bird, we usually give up after three or four years of trying.

## PERSEVERING WITH HYACINTH MACAW

One species that has challenged us for more than twenty years is the Hyacinth Macaw. We acquired two pairs in the 1970s, and have had at least ten fertile eggs in the following years. Every one has failed to hatch, either when left with the parents, or removed for incubation. If we decided to help the chick hatch, it would die. If we decided to leave it alone, it would die. So you can imagine that we were delighted to hatch our first ever Hyacinth chick this year. I say 'we', but it was actually achieved by our friend John Heath, who often helps us with special eggs. After a rocky start the chick thrived, but it soon became obvious that we had a problem. The chick's upper mandible was seriously curved, as you can see from the first photograph on this page. We asked our consultant avian vet (and founder trustee of WPT) Andrew Greenwood if he could help. He put a steel post, rather like a handlebar, through the bird's cranium, and attached an orthodontic rubber band from one end of it to the bent end of the beak, as illustrated by the middle picture. This was remarkably effective, and after nine days of having the band on for two hours a day, it was removed. The final picture shows Harley with an almost perfect beak, clearly quite pleased with himself.

While writing about Hyacinth Macaws, I would like to say that when we bought two birds in 1972, and two more in 1979, we simply did not realise that we were contributing to the drastic decline of this species. We knew they were imported from Brazil, and that was about all we knew. Looking back, I believe I was in a state of selective

amnesia, blissfully unaware of the consequences of my actions. At that time I was not alone, but now that television wildlife programmes have highlighted the problems that face the parrots, both in the wild and in captivity, none of us in aviculture can pretend not to know about the threats to parrot survival, or how much we have contributed to those threats. Having recognised that we have some responsibility, what do we do about it?

In our own case, and with the support of our World Parrot Trust members, we have been able to work with Dr. Charles A. Munn to help Hyacinths survive in the wild. Another opportunity available to some aviculturists is to breed as many of these wonderful birds as possible (but please, keeping the birds in adequate space), so as to satisfy the extraordinary demand from the pet trade and breeders. Some birds are still being taken from the wild, but the evidence suggests that most of these end up with collectors in Brazil. After what happened to Tony Silva, it seems unlikely that anyone would be foolish enough to try to smuggle Hyacinths into the United States.

## BREEDING RESULTS

Paradise Park has had a reasonable breeding season, succeeding with a number of interesting parrots including Hyacinth, Buffon's, Military, Illiger's and Hahn's Macaws, Keas, Leadbeaters, Triton, Roseate and Lesser Sulphur-crested cockatoos. We came close with two trios of Red-faced Lovebirds, which excavated nests in blocks of cork and laid two clutches each. About a dozen other parrot species produced young, a fairly typical result for a collection of our size and type. We've done well with cranes, and have young Wattled, Stanley, Sarus and Crowned cranes at the moment. Softbills that have bred well include Hoopoes, Yellow-fronted Woodpeckers, Village Weavers, and our first Chough for quite a while.

Overseas members may not know that the Chough is an elegant crow with red legs and curved red bill. It is the 'National Bird' of Cornwall (which fancies itself to be an independent Celtic nation), yet it is now extinct in the county. Working with all the relevant authorities, we hope to reintroduce it back into the wild Cornish cliffs, just as soon as we can build up enough birds for a



Young hyacinth (Harley) with curved beak and 'handlebars' fitted.



The orthodontic band is attached.



Harley with straight beak.



North American Otter communicating with his public.

potentially successful release programme.

Another animal of much interest to Cornwall is the otter. We have kept and bred the European otter for ten years, in a joint programme with other British zoos, but these animals are essentially nocturnal and difficult to show satisfactorily to our visitors. This year, however, Bristol Zoo kindly sent us a trio of North American otters *Lutra canadensis*, and these are active throughout the day, cooperating enthusiastically with regular feeding sessions, and giving our guests plenty of good photo opportunities.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In most years, Paradise Park builds new enclosures for its exhibits and breeding birds, or - more reluctantly - new facilities for visitors. This is somewhat dependent on the success of the previous summer season, but most winters we manage to replace an unsatisfactory area with something new and enjoyable for our birds, our visitors, and of course, ourselves. Over the past two years we have developed an area called 'paradise parrot jungle', with very large individual aviaries set in new plantations of bamboos, tree ferns and other sub-tropical plants, with streams, boardwalks, bridges and thatched jungle huts. In one of the new aviaries we have set up a Lory feeding opportunity, where visitors buy dishes of nectar and have the joyful experience of Green-naped Lorries flying down to land on their heads and shoulders to drink the nectar. Quite a few zoos and bird parks now do this, but let us not forget that this great crowd pleaser was originated at Currumbin Sanctuary in Queensland, Australia. And with real wild lorries at that.

### LIBERTY BIRDS

Speaking of free flying parrots, we once again have Scarlet Macaws at semi-liberty. I have to describe the

arrangement in this way, because it is illegal in the UK to permanently release exotic birds. Our birds roost each night in a barrel where they can be closed in safely. Unfortunately these Scarlets, unlike our old pair that flew free for 20 years and produced 55 young, show no signs of breeding activity. For next season we have an established breeding pair lined up to fly at liberty, and it's very satisfactory that the male was bred by our original free-flyers. We have to assume that there are few places left in the world where aviculturists can safely allow their birds to enjoy this wonderful freedom. I know of two others in the UK who do this with macaws and other parrots, but they also live in fairly remote and (hopefully) secure areas, where gun-toting neighbours know that birds with long tails are likely to be macaws, not pheasants.

Anyone wanting to learn more about this subject should read the Duke of Bedford's book 'Parrots and Parrot-like Birds'. He was an immensely bold pioneer in aviculture, and describes his experiences in keeping many parrot species at liberty. He also kept and bred many finches in the same way.

There are many other small items of information I could pass on about Paradise Park, such as our delight in breeding red squirrels (an endangered native species) this year, our frustration with three mature pairs of (aviary-bred) Blue-throated macaws that resolutely refuse to breed, the remarkable fact that our first ever bird keeper, Jill, is still with us after 23 years, or the news that Paradise Park was chosen by the leading national tourist guide as 'Cornwall's Family Attraction of the Year', but I need to move on to talk about various current aspects of World Parrot Trust activity.

Before doing that, however, let me sum up by saying that our place in Cornwall is pretty much like a private avicultural collection that has got a bit out of hand, and if it had to face the discipline of relying on bird sales to sustain itself, it would be out of business immediately. We can only admire the aviculturist who can finance his hobby with sales of surplus birds, and perhaps even more so, the large scale breeder who can make his business pay.

### NEWS ABOUT THE WORLD PARROT TRUST

The first item is a sad one, to report that Judith Venning, our UK administrator, is leaving us. Here is a note from her:

"I am writing to let you know that I am resigning my post as Administrator of the World Parrot Trust. I have been with the Trust almost since it was born eight years ago, and in that time I have watched it grow from a small group of enthusiasts to a charity with a respected world-wide reputation. However, this has always been a part time job for me and now that my two children are teenagers, I have decided to take a full time post. I will be teaching computer skills and business administration at the local Adult Education Centre.

I expect to keep in close touch with the *World Parrot Trust* and will be available to help my successor to take over with the minimum of disruption. I have made a great many friends in the course of my work and I would like to thank everyone for your support and enthusiasm which has made this such an enjoyable job. I wish you and the Trust the very best for the future."

We all wish Judith success in her next venture, and I must record my personal appreciation of her invaluable help for such a long and demanding time with the trust. Apart from working only part time, and being paid far less than she is worth, she has given us many hours of her own time. I'm sure all members will join me in thanking Judith for her work for the parrots.

### RAINFOREST CAFÉ

This is a major theme restaurant group (similar to Hard Rock, Planet Hollywood etc.) which has just opened in London at the Trocadero site near Piccadilly Circus. It is billed as 'A wild place to shop and eat', and that it is. It displays animatronic elephants, gorillas and other animals, and also boosts its atmosphere with a group of live parrots. These birds have their own curator (Cassie, brought in from the US) and their own private 'habitat'

with elaborate air conditioning and other first class facilities. They are never allowed to be stressed by the attentions of diners, and they take part in 'educational outreach' visits to schools. I am personally satisfied that these parrots are very well looked after, and our veterinary consultant Andrew Greenwood has visited one of the US branches and approved of what he saw there.

The best part of this story is that the World Parrot Trust has been selected as one of three wildlife charities to share the proceeds of the 'crocodile pool' into which visitors to the Rainforest Café throw large amounts of cash. We don't yet know how much this will provide, but it could be quite substantial. A satisfactory example of how captive parrots can do something to help the survival of their fellow parrots in the wild. Our thanks to Peter Salussolia, Chairman of Rainforest Café UK, and our long time supporter Johnny Morris of 'Animal Magic' fame, who came to lend a hand with the launch of this exciting new development.

### MORE HELP FOR MAURITIUS

WPT members will know that we have been supporting the work of Carl Jones and Kirsty Swinnerton for the recovery of the Echo Parakeet for eight years. When we began there were only known to be about ten or twelve parakeets left. By April this year the numbers were up to about ninety, including ten or twelve pairs that had been hand-reared and were available to occupy new aviaries at the Black Gorges centre, now re-named 'The Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary'.

This achievement is due to the extraordinary skills developed by Carl and his team in the management of critically endangered populations. First, the Mauritius Kestrel was brought from only four birds to over two hundred,



Launching Rainforest Café, London, with Johnny Morris.

all that the available habitat can carry. Next, the unique Pink Pigeon was similarly rescued. Now, the Echo Parakeet is the subject of the same dedication. This brings the whole project to a critical point, where more funds and more helpers are needed.

Recognising the importance of this next year for the Echos, the Trust has increased its funding by 40% to £11000. In addition, we have arranged for three Paradise Park staff to go to Mauritius during the key months of the upcoming breeding season (September 97-January 98). They will help with the field work, doing the daily checks of the wild nests, baiting rat traps, finding new wild nests etc., and will also use their hand-rearing skills as required. In the 1996/97 season, over twenty chicks were hand-reared. As many readers will know, we work closely with Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust and the Mauritius Wildlife Fund, and some additional good news is that Jersey have found the funds for a new incubation and rearing building. This will mean that the Echo parakeet eggs and young will be totally isolated from the other birds and animals at the centre. Once again, Andrew Greenwood, our trustee and veterinary consultant, will visit Mauritius in December to check on progress at the busiest time of the Echo season.

Naturally, Paradise Park will pay the salaries of its staff while they are in Mauritius, and will also have to find the cost of replacement keepers for the months involved.

The World Parrot Trust will pay the food and subsistence cost of £50 per week per person, plus a small contribution towards equipment, clothing etc. We hope for some free flights from British Airways Assisting Conservation, and have already been promised help from BA in shipping quantities of stores to Mauritius.

Despite all this help, the Echo project needs more funds immediately, so that the great progress of the last two years can be sustained. This is arguably the most successful parrot conservation project in the world, and if you would like to be associated with it, please write out a cheque to 'Echo Project, World Parrot Trust' right away.

#### OTHER WPT ACTIVITIES

We have not mentioned the Parrot Action Plan for a while, but it is proceeding in good shape, with the preparation of the text for the parrots of the Old World (Africa, Asia, Australasia etc.) having been completed by Dr. Phil McGowan, and with the text for the New World (Latin America, Caribbean) under the guidance of Dr. Alejandro Grajal and Dr. James D. Gilardi, aiming for completion by the end of August 1997. Most of the world's leading experts in parrot biology and conservation have contributed towards this Action Plan, which will be issued in draft form for final review in November this year. If all goes according to plan, the 'Parrot Action Plan 1998-2003' will be published by IUCN in March 1998.

As we may have pointed out previously, the publication of this new Action Plan will bring up to date all available knowledge on the status of threatened parrot species, and will enable potential funders of psittacine conservation projects to establish priorities for their support. It is also reasonable to suppose that this new and reliable information will aid the efforts of conservationists to bring attention to the plight of the parrots, both as individual species and in general.

#### PARROT SANCTUARY

In our May 1996 issue of PsittaScene we announced our wish to create a Parrot Sanctuary,



New 'Parrot Sanctuary' adoption bird: "Poppy" the African Grey.

designed to house and, where possible, re-home unwanted parrots.

We suggested a target total of £30000 to build the first stage of the sanctuary, and invited members to adopt a group of our current 'rescued' birds to help fund the whole plan. Everyone responded generously, with Oscar, the aged and rather scruffy Scarlet Macaw rescued from a car spray shop, being the most popular adoptee. We have received over £6000 in adoptions so far, with half of this going to Oscar. To report on the other three birds: Barbie the Yellow-shouldered Amazon is doing OK, but has not bred this year; Rocky the Blue-crowned Conure was given a mate, and has chicks in the nest at the time of writing; Woody, the St. Vincent Parrot should not have been on this list, as he is in no way a 'rescued' bird. He was sent to us by the St. Vincent Government in 1974, and is permanently adopted by Victoria Ewart under our Paradise Park adoption scheme.

We would like to replace him with a recently arrived African Grey called Poppy, who became completely unmanageable after her companion African Grey died. Since African Greys are probably the parrots most often in need of rescue, and also the most numerous of all pet or companion birds, perhaps we can expect a good flow of new adoptions for Poppy. We send a nice Adoption Certificate with a colour picture of the parrot adopted, to every adopter.

So what about the proposed Sanctuary? In our eagerness to build a first class facility, capable of being supported by funds from the lottery and the European Union, we asked a firm of architects to help us (free of cost) with the design. They came up with a splendid design, but when costed out it came to around £150000 (\$230000)! We sent this to the UK Parrot Society, who had expressed an interest in helping when the cost was estimated at

£30000 for Phase 1. Not surprisingly, the Parrot Society lost interest, and we are now aiming to put together a fund of £20000, at which point we will apply for matching funds from the European Union. Only when we have all this in place will we start building, so here's another opportunity for members and supporters to help us achieve one of our important parrot welfare aims.



#### THE PARROTROOPERS

We wrote about this cartoon concept back in 1995, since when we have been trying to bring it to the attention of major animation producers around the world. The only cost so far has been the registration of trade marks, and this has been kept to a minimum due to generous 'pro bono' help from a leading Los Angeles law firm.

Trying to get an idea of this kind into production is a longshot, but it is worthwhile to persevere, since if successful, 'TheParrotroopers' would clearly establish the parrots as resourceful, intelligent, funny animals working to save the earth and every creature upon it. Imagine the high profile the parrots would enjoy if they could match the fame of the turtles. And don't forget, the turtles were so boring they had to wear different coloured headbands so you could tell them apart. No problem like that with the parrots: 333 species, all sizes and all the colours of the rainbow. We'll let members know how this progresses, but in the meantime, anyone with good contacts in the film world could get in touch. Or anyone who can donate about \$25000 to cover the cost of making a pilot film.

So much for wishful thinking, and as the sun sinks slowly into the West, may I wish all our friends in aviculture a resoundingly successful breeding season. For everyone else who studies or just cares about the parrots, a rewarding summer and autumn (or fall). I'm afraid it will be autumn before this reaches you, as we are later than usual in completing this issue.

Yours, Mike Reynolds.



Off to help the Echo Parakeet. L-R: Pete Harverson, Nick Reynolds, Kirsty Jenkin (all from Paradise Park), Andrew Greenwood, Kirsty Swinnerton, Carl Jones.

# The Status of Macaws - wild and captive

by Rosemary Low

Since the second issue of *PsittaScene* (January 1990), in which we published an article on the Hyacinthine, macaws have featured prominently in the pages of this journal. Most of the articles have focused on a single species, and proved very enlightening to our members. Seven years later it is perhaps time to review the macaws as a whole. Probably the best known and most charismatic group of parrots in the world, the macaws always attract attention. They formerly did so because of their flamboyant colours, large size and marked intelligence. Today they are attracting the attention of conservationists, field workers and concerned aviculturists world-wide.

## RAINFOREST DWELLERS

Macaws are found in Central and South America. They are primarily rainforest dwellers. Because of the extent of destruction of their habitat during the past three or four decades, the ranges of all large macaws have declined and only the two species with the largest range are not yet threatened with extinction. Only in the past decade have field studies commenced on most species, so that we are now gaining a true impression of their decline.

## CAUSES OF DECLINE

The decline has been brought about by trapping for international trade, and by habitat destruction. According to Charles Munn, a trustee of WPT-USA, who has been working in the region on macaw conservation for more than twenty years, the Amazon basin (as large as the 48 lower states of the USA) has had its macaw populations reduced or eliminated by trappers in 50-60% of this huge region. In 1992 the former president of the now defunct Association of Bird Exporters of Bolivia stated that 500 large macaws had been exported from Bolivia every two weeks for 10 years - that is, approximately 130,000 macaws. For every bird exported a minimum of another macaw died (a very conservative estimate), so the total trapped is likely to have been well over a million large macaws in ten years. In 1984 Bolivia stopped the export trade in birds. Most countries where macaws occur no longer permit the export of birds, but illegal trade, legal export from Guyana, and

trapping by natives for pets, food and feathers continues.

## SMUGGLING

In Guatemala, for example, Scarlet Macaws are trapped and smuggled into Mexico, thence into the USA. One of the worst aspects of this trade is that trappers hack open nests or destroy trees in an attempt to obtain young macaws. One of the most serious problems facing most macaws is shortage of nest sites thus this method of collection has much more serious consequences than the removal of the birds alone. The other major problem faced by macaws, in the case of certain species which are specialist feeders, is loss of their food trees.

## BLUE AND YELLOW MACAW

The best known macaw is undoubtedly the Blue and Yellow *Ara ararauna*. As it has a very wide range, from Panama, over most of the tropical northern part of South America, it is still widely distributed in the wild. It is extinct in coastal south-eastern Brazil, where most of the forest has been destroyed. It used to be imported, especially from Guyana, in very large numbers. Today, more Blue and Yellows are reared in captivity than any other species. There should be a world-wide import ban on wild-caught ararauna because there is already an excess of captive-bred birds. This is partly due to the fact that this macaw is easy to breed, and to the greatly increased expertise of breeders, and to the fact that unlike Budgerigars, for example, there is a limit to the number of households which can keep macaws. Of all the large macaws, this is the one most often kept as a pet. Young hand-reared birds make wonderfully affectionate pets for those who can spend much time with them. However, generally speaking the large macaws are best kept in an aviary because they do not receive enough exercise in the home.

## SCARLET MACAW

The Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* has always been a very popular aviary subject, for its wonderful plumage. However, its temperament is not always so appealing. Generally speaking, *ararauna* is much more suitable as a pet. Although this species has a large range, from

Mexico, throughout most of tropical South America and as far south as northern Bolivia and southern Peru, its range has contracted greatly this century, especially in Central America. Its range there is now fragmented and discontinuous.

## EXTINCT IN SOME PARTS

In Costa Rica it is almost extinct except in the Corcovado National Park, yet it is considered to be a great tourist attraction. In El Salvador it is already extinct and in Mexico much of its former habitat has been destroyed. A serious problem it has to face is that of being hunted for feathers. There has been local trade in tail feathers dating back centuries, in Panama and most of the countries of South and Central America. The problem has not eased in recent years as Aztec dancers from Mexico in traditional dress, tour the USA. Their head-dresses contain about 70 tail feathers of large macaws, nearly all from macao, and some from militaris. In the UK and several other countries, tail feathers from moulted captive birds have been collected by breeders for some years, and sent to a representative who sends them to Panama. CITES permits are needed, as for live birds, thus having a national representative who collects the feathers is the most effective method.

## TARGET FOR TRAPPERS

Although *Ara macao* was placed on

Appendix 1 of CITES in 1985, which should have stopped trade in wild-caught birds, illegal trade continues. In Guatemala, where large areas of suitable habitat for this macaw have survived, the Scarlet Macaw has been a target for illegal trappers who smuggle birds into Mexico, thence into the USA. A rehabilitation centre exists there. Confiscated birds are rehabilitated, either for breeding or for release. Although there are many Scarlet Macaws in captivity, a large proportion have never reproduced. This fact became known when a studbook was maintained. We must not be too complacent about this macaw in aviculture. Although it may appear common, it is an important species which deserves the attention of serious aviculturists.

## GREEN-WINGED MACAW

The Green-winged Macaw (*Ara chloroptera*) has never been as popular as the Scarlet Macaw, yet it is a wonderful aviary bird. Hand-reared young are gentle and sensitive. The range of this species, although still extensive, is declining - but it is not yet on Appendix 1 of CITES. It is already extinct in Argentina and in south-eastern Brazil, extinct in parts of Bolivia and rare in eastern Ecuador and eastern Peru. Habitat destruction is to blame for local extinctions.

Wild-caught birds were not easy to breed and the myth grew that the Greenwinged Macaw had to be



Free flying Scarlet Macaw at Paradise Park, UK.



Red-fronted Macaw.

Photo: Keith Ewart



Blue-headed Macaw.

Photo: WPT Italy



Buffon's Macaw.

Photo: Mike Reynolds

eight years old before it was sexually mature. This is untrue; captive-bred birds have reared young as early as three years old.

### MILITARY MACAW

The Military Macaw *Ara militaris* is one of only two large macaws which are green. The other is Buffon's Macaw *Ara ambigua*. Much confusion exists regarding their identification. Buffon's Macaw is substantially larger but the three features which identify it easily are the yellowgreen shade (darker in *militaris*), the larger beak in proportion to the head, and the colour of the tail feathers. The long feathers are brown-red in *militaris* and orange-red in *ambigua*.

The Military Macaw is primarily a montane species; it is found in Mexico, Colombia, western Venezuela and the northern-central part of Ecuador. There are also populations in Peru and Bolivia.

### BUFFON'S MACAW

In contrast, Buffon's Macaw is a bird of the lowlands. It is found in Central America, in Honduras, through Nicaragua and Costa Rica to Panama, and a small region in Colombia. A separate sub-species, *guayaquilensis*, is found in south-western Ecuador, in Quayaquil. This population may be as small as 20 or 30 birds, according to field researchers from the University of Amsterdam, who studied it in 1995. In 1994 one pair fledged two chicks, in the Cerro Blanco reserve, thanks to 24 hour surveillance by guards, to prevent the nest being robbed. In 1995 the nest tree fell down, due to destruction by termites. Two artificial nests were constructed but, soon after, the macaws left the area. Some months later the area was ravaged by forest fires. These are lit deliberately by settlers, in order to clear the land and claim it. Around the reserve, agriculture has

increased, mainly growing corn. These are just some of the problems the few surviving macaws have to face.

### BUFFON'S RARE IN AVICULTURE

It has always been rare in aviculture but its numbers are growing slowly, due to increased breeding success. To me, this is undoubtedly the most magnificent of the *Ara* macaws. It is a majestic bird. It is also the *Ara* species which should receive more attention from aviculturists than any other. I would urge those of you who own it to do everything possible to initiate breeding success. Also to join the studbook. The studbook co-ordinator is Martina Muller at Vogelpark Walsrode.

### MILITARY MACAW IS ALSO ENDANGERED

As already mentioned, the Military Macaw has a large range. Unfortunately, its habitat is so fragmented by deforestation that it, too, is endangered. Large macaws need large areas of forest in which to forage. It was placed on Appendix 1 of CITES in 1987. Before this, there was little interest in it from aviculturists. In the USA it was common and inexpensive, due to the number of birds smuggled from Mexico but it had rarely been bred. Now the situation is different and many pairs are reproducing, there and in Europe. Conservation-minded macaw breeders should ensure that this species is in their collection.

### RED-FRONTED MACAW

The Red-fronted *Ara rubrogenys* is a distinctive macaw. In size it is about 60 cm - mid way between the large macaws already described, and the small species. A mountain species from south-central Bolivia, it is a very hardy bird. Unknown in captivity until 1973, it has never been common. It is surprising that it

has not become better known because it can be extremely prolific. This fact and its smaller size, should make it an ideal aviary bird. Unfortunately, however, feather plucking is extremely common, certainly in wild-caught birds. Because it has such a small range in Bolivia, it is of special conservation interest and should be kept and bred by all serious macaws breeders. It was placed on Appendix 1 of CITES in 1983. Unlike the other macaws, it has a well marked juvenile plumage. The red feathers on the forehead do not appear until the age of about nine months. Young birds have a brown frontal band and a small red patch on the ear coverts. Adult birds are very beautiful when they are in good feather.

### THE SMALL MACAWS

Now we come to the group generally known as the small macaws. The Severe Macaw *Ara severa* is about 50 cm in length. It has a very wide range in northern South America, from Venezuela to south-western Brazil, and is believed to have a stable population in most areas. Commonly kept in the USA, it is less numerous in Europe but reared in a number of collections.

### RED-BELLIED MACAW

The Red-bellied Macaw *Ara manilata* will never be a popular avicultural subject. It is too nervous to make a good pet and very prone to obesity if closely confined. Few breeding successes have occurred. It has a very wide range in northern South America and is not known to be threatened. Therefore, and because it is seldom long-lived, I feel that this species should not be trapped. In any case, there is little interest in it.

### BLUE-HEADED MACAW

The Coulon's or Blue-headed *Ara*

*couloni* was the last species of macaw to become available in aviculture. It comes from Peru and adjoining north-western Bolivia, from low elevations up to 1,300m, and is not known to be threatened. Since the early 1990s this macaw has been taken illegally into eastern European countries. There are a number of pairs in South Africa and last year two pairs which were confiscated in Europe were presented to Loro Parque in Tenerife. Last year *Ara couloni* was bred in the Czech Republic, and it may already have been reared elsewhere. The appearance of this species is interesting. The beak colour and eyes are reminiscent of those of Spix's Macaw.

### SMALLEST MACAWS

The remaining three are the smallest macaws: Illiger's *Ara maracana*, the Yellow-collared *Ara auricollis* and Hahn's *Ara or Diopsittaca nobilis nobilis*. They are quite popular in aviculture as they are free-breeding, playful and intelligent. They make excellent pets but their voices can be quite loud. The Illiger's is of conservation interest and was placed on Appendix 1 of CITES in 1989. Due to deforestation it is now very rare in south-eastern Brazil but also occurs in some areas of Argentina and Paraguay. It is the rarest of the three in aviculture, although it can be amazingly prolific.

### YELLOW-COLLARED MACAW

The Yellow-collared comes from Bolivia and is also found in adjoining Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. Little is known about its status in the wild; it is still common in some parts of its range. This is an ideal species for beginners with macaws, breeders or pet owners.

### HAHN'S MACAW

The smallest of all macaws is the Hahn's, measuring 31 cm and



weighing about 165g. It comes from Venezuela, Guyana and north-eastern Brazil. It is the least expensive of the macaws and readily available. The slightly larger sub-species, the Noble Macaw *D.n.nobilis* is uncommon in aviculture as its range covers Brazil (from which no birds have been legally exported for 30 years) and a small part of Peru. No threats are known to either sub-species in the wild.

### HYACINTHINE MACAW

The blue macaws are a remarkable group of birds. Unfortunately, their beauty has been their downfall. The Hyacinthine *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* might be called the king of the macaws. It is the largest and the most spectacular. And it has suffered terribly at the hand of man. So many birds were trapped in Brazil for international trade in the 1970s that dealers in Europe had problems in selling them. It was sheer greed - not demand. As a result, an area of about 100,000 sq. miles (259,000 sq. km) of the Brazilian Pantanal has intact habitat for this species but, according to Charles Munn, only 20-30% of the area still holds Hyacinthine Macaws. Unfortunately, these birds are so easy to trap that trappers would wipe out local populations in a single day. Because exporting them from Brazil was illegal, the trapped birds would be smuggled into Argentina (where it does not occur) or Paraguay (where it has a very small seasonal range). Ranch owners in Brazil now protect any Hyacinthines on their properties. Indeed, some ranches fortunate enough to have these birds use them as a tourist attraction and have built guest houses for tourists. In some cases this is more lucrative than farming because this macaw is so high on the list of wildlife attractions. Unlike the Ara macaws, this is not a rainforest species and is easily viewed. It lives in semi-open areas and feeds on the nuts of palm trees.

### BREEDING

Aviculturists must carefully guard the Hyacinthine Macaws in their care, do their utmost to encourage them to breed and part with the young in a responsible manner. In the USA some breeders promote the young as the ultimate status symbol. This is highly irresponsible since very few people have the time or the temperament or the understanding necessary to look after a hand-reared bird. They are extremely demanding and sensitive

creatures. There is a limit to the number of people who can house breeding pairs, thus this macaw will never be common in aviculture though it will always be well represented. The priority should be to encourage all wild-caught birds to breed, to contribute to the gene pool. Only a very small percentage of those taken from the wild have done so, even although breeding successes are now numerous. But many pairs are badly accommodated in small suspended cages - an insult to such a large and magnificent bird.

### LEAR'S MACAW

Lear's Macaw *Anodorhynchus leari* is smaller and very much rarer. Its habitat in north-eastern Brazil was not discovered until 1978. The ornithologist Helmut Sick had been searching for it for 14 years. He found a population of just over 100 birds. Despite the remote and inhospitable area in which it lives, illegal trapping is occurring. In 1995 it was estimated that during the previous two to three years, 20 of the 117 birds known had been caught and sold to smugglers. In June last year two young Lear's were seized from a Singapore national at an airport in France, and confiscated. These are not the only illegal birds to have turned up in Europe in recent years. A number are believed to be in eastern European countries and Gulf states. Due to their high price and illegal origin, they are more likely to be bought by collectors than aviculturists. Their whereabouts may never be discovered. There are no known breeding pairs in captivity at the present time and the only legalised pair was stolen in the UK in December last year. Several years ago a second small population, consisting of 22 birds, was found in Brazil. As the area is one where marijuana is grown, the trappers will be afraid to go there. The future of this critically endangered macaw is highly uncertain. It is a tragedy that no effective way has yet been found to protect the main population. If enough funds were available, this could be done.

### SPIX'S MACAW

Finally, the sad story of the macaw which by 1988 had a wild population of a single known bird: Spix's *Cyanopsitta spixii*. Its small population was almost trapped to extinction. In recent years, the developments have received more coverage in the world's press than probably any bird in existence. Fortunately, the captive population

of over 30 birds is increasing annually. Legal export of this species has not occurred for several decades; when the original amnesty was declared by the Brazilian Government in the late 1980s, four holders of this species declared their birds. A recent amnesty ended on October 1 1996. Anyone subsequently found with Spix's Macaws, other than those who have declared them, are liable to prosecution.

Of all the macaws, I believe that Lear's is in greatest danger of extinction. All the other endangered species, even Spix's, will survive in captivity even although they eventually become extinct in the wild. The decline of the macaws is a sad indictment of man's reckless use of forests and wildlife. In the span of 50 years, a group of parrots which contains some of the most spectacular birds in the world, has gone from common to threatened, endangered or critically endangered. A number of species have been studied in the field over the past decade, resulting in actions, such as provision of nest sites, which will help to assist their survival. But the large flocks of even half a century ago are gone forever.

### INADEQUATELY HOUSED

Although most macaw species are very well established in aviculture, the trend towards small aviaries or even cages for breeding pairs means that a large proportion of macaws are inadequately housed. Fortunately, this is less often the case in Europe, but in the USA even pairs of the largest macaws seldom have a cage larger than 2.4m (8 ft)

long. To me this is unthinkable. The large macaws have a wingspan of 90 cm (3 ft) or more yet many pairs are kept in cages only 1.2m wide and high and no more than 3m (10 ft) long. This is the farming concept where no thought is given to the quality of life of the birds. As a matter of fact, macaws like a high aviary, 4.5m high and at least 6m (20 ft) long. They look magnificent in flight, enjoy life and breed well because they feel secure at that height. The owner can take great pride in macaws kept in this way. There is no satisfaction, except possibly financial, in those kept in small all-wire cages. Surely it is better to keep one pair well, than several pairs in conditions which are the equivalent of a pet Budgerigar in a small cage of the type sold in pet stores.

Macaws are exceptionally intelligent creatures. So many are condemned to a prison-like existence, presumably because it is expensive to build real aviaries. Yet the cost is small when one considers the high return many breeders gain by continually removing eggs. In addition to the moral issue, I believe that over the course of several generations of birds bred in such cages, small degenerate young will be produced. The macaw is one of nature's most magnificent creations. We should deem it a privilege to have such birds in our care. We must ensure that the birds we breed are the equal in size and appearance to their wild-caught parents or ancestors. If we cannot do this, we should keep Aratingas instead.



Lear's Macaw. One of the two females held at Busch Gardens, Florida.

Photo: Mike Reynolds

# American Aviculture: An Opportunity for Conservation

by Layne Dicker

While many great ideas have been hatched in America, we are probably known more as innovators than inventors. Historically, we have taken good ideas from around the world and made them bigger, better and faster. We take the "what" and add the "how".

Psittacine aviculture is no different. While the pioneers of parrotbreeding have been distinctly non-American, we have clearly made massive if not leading advancements in the fields of husbandry, veterinary medicine, behavior, diet and the overall proliferation of psittacine breeding. There are, without question, more breeders, more species bred and more psittacine chicks produced in the U. S. of A. than anywhere else in the world, possibly even combined. Whether or not this is a good thing under even the best of conditions would be the subject of many, many articles unto itself.

But it very clearly is, if nothing else, a phenomenal opportunity for the conservation of the birds we love so dearly.

The perception of this concept is not lost upon American aviculture, which is very proud of proclaiming that "Aviculture IS Conservation". But is this true either semantically or in practice? I would give both a highly qualified "No". But on a more fundamental issue, where does aviculture and the keeping of companion parrots fit in with an overall scheme of conservation?

Aviculture is, in essence, the care and husbandry of kept birds. My own personal definition of an aviculturist is anyone who is associated with this practice, which would include large and small breeders, hobbyists, veterinarians, behaviorists and even bird product manufacturers and the like. Hey, the more the merrier, right? But still, this is a very straightforward, insular group.

## GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Psittacine conservation, on the other hand, is massive and global. It involves protecting natural ecosystems, and eliminating hunting, poaching and illegal exportation. In some cases, natural populations must be managed to offset damage already done by habitat destruction and trapping.

Conservation is also at work in stopping the illegal importation

(smuggling) of birds into a country irrespective of whether they were exported illegally or not.

Conservation involves mass education in order not only to raise funds for off-shore activities but to teach the public how to spot a smuggled bird and, no less importantly, to properly care for the birds that we are keeping as companion animals. Both to this end and for wider applications, conservation involves funding and disseminating research data in the fields of veterinary procedures, virology, immunology, behavior and diet. And conservation is the domestic breeding of psittacine birds for companion animals, genetic preservation, breeding research for application in the field and, though much maligned, to produce birds for possible reintroduction into their native habitats.

So, in distilling the foregoing, psittacine conservation is comprised of habitat preservation, wild population management and protection, enforcement of importation laws (preventing smuggling), education and, last but not least, aviculture.

Accordingly, while aviculture is not conservation, it can and should be an integral part of an overall scheme of conservation.

## BREEDING PETS

In that most of American aviculture is geared towards breeding companion animals, the question arises as to the relevance of keeping "pets" to preserving wild parrot populations. Well, this association can be made in many ways. First of all, self-sustaining domestic breeding is the best weapon against depletion of wild populations. If one has what they need at hand they hardly have to go elsewhere for it, right? But with importation into the US now illegal, there will be added pressure to smuggle birds into the country to satisfy the demands of uninformed or unscrupulous breeders and hobbyists looking for a bargain. So, the second prong in this attack is to educate the public as to the obvious differences between domestic and imported birds (price, appearance, temperament, banding or other identification, breeder references, etc.) and to the advantages of buying a domestic bird. Oh yes, there should also be a

movement to bring back any number of medieval "incarceration" techniques for individuals convicted of smuggling. (I'm only half kidding.) Penalties should not be based on the number of birds smuggled into the country, but the far greater number that died along the way.

## A SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT

A significant benefit both of and to aviculture is the furtherance of research into the diseases of parrots. I dare say that much of the wonderful work done in the past few years would not have been possible without donations from bird clubs, private individuals and commercial breeders. Sure, some of this is self-serving, but so what? Do you think a polyoma vaccinated bird cares that he didn't die because someone gave money for less than altruistic reasons? I don't think so. I've never seen a homeless, hungry person with a sign saying, "Give, but only if you're properly motivated."

For the next benefit to conservation from aviculture, look to yourself. How many of you reading this were WPT members before you were parrot owners?

Probably very few. For most of us it was love for our own birds that made us care enough to want to protect the parrots of the world.

Our birds are ambassadors for their wild cousins and "giving something back" should be looked at as a requirement of parrot ownership because, as is often pointed out, the keeping of threatened and endangered animals is not a right. Living with parrots must be viewed as the privilege that it is, and if parrot owners do not assume the lead in parrot conservation, then who will? We, more than anyone else, know how wonderful they are.

## AT WHAT COST?

The argument arises as to "at what cost" to the natural ecosystems has aviculture produced these "ambassadors" and is it wise to have placed the environment in a situation from which it must now be extricated. I think that this is a valid but pointless question. Had we to do it again there is hardly one of us who would not have done it in a more scientific, methodical fashion, or not at all. But, as they say, that ship has sailed, don't cry over spilled milk, the cat is out of the bag and you can't unring the bell. I could probably think of a few more clichés, but the point is that it's done. Let's now make the best of a less than perfect situation.

Companion parrots are like a genetic savings account. For far too many parrot species, the captive population well outnumbers the



Perfect companionship.

Photo: Bonnie Jay

wild population.

In the horrible event that certain species can not be maintained in the wild, our birds will become the only hope for reintroduction and/or the only protection from complete extinction. (This does not, by any means, justify the continued mass exportation of birds from their natural habitats, which has been greatly reduced by the passage of the Wild Bird Conservation Act in the United States.)

## RESPONSIBILITIES

This point leads nicely to some of the responsibilities of truly conservation minded hobbyists and breeders. First and foremost, meticulous records and lineologies must be both maintained and shared with other breeders, veterinarians and regulating bodies. Improvements in breeding, husbandry, diet and all manner of information must not be kept to one's self if we - if birds are to benefit. There are far too many people that are tight-lipped about what birds they have, where they came from and what their "secret methods" are in breeding. We are a small community with what is essentially a closed breeding pool. If we are to keep bloodlines clean and diverse, and if we are to make the most of what we have, we must be forthcoming with each other.

## STOP HYBRIDISATION

Similarly, the practice of hybridization must stop. Again, given the status of the law in the US and the wild populations throughout the rest of the world, we have to look at our breeding stock as "closed". To take two pure individuals out of the breeding pool and create offspring that can never be in a purebred breeding pool is insane. The argument that hybrids are "just for companion animals" does not hold up given the massive number of pets that wind up as breeders when an owner gets tired of them.

The breeding of parrots has come a long way since the days when a breeding "success" was delivering a viable, unweaned, neonatal parrot to a pet store. We now know that much of a parrot's early experience determines the quality of his life in captivity, not to mention the quality of the lives of the humans that live with them. The breeding of parrots that have the greatest potential for happiness in captivity is imperative if their popularity is to continue. Further, if the lot of companion parrots does not continue to improve, and it is improving, efforts

to outlaw companion birds will increase. This will, for the reasons set forth herein, be a great loss to conservation. However, most people that I know would rather see parrots out of homes than see them be miserable.

I believe that the arguments for the keeping of companion parrots currently outweigh the arguments against, but the continued improvement of the lot of kept birds is imperative for the maintenance of this balance. In this respect, conservation and aviculture could not be more allied.

## PARROT POLITICS

Now seems like as good a time as any to insinuate just a bit about parrot politics. It seems, at least in the US, that battle lines have been drawn between conservation and commercial interests, with the hearts, minds, souls and dollars of hobbyists being the spoils of that battle. While this is not the rule and many serious commercial and organized avicultural interests are doing wonders for conservation, like much else in this country, the gloves come off when fiscal survival is at stake. This has to stop. The normal system of market economics does not apply outside of a closed system. So, if the machinations of aviculture had no far reaching effects, if parrots and their habitats were not threatened and if parrots were not sensitive, intelligent creatures then I would say, "all sides come out fighting and the last man standing wins". But in this case by the time either side "won", the parrots would be lost.

## SELF REGULATION

Our cherished free market economy was designed for widgets, not for endangered animals. If all commercial aspects of aviculture do not realize this then, as they fear, they will be regulated out of business. The only way to remain autonomous is to self regulate; to implement serious and punitive regulations for improper practices (hybridization, line breeding, selling unweaned birds, manufacturing unsafe products, advertising seedmixtures as being an adequate diet) and to make mandatory some very simple things like sanitation, holding back domestic stock for future breeding, minimum cage/flight sizes, mandatory record keeping and the like. There is some movement in this direction, but it is generally voluntary and "has no teeth" in the event of non-compliance. But progress is progress and credit must be given to



Parrot disciplines pirate. Parrots are show business too.

Photo: Andrew Hallam

aviculturists who are advancing these programs and properly raising their babies, and to the manufacturers who support foundations and produce safe, quality and ethical products.

## LICENSING

Personally, I strongly support requiring a license for both breeding and keeping parrots involving mandatory testing, education and inspections. It is always interesting to me to see who likes this idea and who stares at me like I just committed treason, or blasphemy.

In any event, it seems clear that the system that has evolved surrounding psittacine birds, while not ideal in its origins, provides assistance in assuring the continued survival of parrots, in relieving pressure on wild populations, in motivating its participants to work toward advancements in the physical and psychological betterment of parrots and to give everyone concerned a true hands-on experience of the special creatures that we must succeed in saving.

## WHAT CAN YOU AND I DO?

So where do we fit in? What can you and I do, right now, that will assist this process?

Well you've started; you're reading this diatribe and you've joined the World Parrot Trust. This is both excellent, and not enough. I think we all know someone who has and loves their parrots who is not a member. The wonderful thing about this is that having them join will be something for which they will thank you. Pick up the phone, make the call, double our ranks.

## ACTIVE MEMBERS GROUP

As for the US members, as you may have read, we are forming the WPT-USA Active Members Group, as being organized by myself and Alan

Lurie. If you want to "give a little more" of yourself, of your time, of your commitment to the survival of parrots outside of zoos, aviaries or museum drawers, get in touch with us; your input and energies will be more than welcome.

Considering the wealth and size of the avicultural community in our country, membership in the WPT is downright anemic. Please, pick up the phone, make two calls, triple our ranks.

My particular emphasis in aviculture is the education of hobbyists and breeders in the proper physical and psychological care of their birds; I can't stand to see an unhappy parrot. I do this because I truly believe that everyone succeeds when breeders raise better birds and hobbyists become better companion bird companions. Whereas strife brings only paranoia and distrust, success brings generosity and a spirit of community.

And we must be that generous community - a community comprised of breeders, veterinarians, manufacturers, behaviorists, hobbyists, handfeeders, petsitters, groomers and bird admirers of all descriptions - if we are to effectively work toward the conservation of our parrots, of all parrots and, in the long run, of our world. We are making progress, but we are not yet where we need to be.

*Layne Dicker is the Staff Avian Behaviorist at Wilshire Animal Hospital in Santa Monica, CA, as well as being a private behavior/care consultant to individuals, breeders and wildlife parks. Layne is a very popular (although not always so somber) lecturer, photographer and author of over 50 articles on parrot behavior and care. Layne is very proud to have been invited to assist in the launching of the World Parrot Trust-USA Active Members Group.*



# NEWS...VIEWS...ACTION

## FESTIVAL: WORLD PARROT TRUST BENELUX

The former seminar and present meeting center Bovendonk in Hoeven, Netherlands was host to some unusual guests on Sunday June 1, 1997 where the World Parrot Trust banner was flying at the main entrance. In these impressive surroundings, which still breathed the majesty of the past, the *World Parrot Trust Benelux* held its Festival.

It was a different approach from previous years: instead of having a symposium it was this time an informal gathering of our members and sympathizers. The program consisted of a presentation about the working of WPT followed by some workshops about recent changes in legislation which could be attended at choice.

In the impressive courtyard, different information stands of several organizations were present, avian art was also to be seen, an aviary construction was on show together with the suitable planting. But the real eyecatchers were, besides our well known bus, the renovated WPT Benelux information stand and sales counter where people literally received a red carpet treatment. As it was a very sunny day people could be sitting in the beautiful surroundings and make or renew acquaintances in a very relaxed way. Needless to say the funding of WPT did thrive and most important of all, new members joined our Trust.

We can conclude that it was a well organised and most important well received happening by the attendees. Thanks to the



Bovendonk centre, Hoeven

Educational commission of WPT Benelux.

## USA

The 1998 IAS Convention will be March 4 - 8, 1998 in Orlando, Florida. The 1999 Convention is tentatively scheduled March 3-7, 1999 in Orlando.

Additional information will be posted on the website: [www.funnyfarmexotics.com/IAS](http://www.funnyfarmexotics.com/IAS)  
The new USA WPT web address is: [www.funnyfarmexotics.com/WPT](http://www.funnyfarmexotics.com/WPT)

## ZIMBABWE

WPT did not attend the recent Conference of the Parties of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) in Harare, Zimbabwe, but has received some reports. The first, from a member who we prefer not to name, goes as follows:

I was wondering if you had heard of the results of the CITES Conference in Zimbabwe. *Amazona viridigenalis* and *Vini ultramarina* were listed on Appendix I. The entire mood at the Conference was horrible. The listing proposals of the Vini species were effectively blocked by the pro-ivory and pro-whaling Parties. It was only on a second vote (after the elephant debate) that *Vini ultramarina* proposal was approved. Germany withdrew their proposal to uplist *Cacatua sulphurea*, after a discussion on the floor. This was due to disapproval of the uplisting from BirdLife International. It is a shame, because if they took it to a vote they would have almost certainly won. I have an extra copy of the Conservation Plan for the species if you would like a copy. The Indonesian government gave out a lovely brochure on its natural resources. On one page it has a photo of *C. alba* in a market, the caption reads, "Millions of birds and other animals are sold in these markets every year." Nice bragging point!...things don't change much.

We also have a detailed report from Dr. Ronald Orenstein, a leading independent commentator on CITES issues. This report can be obtained in full from him at [ornstn@inforamp.net](mailto:ornstn@inforamp.net), but here are some extracts:

## 'THOUGHTS ON COP10

I have been attending conferences

of the CITES Parties since 1987, and I can say without the slightest doubt or hesitation that the recent meeting was by far the worst I have ever attended.

My real concern, and my real anger, about what went on in Harare relates to two issues: the manner in which the meeting was conducted, and the manner in which it was reported in much of the press. I believe that the value of meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES is determined, not just by which decisions are made, but by the attention the decision makers give to the principles of conservation on the one hand, and individual facts relating to each issue on the other. At previous meetings, I have always felt that there was at least some discussion of specific facts, some room to consider alternate opinions, and some real interest in determining what was actually going on in the world outside before decisions were made. Sometimes there was far less of this than I would like, but it was always there.

In Harare, the voice of conservation, of reason, and intelligent scientific debate was effectively silenced. This was by far the most political meeting CITES had ever had. Instead of individual concentration on the issues, countries voted as blocs. Their speeches could almost be predicted before the microphones were opened. Often, the only statement a party would make on taking the floor was that it believed in the principle of sustainable use – something on which surely everyone was agreed anyway. Of genuine debate there was practically none.

The hawkbill debate brought out one of the worst and most shameful moments of the conference, in my opinion. The blame for this lies entirely at the feet of the chairman of Committee I, David Brackett, who is, I am sorry to say, the Director-General of the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Chairman of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. One would have thought that anyone holding these two posts would have wanted the debate to be as open and scientific as possible. In the past, this has usually been achieved by interventions from the floor by the

scientific experts with many of the NGO groups in attendance. Mr Brackett made the unprecedented ruling that NGOs would no longer be given the floor. Instead, they would be only allowed to make their comments in writing to the rapporteurs, who would then include them in the minutes - effectively, of course, silencing observer input. This not only denied observers their rights guaranteed in the text of the treaty, but it led to a situation in which the Marine Turtle Specialist Group of IUCN was accused from the floor, by a party representative, of fabricating data and lying to the Parties, and when representatives of that group asked for the floor to respond to these scurrilous charges, the chairman of their own Species Survival Commission refused to allow them this right. I do not always agree with the positions IUCN takes, but stifling scientific input in this fashion marked, for me, the lowest point I have ever seen a CITES meeting reach.

Naturally, I do not know what the effect of the elephant decision at CITES will be, though I hope my fears that it will stimulate an increase in poaching in Africa will prove to be wrong. However, Simon Trevor, a well known East African wildlife film maker, heard a report on the day after the elephant decision that a band of some two hundred Somali bandits had already been seen heading towards Tsavo National Park in Kenya.

There were some moments in the conference that were truly amusing, though perhaps in an ironic way. Certainly a new height in hypocrisy was reached by the delegate from Nigeria during the elephant debate, who announced that his country placed the highest priority on protection of the environment and respect for the rights of local communities - this from a country that hanged eight environmentalists who protested the destruction of their tribal lands by oil exploration!

I am sure that by now everyone will simply assume that these are the musings of one bitter individual. I can only tell you that I heard the same views from many others, including representatives of government delegations who were disgusted by the way in which this meeting proceeded. This has nothing to do with whether you are

for trade in wildlife or against it. If CITES meetings are to be nothing more than political floor shows where true discussion is replaced by posturing, I fear very much for the future of this treaty. Certainly the atmosphere of hostility at this meeting was unprecedented. Several NGOs were harassed or even threatened with physical violence, most of these threats being directed at young women. One of them received a death threat. Under these circumstances, I can only hope that the next meeting, in Indonesia, will see a shift in the pendulum back towards genuine concern for conservation and respect for those that seek to practice it.'

#### WPT COMMENT:

This is all rather depressing, and casts doubts on the effectiveness CITES may have as an aid to parrot conservation. Seven parrot species were proposed for uplisting to Appendix 1, and WPT wrote to recommend that all be approved. As you will see above, only the Green-cheeked Amazon and the Ultramarine Lory were approved; Black-billed Amazon, Horned Parrot, Tahiti Blue Lory and Kuhl's Lory were not approved. Why BirdLife International disapproved of the uplisting of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo is a puzzle, and WPT has written to ask about their reasoning.

#### WEB PAGES

The World Parrot Trust has two web pages. One devised by our Canadian WPT, which can be found at: [www.what.on.ca/parrot/cwparrot.htm](http://www.what.on.ca/parrot/cwparrot.htm). The other, developed by WPT-USA, is now at: [www.funnyfarmexotics.com/wpt](http://www.funnyfarmexotics.com/wpt). Both have recently been updated, so members may like to check them out. Better still, refer potential new members to look them up, as both pages have 'sign-up' facilities.

#### WPT ADS

We are looking for opportunities to place ads for WPT in avicultural or conservation publications. Some publications kindly allow us free space, and members may like to ask their bird club secretaries if they will do this for us (and the parrots). We reproduce below a simple ad which we have used recently. If you can place it, please contact either Mike Reynolds or Jo Pagan at WPT-UK, and we'll fix it up. It's best to fax us on: (44) 01736.756438, or email: [worldparrottrust@compuserve.com](mailto:worldparrottrust@compuserve.com).



#### WORLD PARROT TRUST CHRISTMAS CARD

This year we have a beautiful card depicting the St. Vincent Amazon. Price £5.50 (\$9) for a pack of ten including postage. Place your orders through your local branches or directly to World Parrot Trust, Sales Dept., Glanmor House, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4HY. Cards will be despatched from 1st October 1997.



ROSEMARY LOW SAYS: "Whether you have just one pet parrot or a whole flock, you owe a debt to the parrots in the wild.

Without those wild parrots, and the millions taken to meet our demands, we would have nothing. No pets, no breeding birds, no hobby. If you really care, please put something back to help parrots in need.

Support the WORLD PARROT TRUST, working for the survival of parrots in the wild, and their welfare in captivity. I edit PsittaScene the quarterly magazine. For more details see our web page: [www.funnyfarmexotics.com/wpt](http://www.funnyfarmexotics.com/wpt)

YES, please make me a member of  
**The World Parrot Trust**

Name: .....

Address: .....

Cheque enclosed for £15 for annual membership. Or, charge my credit card

No: .....

Exp.....And/Or please receive my donation of: £10 ( ) £20 ( ) £50 ( ) £100 ( ) Other ( )

Send to: World Parrot Trust,  
Glanmor House, Hayle,  
Cornwall, TR27 4HY, UK  
Phone:01736 753365  
Fax:01736 756438

email: [worldparrottrust@compuserve.com](mailto:worldparrottrust@compuserve.com)

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Rosemary,  
I was very interested to see the 1890s advert for Cross's, the Liverpool dealers, in PsittaScene (Feb 1997 p.2), not least as I have been researching the zoological collections and dealers of the Liverpool area. I have traced a series of advertisements from 1885, which indicate the scale of the Cross business at that period. These are the numbers of parrot-like birds imported between April and December (because of possible duplication, in many cases I give minimum/maximum figures): Grey Parrots 1950 - 4900 (plus 60 - 90 'South Coast Grey Parrots'); Budgerigars 680; Parrakeets 180 - 360; Amazons 50 - 110; Rosellas 19; Cockatoos 300; Lovebirds 520 - 600; Macaws 9 - 13; Lories 47; Cockatiels 21

The large numbers of cockatoos, relative scarcity of macaws, and just two cockatiels are quite striking features. Cross also handled large numbers of mammals - even big cats, elephants, rhinos, bears etc.. If any of your readers hold any material related to Cross or other 19th Century dealers or zoological collections I would be grateful for further information.

**Gwyn Griffiths (Mr),  
18 Holly Mount, Basford,  
Crewe, CW2 5AZ**

Dear Rosemary,  
I am writing to request your help with some scientific research that I am carrying out with Dr. Rupert Sheldrake, author of popular science bestseller "Seven Experiments that Could Change the World". We are researching the possibility of

telepathic relationships developing between people and animals and birds with whom they have a strong bond. Far from being fanciful or far-fetched, we have had many reports from dog and cat owners of such psychic links - an often reported phenomenon being dogs and cats who know when their owners are returning home. Experiments that we have carried out with some dogs show that this happens no matter what time of day the owner arrives, whether on foot, bike, in their own car, or a strange vehicle - so they are not merely responding to a familiar routine or sounds.

We have also had similar reports from parrot and cockatiel owners. We are very keen to hear of other birds who apparently demonstrate psychic bonding with their owners and I would be grateful if your members would get in touch if they have anything to report on this matter.

**Jane Turney,  
8a Hillside Gardens, Highgate,  
London N6 5ST**

#### KAKAPO

In our May 97 PsittaScene we said we would provide a full report in this issue on progress with the Kakapo recovery programme, following Andrew Greenwood's visit to New Zealand. For space reasons we had to defer this until the November 97 issue. Sorry. (Ed).

#### THANKS TO OUR TRANSLATORS

We are now regularly sending translated copies of PsittaScene to members in French, German, Italian, Danish, Dutch and Spanish. The work is all being carried out by hard working volunteers. I have listed below those that help regularly and our thanks to anyone else who may be helping as part of a team but whose name we have failed to mention:

**Italian:** Marco Venier and Freddie Virili.

**Danish:** Simon Waagner, Mette Vilborg, Mette Bohn Christiansen, Poul G. Poulsen, Inge Christiansen, Mohammed Halaouate, Lena Ingwallzen, Line Wadum and Michael Iversen.

**German:** Gerry and Doris Harries, Lars Lepperhoff, Frank Habet and Franziska Vogel.

**Dutch:** Ria and Ruud Vonk, Dick van der Wel.

**French:** Jacqueline Prin  
**Spanish:** Staff of Pulsar Internacional, Mexico.



Anne Morrison's shop.

### NOVEL WAYS TO PUBLICISE WPT

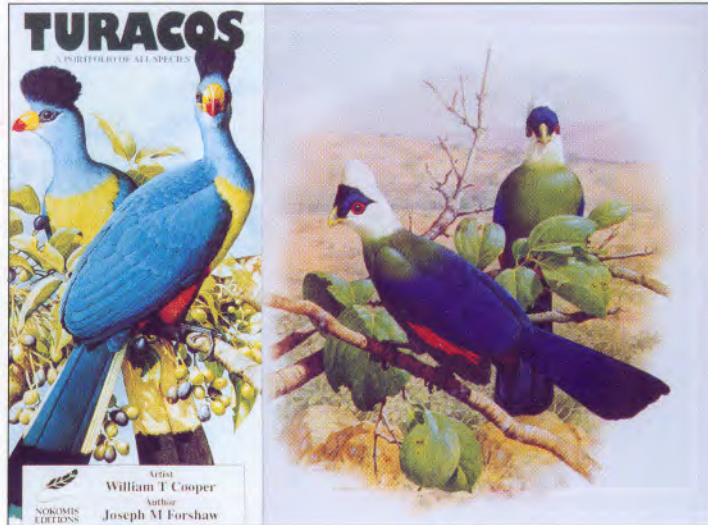
We have many enthusiastic members around the world who find their own way of publicising the Trust and raising funds. One of these is Anne Morrison, a potter in Australia. Living in Alice Springs, she meets tourists from many different countries. She brings the existence of the WPT to their attention in her shop 'Pioneer Pottery', where visitors can buy WPT T-shirts and other goods. She enlists the help of her hand-reared cockatiels and other birds to promote our work. So if you ever visit Alice Springs, make sure you meet up with Anne Morrison at 89 Todd Mall.

### FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

Sincere thanks are due to our member Susanna Gibb, who had a great success with her exhibition of paintings on behalf of the trust. She raised the remarkable total of £1375 when she put her paintings on show at an enterprising pub in Scotland. Even though no bird or parrot people came to the show,



Purple-crowned Lorikeet, by Susanna Gibb.



Coming soon – the Turaco Portfolio.

almost every picture was sold. The painting illustrated below, of a Purple-crowned Lorikeet, is typical of her style, and at the time of writing is still available for a mere £100 (plus carriage etc.) For more information write to Susanna Gibb, Inshewan House, by Forfar, Angus DD8 3TU, Scotland.

### TURACOS - A PORTFOLIO

You may wonder what these lovely birds are doing in a publication devoted to parrots. Read on and you will discover where the parrots come into the story.

This amazing new Portfolio of all the 23 species of Turaco is the latest achievement of William T. Cooper and Joseph M. Forshaw, creators of 'Parrots of the World'.

The Turaco Portfolio will be the most lavishly produced of all their works, and Bill Cooper's paintings are reproduced to their original size of 750mm x 570mm. The introduction to the portfolio is

written by Sir David Attenborough. 'William Cooper is a great lover of birds and his affection for them is immediately visible in the vivacity with which he invests his subjects. They are so alive they seem almost ready to fly from the page.'

An edition of 290 sets will be published at A\$3840 (approx. £1830 or \$2920). Each plate is numbered and presented in a handcrafted solander box with a book of text by Joseph M. Forshaw. A beautiful brochure is available if you write to Nokomis Editions, PO Box 319, Clifton Hill, Victoria 3068, Australia. Phone +61 3 9486 1756, fax +61 3 9482 3573, email aislesbs@anzaab.com.au.

Here's where the parrots come in. After the turaco project, the same team will follow up with THE PORTFOLIO OF COCKATOOS, treating all 21 cockatoos in the same exciting way. But note carefully, priority for the Cockatoo Portfolio will be given to purchasers of the

Turaco Portfolio. If you move quickly, you could expect to secure a particular number for both portfolios.

### ANOTHER POSTER SITE FOR WPT

After we ran a picture of our WPT 'Save the parrots of the world' poster in the May 97 issue of PsittaScene, we had a letter from Dr. Des Spittal, Curator and Deputy Director of the Currumbin Sanctuary in Queensland, Australia. Des is going to put up the large 2m x 1m version of our poster alongside their breeding project for Coxen's Fig Parrot. The idea is that the cash collected will be shared equally between the Coxen's project and our Australian project on the Palm Cockatoo.

We mention all this in hopes of inspiring other zoos or bird collections around the world to work with us in the same way. The poster design is excellent, and displaying it to the visiting public is bound to help the conservation image of the institution in question. Let us know if you have a suitable location.

### THE ULTIMATE AUSTRALIAN PARROT TOUR

The World Parrot Trust has had some preliminary discussions with Joe Forshaw about his leading a small group of about ten people on a spectacular tour of Australia's most memorable parrot-watching areas. This could be done during May 1998, but arrangements would have to be completed soon. Anyone interested should write, in the first instance, to Mike Reynolds at the WPT UK address.



Above: This poster has helped in raising funds for WPT in many zoos and bird parks, and at bird shows and conventions. Two sizes are available from WPT-UK: 2m x 1m and 1m x 0.5 m.

# YOU CAN HELP US...



**Charles A. Munn III PhD.**  
 Founder Trustee WPT-USA.  
 Senior research biologist.  
 Wildlife Conservation Society.



**Andrew Greenwood MRCVS**  
 Founder Trustee of  
 WPT-UK and WPT-USA.  
 Zoo and wildlife veterinary  
 consultant.



**Audrey Reynolds**  
 Director, Paradise Park.  
 Founder Trustee of  
 The World Parrot Trust UK.



**Rosemary Low**  
 Author of 'Endangered  
 Parrots' and 20 more parrot  
 books. Editor of  
 PsittaScene.



**Wm. Richard Porter MD**  
 Director of the International  
 Aviculturists Society.  
 Founder Trustee of WPT-  
 USA.



**David Woolcock**  
 Curator, Paradise Park.  
 Founder Trustee of The  
 World Parrot Trust UK.



**Michael Reynolds**  
 Founder of The World  
 Parrot Trust, Hon. Director  
 of WPT-UK, Trustee of  
 WPT-USA.

# ...SAVE THE PARROTS!



Lear's Macaw



Echo Parakeet



Red-tailed Black Cockatoo



St. Vincent Parrot



Red-vented Cockatoo



Red-tailed Amazon



Hyacinth Macaw

## Join us.

Become a member of the World Parrot Trust, receive our *PsittaScene* newsletter, know that you are actively contributing towards our aims.

## Help fund our Projects.

We are currently supporting parrot conservation, education and welfare projects in Africa, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, the Caribbean, Equador, Mauritius, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru and the Philippines. Your generosity towards the parrots could help us expand current schemes and start new ones.

FEEL FREE to copy this page and hand it out to potential WPT members. Thanks!



## Aims of the Trust.

The survival of parrot species in the wild, and the welfare of captive birds.

These aims are pursued by:-

- Educating the public on the threats to parrots.
- Opposing trade in wild-caught parrots.
- Preserving and restoring parrot habitat.
- Studying the status of parrot populations.
- Encouraging the production of aviary-bred birds.
- Creating links between aviculture and conservation.
- Promoting high standards in the keeping of parrots.
- Supporting research into veterinary care of parrots.

## YES, I WANT TO HELP SAVE THE PARROTS OF THE WORLD

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES (please tick)

- UK and Europe (Single) £15
- UK and Europe (Family) £20
- Fellow (Life Member) £250/US\$400 Corporate (Annual)
- All Overseas Airmail £17/US\$25 (or equivalent currency payment by Access/Visa/Mastercard preferred)
- Plus donation of £/US\$.....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

..... Zip/Postcode .....

Please charge my Access/Visa Acc./No.

Exp. date ..... Amount £/US\$ .....

Signature .....

OR: I enclose cheque payable to the WPT

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO

'WORLD PARROT TRUST' AT-

UNITED KINGDOM

Glannor House, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4HY

USA

Cynthia Webb, PO Box 341141, Memphis

TN 38184

BENELUX

Romain Bejstrup, Boomgaardstraat

76, B2070, Zwijndrecht, Belgium

CANADA

Mike Pearson, PO Box 29, Mount Hope,

Ontario LOR 1W0

DENMARK (SCANDINAVIA)

M Iversen, Alsikemarken 48, 2860 Soborg.

FRANCE

J & G Prin, 55 Rue de la Fassierte, 45140, Ingre.

GERMANY

G & D Harries, Vodestr. 39, 44625 Herne.

ITALY

Freddie Virili, via Matarus w.10, 33045 Nimis, Udine.

AUSTRALIA

Peter Sipek, 1 Rossell Pl., Glenfield, NSW 2167.

AFRICA

V. Dennison, PO Box 1758, Link Hills 3652, South Africa.

SWITZERLAND

Lars Lepperhoff, Sagemattstrasse 31, 3097 Liebefeld.



I heard about the World Parrot Trust from .....

# PARROTS IN THE WILD



## HYACINTH MACAW *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*

In this issue of *PsittaScene* we have had a lot to say about this extraordinary parrot, both in the wild and in captivity. This superb shot of a macaw enjoying his favourite palm nut was taken by Richard Porter on his recent visit to Piauí. See his report on pages 1 to 3 of this issue.

The Hyacinth Macaw will always be a focus of attention, due to its phenomenal beauty and unique character. Truly, this bird is its own worst enemy. In captivity it attracts more attention than any other parrot, first, because a young handraised bird makes a most amiable pet or companion (provided it can be given as much care, time and consideration as a human infant), and second, because it has a high financial value.

In the wild, with perhaps 3,000 or more Hyacinths still existing in three or four locations, the species has a reasonable chance of sustaining itself over the next twenty years or more. It is still being poached, but more and more effort is being put into its protection. Since 1990, the World Parrot Trust has raised substantial amounts through its 'HYACINTH FUND', and used this to support the work of Dr. Charles A. Munn III in Brazil.

You can help the effort to save the Hyacinth Macaw. A small number of the spectacular limited edition print 'The Noblest of Them All' by Nicholas still remain to be sold, and they are now available at £30 or \$50 **including postage**. Please send your cheque or credit card details to the UK address of the Trust, and we will do the rest. If you don't want the print, a cheque made out to 'World Parrot Trust Hyacinth Fund' would be very welcome.

