PROMOTING EXCELLENCE
IN PARROT CONSERVATION
AVICULTURE AND WELFARE

Psitta scene

The World Parrot Trust

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LEAR'S MACAW- NEXT IN LINE FOR EXTINCTION?

by Michael Reynolds

As you would expect, the *World Parrot Trust* keeps a close eye on all threatened parrot species, often referring to 'Birds to Watch 2', published by BirdLife International. By the end of 1997 we hope to have available the 'Parrot Action Plan 1998-2003', which is currently being produced as a joint exercise by IUCN, BirdLife International, the Association for Parrot Conservation, and the *World Parrot Trust*.

Ninety parrots are listed in 'Birds to Watch 2', and of these, one is categorised as 'Extinct in the Wild'. This is the Kakapo, of which fifty six specimens remain, all now transferred to off-shore New Zealand islands and being closely monitored and supported by the New Zealand authorities. Our trustee and veterinary consultant Andrew Greenwood has just spent two weeks advising on this vital programme, and a brief but exciting report is on page 6.

NINE PARROTS CRITICAL

Nine parrots are listed as 'Critical', and these are: Philippine Cockatoo, Night Parrot, Norfolk Island Parakeet, Echo Parakeet, Lear's Macaw, Spix's Macaw, Yellow-eared Parrot, Fuertes's Parrot, and Puerto Rican Amazon. Very briefly, we believe the status of these birds is as follows:

Philippine Cockatoo: being protected on island of Palawan, and a new population recently found on another island.

Night Parrot: still present in arid central Australia. Fifteen sightings in the last ten years, a corpse found 1990. Threatened by habitat degradation, predation by cats and foxes, reduction of available water.

Norfolk Island Parakeet: in 1991 there were 40 individuals, and the species was showing signs of recovery after many years of active management.

Echo Parakeet: an eight year recovery programme has brought the number of known birds from 15 to over 80, including a captive breeding group in Mauritius.

Yellow-eared Parrot: may be close to extinction in Colombia and Ecuador, owing to the loss of its wax palm habitat. More information needed.

Fuertes's Parrot: extremely rare due to habitat destruction in the central Andes of Colombia. Last sighting in 1992 consisted of 25 birds.

Puerto Rican Amazon: this species was reduced to very low numbers by being taken for pets and food. Two official aviaries are now breeding them in captivity to a total of around sixty birds, with a similar number in the wild.

TWO MAY NOT SURVIVE

Of these nine species, it seems reasonable to think that seven of them will still survive in the wild in ten years time, despite the difficulties they face. But what of the two macaws, Spix's and Lear's? Most people in the parrot world will know the story of Spix's Macaw, which was found by a WPT funded survey in 1990 to consist of only three birds left in the wild. Later, two more birds disappeared, leaving just one precious wild specimen. We now know that for several years the last remaining nest had been closely watched by local trappers, who removed the chicks on the point of fledging, and sold them on through middlemen to collectors. Some of these were in Brazil, but most were overseas. It must be remembered that Brazil made the export of any of its native wildlife illegal as from 1979.

AMNESTY

Despite this, Spix's Macaws ended up in three important collections: Birds International in the Philippines, Loro Parque in Tenerife, and with a Dr. Hammerli in Switzerland. In 1992 the Brazilian government conservation authority IBAMA made an agreement with these three known holders of Spix's Macaw, whereby they would be granted an amnesty

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It's not often that we can say we "held the front page" – but it is true of this issue! Developments with the critically endangered Kakapo are so exciting and so good we wanted to be the first to bring the news to our members. Andrew Greenwood, WPT trustee and advisor to the Kakapo Recovery Programme, is seen above with one of the FOUR Kakapo chicks which hatched this year. In view of the fact that only 50 adult Kakapo survive, some of which are almost certainly too old to reproduce, the Kakapo might well be described as the most critically endangered of all parrots. Only 19 females exist. See the February 1997 issue of *PsittaScene* and the back of this issue for more information.

"psittacine (sit'å sîn) Belonging or allied to the parrots; parrot-like"

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

World Parrot Trust

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from prosecution, provided they joined and funded a 'recovery committee' for the species. In 1996 IBAMA announced that the opportunity for any other holders of Spix's to receive an amnesty in return for co-operation, had ceased.

The committee set about providing a mate for the bird in the wild, thought to be a male. A large release aviary was built, and a female Spix's was eventually released to join the male. Sadly, this has not been successful, as the latest news is that the female has disappeared. The male is still paired with an Illiger's Macaw, and may have produced hybrid young.

WPT ADVICE

If the *World Parrot Trust* could offer some advice to the Spix's Macaw Recovery Committee, it would be this:

1. You must lose no time in supporting the remaining male with other conspecifics.
2. At the right time, you must remove the Illiger's macaw.
3. You should establish a group of eight or ten Spix's at the site of the release aviary, together with skilled biologists and aviculturists to care for them. Expensive, yes, but your funders have deep pockets. These new birds should come mostly from Birds International, as they have been most successful in breeding them in captivity, and now have over 30 birds. You should also consider returning to this programme the two Spix's sent in 1996 from Sao Paulo Zoo to Loro Parque, as these two birds are almost certainly wild-caught, and are therefore likely to possess invaluable knowledge of the wild situation.
4. Arrangements should be made to monitor closely the breeding stock of the holders of Spix's Macaw, and ensure that 50% of all birds bred each year are returned to a Brazilian facility.

This is clearly a desperate situation, the more so since our advice is unlikely to be followed. The most likely scenario is that the last wild Spix's will also disappear, that no more releases will be attempted, that the captive population will continue to grow, and that Spix's Macaw will become a high priced target species for a few affluent collectors. It will also be "extinct in the wild".

LEAR'S MACAW

All the above is a preamble to discussing the situation that now confronts us with Lear's Macaw. The *World Parrot Trust* has been closely involved with this species through its support of the work of Dr. Charles A. Munn III, widely regarded as the leading expert on macaws.

Above:Captive-bred Lear's Macaw at Busch Gardens, Florida.

BLUE MACAW CONFERENCE

In our February 1993 issue of *PsittaScene* we reported our attendance at the 'Blue Macaw Conference' held at Belo Horizonte, Brazil. This reviewed the circumstances of Spix's, Lear's, and Hyacinth Macaws. In the case of Lear's, the consensus of opinion among field researchers, including Munn, Hart,Yamashita and Machado, was that existing plantations of licuri palms needed protection from goats and cattle, and that new plantations were needed. This led to the WPT's successful 'Palm for a Parrot' campaign, and the establishment of a licuri palm nursery in Bahia. The same issue of PsittaScene carried an extensive report on Lear's from Dr. Munn, and further information from Dr. Judith Hart.

The November 1993 issue described how we brought in the palm-growing expertise of Professor Alan Meerow of the University of Florida. The next major development was the finding of a second population of Lear's Macaw, reported by Dr. Munn in our November 1995 PsittaScene. This report dealt frankly (in retrospect, perhaps too frankly) with the disagreements and 'political' difficulties that surround the attempts to preserve Lear's Macaw.

It closed with the following Summary:

PSITTASCENE SUMMARY

"Starting in early 1993, the World Parrot Trust, Wildlife Conservation society and CETREL Corporation began working together to try to keep the Lear's Macaw from slipping down the slippery slope of collector-driven trapping to extinction in the wild.

LACK OF PALM TREES

We first started by diagnosing and beginning to work on a solution to the apparent problem of lack of adequate palm regeneration in large parts of the range of the first population. We consulted with Professor Alan Meerow of the Univeristy of Florida about palm production. We bought and shipped to Brazil 50,000 plastic palm pots for our palm nursery.

In 1994, we stumbled into some novel sources of information provided by former bird trappers and this information eventually led to our finding the second population of birds in an area very far from the first, an area that has no drought or goats and thus, has excellent, healthy palm populations in every size and age class. In 1995, we found the nesting cliff of this second population of 22 birds and also received as yet unconfirmed information about several other isolated, widely scattered populations of this spectacular macaw.

TIME TO SPEND MONEY

The time has now come to spend money for Lear's Macaw on

1) Checking the rumours about yet more populations;
2) protecting the second populations;
3) protecting (finally) the first population;
4) producing more palm seedlings for the first population; and
5) testing models of ecotourism with the first population to produce

some local employment related to the conservation of the first population. We look forward to receiving suggestions and support to help carry out all these activities. Above all, we would ask Brazilian authorities and NGOs to co-operate with us in a sincere and committed manner in order to save this remarkable macaw. Time is running out". That was our summary in November, 1996.

To bring this sad story up to date, here is an extract from a letter written by WPT to IBAMA (the official Brazilian conservation agency) in March 1997.

TO IBAMA RE LEAR'S MACAW

"In our opinion this is the most prominent and threatened of all parrot species currently under pressure from international trading activities.

The confiscation of two young Lear's Macaws at the Paris Orly airport last July was reported globally, and we believe it is generally agreed that at least 19 birds were stolen from the wild population in 1996. With an estimate of around 120 birds in the wild, it is obvious that, without a solution being found, this species could follow the pattern of Spix's Macaw and be effectively extinct in the wild within a very few years.

We have a copy of an excellent 'Action Plan for Conservation of Lear's Macaw' compiled by the Special Working Group in 1994. The Action Plan states on page 10: 'Capturing wild animals is also quite common in the region; they are smuggled to zoos, collectors and aviculturists all over the world. A.leari is certainly one of the most coveted species, since it is very rare today. It is believed that with the sharp decline in the natural population of Cyanopsitta spixii, hunters will turn to A. Leari, which will require an increased inspection effort in its area of occurrence on the part of the appropriate agencies'. There are no proposals in the Action Plan on how to deal with the root cause of this loss of birds from the wild populations, which as we all know, is the continuing demand by unprincipled collectors, both outside Brazil and within.

We realise that our organisation has no official mandate to make proposals relating to what is clearly primarily a national concern for Brazil, but nevertheless, our eight years of involvement in global parrot conservation, and our substantial financial commitments to work with Brazilian experts to help six parrot species, encourage us to offer what we think could be a suggestion to assist the survival of Lear's Macaw.

That is that Brazil might bring up the question of international trade in Lear's Macaw at the forthcoming CITES Conference of the Parties in Harare, Zimbabwe in June 1997. Your government could ask for stronger enforcement measures from all CITES signatories, especially those that may have been - no doubt without their knowledge - involved in illegal movements of this macaw.

If Brazil were to ask its fellow CITES members at the COP to pay especial attention to traffic in this species, we think it would improve vigilance by all countries and agencies. It might also have the effect of generating funds from major international conservation foundations for the in-country proposals made in your Action Plan. At the same time, you might want to make it clear that there is no possibility of an amnesty being declared for illegal holders of Lear's Macaw, but that all diplomatic and legal means would be used to secure the return to Brazil of illegally held birds.

This proposal aimed at choking off international demand for Lear's Macaw is given extra significance by a report from today's press which quotes your President Fernando Henrique Cardoso as saying at the 'Rio Plus Five' Conference: 'We don't have the means to stop deforestation. In those regions, there's hardly any presence of government capable of imposing the law'.

With these difficulties to contend with inside Brazil, would it not be a good idea to make every effort to attack the 'demand' side of the equation as well as the ' supply' side? We hope you may find our comments of some interest.

Please be assured that our desire to help parrot conservation is closely followed by our wish to work with the appropriate authorities in all countries."

Two months later, no reply has been received.

It doesn't take a genius to work out that if a population of around 120 birds is subjected to poaching of around 20 every year, the species will be extinct in the wild in six years. A recent helicopter flight over the newly discovered Lear's Macaw area found trappers ropes suspended above nest sites in the cliffs. The territory in which this macaw lives is so remote, so extensive, and is so difficult to traverse that it presents almost insuperable protection problems.

CO-OPERATION

We can only repeat that sincere and effective co-operation between all interested parties is an essential step in ensuring the survival of Lear's Macaw. The *World Parrot Trust* continues to fund the work of Dr. Munn and his associates in Bahia, notably Dr. Pedro Lima of CETREL (an environmental protection company), Mr. Danilo Lima (agronomist responsible for the palm plantation), and now BioBrasil, a newly formed environmental trust based in the state of Bahia, and thus the NGO most relevant to the protection of Lear's Macaw. Funds from other sources are received by IBAMA and Biodiversitas, and if the efforts of all involved could be co-ordinated, it is reasonable to think that the poachers could be caught, punished, and persuaded to leave the macaws to flourish in their wilderness, as they have done for tens of thousands of years.

RETURN ILLEGALLY HELD LEAR'S MACAWS

At the same time, we would like to see a special international effort, co-ordinated by IBAMA, CITES and WWF TRAFFIC, to track down, seize, and return to Brazil, all illegally held Lear's Macaws. The *World Parrot Trust* has written to these bodies to make this proposal, and has again asked for the CITES Conference of the Parties (held in Zimbabwe in June 1997) to take the lead in setting this in motion. We believe it will also be necessary for Brazil to state that an amnesty from prosecution will under no circumstances be offered to illegal holders of Lear's Macaw. Such a statement would have the effect of reducing demand from collectors, and this in turn would reduce the pressure to take birds from the wild.

It is time for serious and drastic action. If nothing is done, there is little hope for Lear's Macaw, which will then surely meet a similar fate to that of Spix's Macaw.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP LEAR'S MACAW TO SURVIVE, YOU COULD ORDER A LIMITED EDITION PRINT OF OUR PAINTING BY ARTIST DAVID JOHNSON £38.00 (US$55) DIRECT FROM THE WORLD PARROT TRUST, U.K.
(address on Page 15)

Golden-shouldered Parrot *Psephotus chrysopterygius*

by Stephen Garnett and Gabriel Crowley

By most definitions Cape York Peninsula is a wilderness. In an area a little larger than England but with fewer then 2,000 people living outside the few towns, one would expect humans to have had less impact on the region. Yet the lack of people has not been enough to save the Golden-shouldered Parrot *Psephotus chrysopterygius*. Once this parrot was widespread across the Peninsula. Today a few thousand remain in two tiny populations. The population is gradually getting smaller. This account summarises three year's research on the species which is forming the basis of a rescue effort that it is hoped will reverse the population trend.

DESCRIPTION

Golden-shouldered Parrots live in grassy Savannah woodland and are the closest relative, possibly even the same species, as the now extinct Paradise Parrot *Psephotus pulcherrimus*. They are a small parrot, little larger then a budgie but with a longer tail. The male, which usually attains full plumage in its second year, is a brilliant turquoise with a black cap, lemon front, a vivid yellow shoulder that contrasts with its brown back and dark blue wings, and a salmon pink belly. The female is almost entirely grass green apart from her turquoise rump and washed pink belly. Young look much like the adult female though, even at fledging, young males can be distinguished by their turquoise-cheeks.

The birds live in a region where there are two seasons. The wet season runs from October to April while almost no rain falls during the rest of the year. The birds start nesting near the end of the wet season when the new seasons grass seed is plentiful.

NESTING IN TERMITE MOUNDS

At this time the pairs select a termite mound in which to make their nest, often testing several with trial diggings before finally excavating first a tunnel then a full chamber. Most nests are built in conical termite mounds, the shape of a witch's hat, which occur primarily among ti-trees *Melaleuca* species along the edge of grassy drainage flats. Most digging is undertaken in the morning which may explain why few nest entrances face east, where digging would have to be done in the heat of the morning sun, though they will face in any other direction.

When complete the nesting chamber usually stretches to within a few centimetres of the outside wall of the mound. The termites resent this intrusion. If there is rain after the eggs are laid there is a flurry of termite activity during which the parrots' eggs are sometimes fixed to the floor of the chamber or the nest entrance is built over. Later the termites will sometimes attack the chicks, though to no avail.

The female lays between 4 and 7 eggs, usually 5 or 6 at two day intervals. Incubation starts in the middle of laying and continues for three weeks. Every hour or so the female emerges to be fed by the male in a nearby tree. Once the chicks have hatched both parents seek food, returning to feed chicks about five times a day. For the first few days the female broods the young at night but soon she only enters the nest to provide food. (This is the reason why they can be difficult to breed in captivity in temperate climates). Fresh grass seed forms the bulk of the chick's diet supplemented by the bright green seeds of native legumes.

At the same time the hen is laying eggs a moth *Trisyntopa scatophaga* is doing the same thing nearby. The moth eggs hatch at the same time as the parrots and the larvae live off the parrot droppings, forming a squirming mat beneath the parrots' feet. Finally, as the chicks fledge, the moth pupate in the wall of the termite mound. Most but not all parrots have moths in their nest but the moth is found nowhere else so is as threatened as its host.

NESTING PREDATION

About two thirds of eggs hatch and a similar proportion of chicks fledge. The principal cause of nest failure is predation of eggs or chicks by reptiles, probably tree goannas *Varanus tristis*, which are small enough to slip inside the entrance. When the chicks have hatched Pied Butcherbirds *Cracticus nigrogularia* also start to visit nests regularly. Though butcherbirds cannot reach the young in most nests, they appear to inspect their progress, ready to pick them off when they fledge. Nest robbing by people may have been a localised problem in the past but is now very infrequent and does not pose a threat to the species.

Above: A pair of Golden-shouldered Parakeets on their termite mound. Note the nest entrance at bottom left. *Photograph: Sam Abell*

Nesting is a hazardous time for adult Golden-shouldered Parrots. Adult feathers are often found near nests indicating the death of at least one parent. At others, only one parent feeds the chick, suggesting the other has died away from the nest. Fortunately a single parent can raise five chicks to fledging, suggesting food is not limited during the breeding season. Interestingly males, which are more numerous than females, never manage to obtain new mates while feeding chicks whereas females have a new male within days. However the new male simply accompanies the female to the nest and never feeds the young.

In the first six weeks after fledging young birds move no more than a few kilometres from the nest site and continue to be fed by their parents. After that they join flocks in areas burnt early in the dry season. Such fires have been lit by Aboriginal people on Cape York Peninsula for many thousands of years and it is a tradition continued by pastoralists who have been grazing their cattle there for the last century. The fires expose the abundant seed of annual grasses making it easier for parrots to find food, and safer since they can see predators more easily.

Because they have access to these burnt areas, Golden-shouldered Parrots have an easy life through the dry season. They leave their roost sites after sunrise, wander down for a drink or collect dew from leaves of trees, then spend an hour feeding while there is still a touch of chill in the air. That done the flock rises as one and heads for nearby shady trees in which to spend the next eight hours idly scratching, preening, dozing or, sometimes, chewing on the flowers or leaf buds of whatever tree they are in. In the late afternoon they will feed again for another hour, some may drink and then all will gather noisily in the tops of nearby trees to roost.

WET SEASON ACTIVITY

This slothful existence ends with the first storms of the wet season. Within a day of the first fall the parrots have to feed for twice as long, much of the remaining seed having been buried by the rain. If the first storm is heavy this seed

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will germinate and the parrots have to shift to other seed that does not germinate as readily. More often, however, the first storm is followed by a dry spell when wind exposes the seed again and the parrots get a reprieve. Nevertheless they are excited by the rain, the young males fight and the adults start playing around on termite mounds where later they will nest. With successive storms, however, the parrots have to spend longer searching for food often in areas that have not been burnt and so become more vulnerable to predators.

WOODSWALLOWS ACT AS GUARDS

Fortunately for the parrots. the rains initiate breeding in Black-faced Woodswallows *Artamus cinereus*, pugnacious insectivores which defend their traditional nesting areas vigorously against potential predators. The parrots, as well as finches and many other bird species, have learnt that they can feed in peace near breeding Woodswallows, assured they will be warned of approaching predators by the Woodswallows' vigorous alarm calls. Inexperienced young parrots stay near Woodswallows for long into the wet season when the Woodswallow chicks fledge and the flocks start to disperse.

By this time there is new seed available and the parrots have to travel themselves to take advantage of it, feeding on one plant species after another as their seed ripens. If food gets really short the parrots will feed for long periods on leaf tips and flowers. Eventually, by early March, the perennial grasses set seed and the food supply is sufficiently assured for the parrots to start breeding.

TI-TREE PROBLEM

The critical point in this life cycle, and the point where humans are important, appears to be the breeding season. The problem is that the habitats most favoured for nesting, the grassy flats, are being invaded by ti-trees to the extent that they are no longer open flats but closed woodlands. The termite mounds are still there and the parrots continue to nest in them but, on closed flats, the nests are more likely to fail and adults are more likely to be killed. The culprit is thought to be an ambush predator, such as the Pied Butcherbird, which can take advantage of the denser vegetation to surprise their prey.

LACK OF FIRE

The reason the flats are disappearing is lack of fire. For perhaps as long as 100,000 years Cape York Peninsula has been intensely managed. A hundred years ago over 20,000 Aboriginal people were scattered across the region. Starting in May, they lit fires throughout the dry season until it was too wet for grass to burn. The result was a fine mosaic of areas burnt at different times of year as well as areas left unburnt, protected from fires late in the dry season by the scars of fires earlier in the year.

IMPORTANCE OF FIRE

This burning pattern favoured the parrots. The early fires provided feeding sites through the dry season while the later fires, which tended to be hotter, kept the ti-tree in check, burning them to ground level. Although the ti-tree would resprout it had trouble competing with the grass. If spared from fire for more than five years, however, the ti-tree grows to a height when most plants will resprout from the canopy and continue growing. Late fires early in the wet season were particularly helpful for the parrots. These fires not only help keep ti-tree under control but also expose remaining seed on the ground, sometimes scorching newly sprouted seed so that it remains available to the parrots, while promoting growth of some wet season food plants.

BURNING PATTERN ALMOST LOST

Unfortunately it is a burning pattern that has almost been lost. Over the last thirty years in particular most Aboriginal people have moved away from their traditional lands to live in towns and settlements and fire management has been left to the few hundred pastoralists who run cattle properties in the area. Some pastoralists do manage to maintain a burning regime similar to that practised by Aborigines, though cattle tend to eat the fuel and so reduce the intensity of fires. Many pastoralists however, especially newcomers with little experience of the habitat tend not to burn at all, or only do so early in the dry season. By the time these newcomers have learnt that more burning is necessary, the grassy flats have been lost and the parrots with them.

BETTER PROSPECTS

The prognosis for the parrots, however, is not all gloomy. On Artemis Station, one of the few properties where the parrots still occur, the Shepherd family have been involved with research on the Golden-shouldered Parrot since its inception in 1992 and are now actively involved in running their property in a way that will help both the parrots and their cattle. With help from the Queensland Government, the Queensland Ornithological Society and the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, the Shepherds are constructing paddocks that will periodically be spared from cattle grazing and burnt in a way that should favour the parrots. This management regime will also favour the cattle since the grassy flats produce the best pasture.

HELPING SURVIVAL

On an experimental basis the Shepherds have also been clearing round nests and supplementing food in the wet season to try to increase nest success and to help immatures survive the wet season. So far both measures appear to have been successful which means that intensive management of the remaining populations is likely to be effective should further declines necessitate it. Before then, however, it is hoped that the Shepherds' example will be followed by other pastoralists on Cape York Peninsula and the Golden-shouldered Parrot will again expand into its former range.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Drs Stephen Garnett and Gabriel Crowley are independent research biologists specialising in threatened species conservation management. Stephen wrote the Action Plan for Australian Birds for the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1992 and is currently chair of the Birds Australia Parrot Association. Gabriel is primarily a botanist and has developed an extensive understanding of the ecology of the plants parrots eat in many parts of Australia. Since completing their work on Golden-shouldered Parrots they have moved to Kangaroo Island off South Australia to study the 200 remaining individuals of this subspecies of Glossy Black-Cockatoo. They are also starting work on Palm Cockatoos in New Guinea and North Queensland as part of a project partly funded by the World Parrot Trust.

Above: A burning regime helps the Golden-shouldered Parakeets by controlling Ti-trees and providing food. *Photograph: Stephen Garnett.*

"Hoki" Kakapo's Story

by Don Merton (New Zealand Dept. of Conservation)

"Hoki" was hatched by her mother "Zephyr" on Codfish Island off the north-western coast of Stewart Island in early April 1992 - the only occasion when Kakapo there have bred. Zephyr's nest was found by Dave Barker and his dog 'Bob' on 16 April when Hoki was 10 - 14 days old. Hoki, a female, was the eldest of a brood of three chicks.

At this time no Codfish Island Kakapo were being supplementary-fed and the bumper ("mast") of rimu fruit there was failing (virtually all fruit was under-developed, unripe and aborting). Zephyr and the two other females known to have chicks were foraging almost all night long but very little food was available for them to sustain their newly hatched young. (Of six chicks known to have hatched on Codfish that disastrous breeding season Hoki was the only one to survive. But for our intervention she would have died).

Like the other females, Zephyr was giving her chicks everything and as a consequence was herself starving. At 850 gms she was (and still is) the lightest adult Kakapo known -she currently weighs more than 2 kg! All attempts to feed the stressed females were unsuccessful.

The situation was critical. One of Hoki's siblings - probably the youngest - was already dead when the nest was found. Hoki and her surviving sister were starving.

Soon after the discovery of Zephyr's nest I was advised by Southland Conservancy staff of the very serious situation and asked to assist. I flew from Wellington to Codfish Island immediately. The Codfish team and I reached Zephyr's nest at around l am on 18 April. The nest was just visible - 4m in under a huge boulder. It was extremely difficult to see into it and was seemingly impossible to reach.

If any chicks were to survive they had to be removed, warmed and fed without delay. It was unlikely they would have survived until daylight.

By lashing two long, straight poles together and taping a small food strainer to one end, we managed with great difficulty to reach the nest and after a couple of very anxious hours to rescue the two chicks - one of which was close to death.

Once in a brooder back at camp and fed tiny quantities of electrolyte solution and food, the two soon recovered. The stronger chick, later to be known as Hoki, we fostered to her grandmother Nora who was incubating two very rotten and long-overdue eggs.

She accepted the two-week old nestling immediately and managed to find sufficient food to feed Hoki for the next three weeks. Once the second (much weaker) chick recovered it was flown (on 21 April) to Auckland Zoo for hand-raising. It too was a female but unfortunately it died at fledging-age two months later.

Hoki's weight continued to increase until mid May. At this point her grandmother was obviously unable to find sufficient food and Hoki's weight began to decline. On 13 May Hoki, now about 5 weeks old, was removed from her foster-nest on Codfish Island and flown 'Business Class' to Auckland Zoo.

FIRST HAND-RAISED KAKAPO

Of three starving nestlings sent to the Zoo that season Hoki was the only one to survive. She thus became the first - and only - Kakapo ever to have been hand-raised. Mick Sibley of Auckland Zoo was responsible for hand-rearing her - and so demonstrating that such is feasible.

In early July 1992 Hoki reached fledging age and was in need of more space. She was flown to Maud Island where, with Kakapo programme sponsors Comalco New Zealand Limited's financial help a purpose-built pen had been constructed for her.

Hoki settled in remarkably well and during July/August was "weaned" onto foods being fed as supplements to some adult Kakapo - i.e. a range of nuts, seeds, apple, corn, sweet potato, sprouts, parrot pellets and nectar-mix. But for the elimination in 1994 of pellets her diet has changed little since that time. (Kakapo are one of two New Zealand bird species that are purely herbivorous).

Throughout her (almost) five years in captivity on Maud Island Hoki has been cared for by Gideon Climo, Kakapo Programme Officer based on Maud Island. Gideon is to be congratulated on his remarkable achievement. Never before has a Kakapo been maintained in captivity for so long. Gideon has shown that it is possible to maintain Kakapo in captivity long-term.

HOKI GROWS UP

In mid-I992 Hoki was moved from her relatively small, enclosed, "fledging pen" to a more spacious, open-topped pen on Maud. She is currently alternated every few months between this and another large pen on Maud -both built with funds provided by Comalco through the Threatened Species Trust. (Like other parrots she is rather hard on vegetation growing within her enclosure - hence the need to move her periodically!)

Above:This is Hoki with her person, Gideon Climo at night on Maud Island.
Photograph: Don Merton

Hoki is now almost five years old and very likely approaching the age of sexual maturity. The age at which Kakapo reach sexual maturity is as yet unknown. However Hoki's mother, Zephyr bred at 11 years and another female is known to have bred at 9 years. Breeding may in fact be possible at a younger age than this.

Hoki has therefore been provided with artificial roost/nest chambers - enclosed plastic tanks dug into the ground and partially filled with bark and wood-chips. Provision has also been made for Hoki to leave and return to her pen at will so as to enable her to socialise with the seven free-living adult Kakapo on Maud Island, and of course to mate when she is ready.

A rather sophisticated version of a 'cat-door' has been developed which Gideon has trained Hoki to use - and through which she alone may pass. Hoki has been surprisingly quick to learn how to use this door. She is to be offered her freedom later this month. (December 1996).

It is anticipated that Hoki will in fact continue to regard her spacious enclosure as her "home-range", and will regularly return to it to roost by day, to feed from her traditional food station - and perhaps eventually to nest!

Since she has been partially hand-raised and subsequently maintained in captivity, Hoki is comfortable in the presence of people - in fact she seems to enjoy playing and interacting with humans. Her scientific, educational and advocacy potential is thus unique.

She is also the only surviving female Kakapo to have hatched since 1981, so her reproductive contribution is thus crucial to the survival and recovery of her species. Her potential as a breeding female must therefore take priority over all else.

GOOD NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

Andrew Greenwood is just back from consulting with the Kakapo Recovery Team in New Zealand, and reports that four Kakapo chicks are now being reared. These are the first to be hatched since 'Hoki' in 1992. Two are with their mothers in wild nests, but two had to be removed for hand rearing. A full report will be in our August 97 issue, but for now, see pictures on pages 1 and 16 of this issue.

Working for Parrots World-wide

by Rosemary Low

Rosemary Low reviews the work and aims of the Trust for the benefit of newer members

The *World Parrot Trust* was founded by Michael Reynolds of Paradise Park, England, in 1989. He invited Andrew Greenwood and myself to participate in the foundation, together with his wife Audrey and David Woolcock, the curator of Paradise Park. From very modest beginnings, and almost no cash, the Trust has achieved far more than anyone could have predicted.

Unlike some charities, overhead expenses are very low. On occasions fees are paid to professional advisors, working on specific projects over a short period. Michael Reynolds and his wife devote most of their working hours to the Trust, without payment, and Paradise Park donates much staff time and office space, computers and other equipment, and pays for many of the running expenses, such as telephone and fax services. I edit the magazine *PsittaScene*, without payment. The Trust is therefore an extremely cost-effective organisation, with perhaps a higher percentage of donations going to its projects than any other charity.

SUPPORT GROUPS

We now have 2,500 members in 52 countries world-wide. There are ancillary Trusts and support groups in the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, South Africa, Scandinavia, Switzerland and the USA.

Paradise Park donated £15,000 to start the Trust, and two staff members have raised the incredible sum of just over £100,000. They have done this, and continue to raise funds, by giving eagle flying demonstrations at Paradise Park. After the demonstration they appeal to the public on behalf of the Trust. Funds are also raised by the more orthodox methods of selling T-shirts, greetings cards, books and other items.

I will now describe the aims of the Trust and how they have been carried out to date.

FIRST AIM OF THE TRUST

The first aim is to educate the general public world-wide about the threat to parrot survival, seeking their interest, concern and support. The Trust's magazine *PsittaScene* has played an important role in this aim. It has opened the eyes of people to the serious plight of many parrot species - in fact, one third of all parrots are threatened with extinction. Steps being taken to try to reverse declining populations are described in articles from field workers. Many articles which have appeared in *PsittaScene* have been reproduced in other magazines throughout the world. We welcome such reproduction and, in conjunction with the author of the article, we are always pleased to give permission.

SECOND AIM

The second aim of the Trust is to help to protect and preserve the natural habitats of parrots. This is much more difficult to achieve, as it is so expensive. In 1994 we set up a special fund, called the Parrot Habitat Fund. We also launched a T-shirt to promote the Habitat Fund. To date, unfortunately, the fund has not attracted enough support for us to progress in this aim. We would welcome contributions!

THIRD AIM

The third aim is to gather and disseminate information on the status of parrot populations in the wild and in captivity. In this we have been successful, both in helping to finance field studies and in publishing the results.

FOURTH AIM

An important aim is to advocate effective controls on the international trade in wild-caught parrots, and the replacement of that trade by captive-bred birds. In the eight years since the Trust was formed the trade in wild-caught birds has decreased - but it still exists. It is very difficult to influence Third World countries on this matter. But the Trust will grasp every opportunity to do so. Advocating the purchase of captive-bred parrots has always been given emphasis. Even those who do not have strong moral feelings on this issue must realise that buying wild-caught birds of such species as Orange-winged Amazons , Hawk-headed Parrots and Black-headed Caiques, which come in from Guyana, is not only causing the death of the parrots that don't survive being trapped, but is also helping to put aviculturists out of business. Of course, breeding parrots is seldom a full-time profession in Europe, but it is an expensive hobby. If breeders are unable to sell their young, because they must compete with inexpensive wild-caught birds, they are very likely to give up parrot breeding. I would implore everyone here not to buy recently wild-caught birds under any circumstances.

FIFTH AIM

The fifth aim of the *World Parrot Trust* is to encourage co-operation between aviculturists and zoological institutions, and better liaison between aviculturists and conservation bodies. Here again, publishing information on conservation projects in *PsittaScene*, which is read by several thousand of the world's more thoughtful and influential aviculturists, has helped to foster a greater understanding. One of the reasons why this is important is that creating self-sustaining captive populations of endangered parrots requires liaison between both groups.

SIXTH AIM

The Trust also aims to promote high standards in the keeping of parrots as pets. It publishes a leaflet entitled "Who's a lucky boy then?" giving the basics of good care. The leaflet has been distributed free to thousands of owners and pet shops, also to breeders, to give away with parrots sold as pets. In *PsittaScene* we deal with some aspects of pet-keeping, such as feather plucking and environmental enrichment. The latter applies to aviary birds, as well as to pets. The idea is now becoming more widely accepted that environmental enrichment is not just a smart phrase invented by zoologists, it is something which is absolutely essential to the physical

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Above: Vast numbers of parrots are still being taken from the wild. Most of them will not live for long.

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and mental well-being of all captive birds.

Here are some simple ideas for aviary birds which will provide them with hours of amusement. You can hang a knotted skipping rope from the roof of the aviary, using a dog clip. It is best to use those which have plain wooden handles - not varnished. Alternatively, hang thick pieces of rope from the roof. A swing can be made very easily by using a piece of branch from an apple tree. Use a length which has two protrusions in suitable places near each end of the perch. Buy chain by the metre from your local hardware store. Loop the chain around the perch on the inner side of the protrusion then secure the two ends using a key ring. Then attach a dog clip to the free end and hang from the roof using a dog clip.

SEVENTH AIM

The seventh aim of the Trust is to encourage research projects, such as those relating to the veterinary care of parrots. The Trust has, for example, contributed towards research into PDD (proventricular dilatation disease).

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

I would now like to describe some of the conservation projects with which the Trust has been involved.

The very first project concerned the Hyacinthine Macaw. We helped to fund research into its breeding biology in the Pantanal of Brazil, also to provide artificial nest-boxes. Nest sites for this, the largest of all parrots, are in short supply. It is believed that only 3,000 to 5,000 Hyacinthines remain in the wild. In the 1970s their numbers were decimated by trapping. Now the unique fauna and flora of the Pantanal is under threat from illegal hunting, mining, expanding agriculture and water pollution (see February 1997 issue of *PsittaScene*). Fortunately, there is another population of the Hyacinthine Macaw outside the Pantanal, in the state of Piaui, in north-eastern Brazil. Ten years ago Charles Munn, a trustee of WPT-USA, met a trapper there who was regularly removing young from nests in cliffs.

At the time no funds were available to provide an incentive for him to stop this. However, in 1994 he stopped dealing in macaws after one of his associates was imprisoned for wildlife smuggling. In 1995 funds were available for Charles Munn to travel to Brazil to meet the former trapper. The outcome was that he agreed to take Munn to the remote location in southern Piaui where he had been trapping. Munn was amazed to find an untouched area of perhaps 30,000 acres of totally intact dry forest (cerrado) filled with the low palms on which the macaws feed. In addition, there were more than 100 Hyacinthine nests in a 112 km (70 mile) long stretch of cliff. It is extremely good news for this species. The outcome was that the former trapper is now being paid to protect nests, not to rob them. Fortunately, he is a man of great influence in the area; his new conservation goals are the source of much interest and are making other people aware of the importance of conserving the macaws. This project is quite expensive as in order to compensate for the loss of income, supporting organisations have agreed to pay families in the area for tractor services, so that they can plant more crops. For example, the extra rice crop of 1996 meant that they did not have to buy any rice for nine months. This is extremely important for such poor people. Now a wage is paid to the former trapper and his two assistants, as well as the cost of patrolling a large area to ensure that no trapping is occurring. WPT and WPT-USA are two of the organisations which are helping to pay their wages and expenses. The latest project there is tourism. This year the first group of Hyacinthine enthusiasts will visit the region, with the former trapper as a guide. He has managed to manipulate up to 60 wild macaws to spend hours each day in two or three trees and hopes to be able to show these birds (and others) to the tourists.

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.

THE 'PARROT BUSES'

Our early projects included a unique method of conservation education: the conservation bus. On small islands this is a good way of spreading the message and of obtaining the interest of children. Each bus was painted externally with a rainforest scene which featured the appropriate parrot species. Inside there were interactive displays which emphasised the importance of conserving the rainforest and its parrots. Their destinations were the islands of St Vincent, St Lucia and Dominica, all of which have endangered Amazon parrots. A fourth bus was created in Paraguay.

ECHO PARAKEET

To date the Trust has raised over $1 million which has been used to initiate and support conservation and welfare projects in 19 countries for 23 parrot species. One of our most important projects has been with the Echo Parakeet *Psittacula eques* of Mauritius. When the Trust began to support this species in 1990, it was the least numerous parrot in existence, with only about 15 individuals. It was on the brink of extinction, with only three known females. There were no birds in captivity. Today there is an aviary population of about 30 birds and a total population of 85 to 90 birds. This includes 13 known pairs in the wild. Last year was the best breeding season since the project began. From 20 eggs laid in the wild, 18 chicks hatched.

Last year WPT UK provided funds of £10,000, and WPT-USA donated $6,000 which was used to fund an additional field worker. Our friends at IAS (International Aviculturists Society) donated $4000. This brought the field team up to five people, for the first time ever, which resulted in the location of new nests. It is vitally important to monitor all nests in the wild, because of the dangers to chicks from predators, and even injuries inflicted by introduced mynahs.

Another problem was that of poor weight gains of chicks, perhaps due to failure of the food supply, due to very dry weather. The field workers weighed the chicks daily and removed any which were in danger of dying. Thus ten chicks had to be removed for hand-rearing. Including chicks which were hatched in the aviary, a total of 18 chicks were reared. This far exceeds any previous years and indicates that, at last, there is very good reason for optimism regarding the future of the Echo Parakeet. If the 1997 breeding season is equally productive, there will be no doubt that this is the world's most successful parrot conservation programme.

I have to admit that a few years ago I felt that there was little chance for the survival of this parakeet. I am very glad to have been proved wrong. In 1980 the Parrot Working Group of ICBP (now BirdLife International) recommended that all the few surviving birds should be caught and taken into captivity. The population was declining so quickly it was feared that the Echo Parakeet would soon be extinct. Fortunately, it proved impossible to catch the birds. I say fortunately because there were unexpected problems with the first captive-hatched birds, mainly concerning the diet, and had this recommendation been implemented, the species would probably be extinct now. Credit must go to Carl Jones and his team,

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working with the Mauritius Wildlife Fund, for reversing the near catastrophic decline. This year there are plans for the first time to release into the wild Echo Parakeets which have been reared in the aviaries.

AUSTRALIA

The Trust does not have projects only in developing countries. There are two in Australia, the first of which commenced in 1991. We have helped to sustain an isolated population of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii* of the sub-species *graptogyne*. It is found only in south-western Victoria and adjacent south-east South Australia, where its habitat is now fragmented and threatened. Only 500 to 1,000 birds remain, and they are declining due to the loss of nesting trees and the stringybark trees *Eucalyptus baxteri* on which they feed. The Trust met half the cost of the conservation programme. All the few known nest sites are on private property; there is liaison with these property owners to protect nest trees and potential nest sites. This is most important as many of the cockatoos never have an opportunity to breed, due to lack of nest holes. However, the good news is that nestboxes have been erected and these are being used. Much data has now been compiled on the breeding requirements of this cockatoo.

PALM COCKATOO

Our next project in Australia will focus on the Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus* whose natural history is little known. A three year study is planned. It includes comparative studies in New Guinea, at the Crater Mountain research station of the Wildlife Conservation Society and New York Zoological Society. The Palm Cockatoo is not currently threatened with extinction but because all its populations are in areas where great changes have occurred, research is needed to discover how it is coping with these changes. For example, in Australia, changes in fire regime may be affecting nest site availability. At Iron Range, Cape York Peninsula, in 1990 at least nine out of 33 marked nests were destroyed by fire. Recommendations will be made to promote the Palm Cockatoo's conservation throughout its range. The Australian population is probably genetically isolated from that in New Guinea - and this aspect will also be investigated.

The Trust is helping to fund work on another large parrot which is well known to aviculturists - Buffon's Macaw *Ara ambigua*. Its numbers have declined greatly due to trapping and deforestation. Last year the Trust donated $4,000 to help buy a vehicle for researchers of the RARE Center in Costa Rica. A campaign is focusing attention on this macaw and 2,000 copies of a fact sheet about it have been distributed. Nearly 700 questionnaire forms were returned by local people. Two school songs have been written about La Lapa Verde, as the macaw is known, for use when schools are visited. In addition, the macaw will be the star of a puppet show; theatre and puppets have already been constructed. A popular song has been written for local radio stations. All these measures are designed to make local people aware of the importance of protecting this large macaw.

CAPE PARROT

In South Africa, the Trust has contributed towards research on the Cape Parrot *Poicephalus robustus*. The South African form has declined greatly due to destruction of yellow-wood *Podocarpus* forests, of which only small areas remain. Biologists have explored the distribution, status and diet of this parrot. Results indicate that the South African form, described as the nominate race, is in fact a separate species. Its conservation is therefore of even greater importance.

The Trust has contributed to many other conservation projects, such as protecting the nests of Red-tailed Amazons *Amazona brasiliensis* in Brazil, and studying the Philippine Red-vented Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia* on Palawan, the only island where it survives in any numbers. In Africa, funds have been provided for a study of Grey Parrots in the Central African Republic. And the Trust has paid for Andrew Greenwood to travel to St Vincent, Mauritius and Paraguay as veterinary advisor to conservation projects. His next stop will be New Zealand where he has been invited by the government to advise on the conservation programme for the Kakapo, probably the world's most interesting and most critically endangered parrot.

PARROT ACTION PLAN

Not all the Trust's work centres around individual species' protection. In 1995 it started to prepare an international document on parrot conservation. This will form a regularly updated source of reference on the status of threatened parrots world-wide. The Parrot Action Plan draws on a worldwide team of experts to advise on the status of the many threatened species. When published by IUCN, it will be an invaluable resource for every organisation or individual seeking to help parrot conservation.

Above:Palm Cockatoo, *Probosciger aterrimus* *Photograph: Paradise Park*

FUNDING

As you can see, the work of the Trust is widespread and varied. It is limited only by financial constraints. The Trust needs more members and more donations! One of our immediate aims is to double our membership in a short period of time. By so doing we will double our ability to influence organisations and individuals whose actions affect the conservation and welfare of parrots.

I would appeal to you all to support the *World Parrot Trust*. It is worth pointing out that with the exception of the World Pheasant Association, the *World Parrot Trust* is the only bird conservation organisation founded by aviculturists. The majority of its members do keep parrots, although many of them are concerned pet bird keepers, rather than aviculturists. Many scientists and conservationists are also members.

Many parrot keepers belong to clubs, most of which have various fund-raising activities. These clubs often support charities but because not all officials have much knowledge regarding bird conservation, donations are made to other causes. If you belong to a club which does not support parrot conservation, may I suggest that you contact The *World Parrot Trust* and ask them to provide details of a specific project which needs funding. They should be able to supply colour slides relating to the project. Then prepare a short talk for members of your society to convince them to support it. There are many people who would be pleased to support parrot conservation but do not know how. You can show them!

INFLUENTIAL

Do not doubt that the Trust is influential. Since our formation we have significantly changed attitudes to parrots around the world. We have asked aviculture to "put something back" to help parrots in the wild. We have promoted the concept of "responsible aviculture" and this has been taken up by other organisations. Around the world our associates are involved in projects of many kinds, all contributing to our knowledge of these wonderful birds and our ability to protect them from the modern world. With YOUR help, we could do even more. Thank you.

Ecology and Conservation of the Blue-throated Macaw

by Giles E. Duffield and Alan J. Hesse

In August 1992, the Blue-throated macaw *Ara glaucogularis* was rediscovered in the wild. Since its original discovery in the 1800's, this macaw had remained a mystery. The only information available on the bird came from five museum skins, observations of a few captive individuals and from reports from bird trappers. Alan Hesse and Giles Duffield of the Bolivian conservation organisation, Asociacion Armonia, are studying this enigmatic and highly endangered macaw within the framework of a long term conservation programme, prioritising the species' protection in the wild.

SEARCH AND DISCOVERY

A. glaucogularis is restricted to a relatively small area of forest island and savanna habitat in northern Bolivia. Studies over the last four years have confirmed its presence in the Beni Department of Amazonian Bolivia, and have established its core distribution and population status.

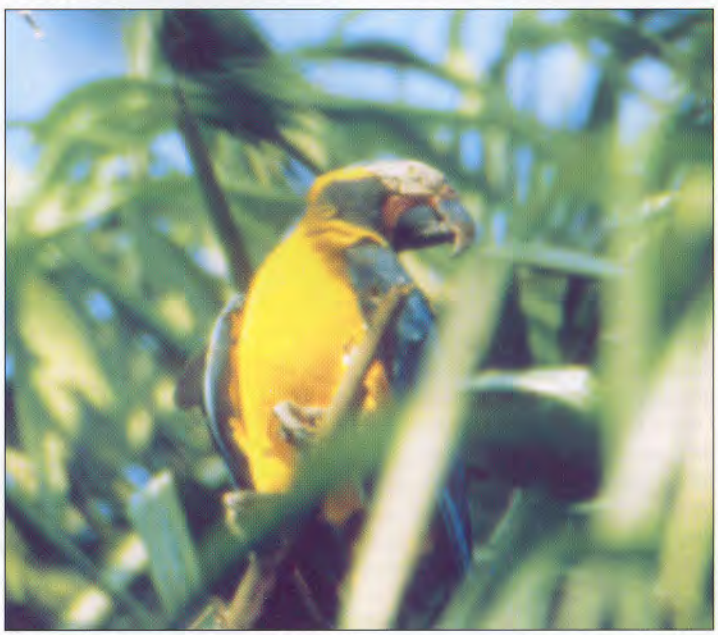
The species was "rediscovered" in 1992 by Charles Munn of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). This sighting was made to the north of the city of Trinidad and well within the area described by local macaw dealers. In contrast, the simultaneous efforts of the "University of Nottingham Bolivia Project 1992" team, which included the authors and was funded by BirdLife International and Fauna and Flora International, failed to find the species during a 10 week period in the Beni Biosphere Reserve, located 180 km to the west of the macaws' currently established range.

With the help of his local guide, Munn immediately started a small scale experimental nest programme in the then only known locality. The resident macaws were guarded and encouraged to dig nest holes by having the work started for them.

DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION

It is from macaw trappers' reports provided in the early 1980's that A. glaucogularis was known to be distributed in northern Bolivia, specifically in the southern half of the Beni Department and in the north-western area of the Santa Cruz Department. However, some of these have been attributed to its confusion with the Blue-and-yellow macaw, Ara ararauna. Infact, searches in southern Bolivia by Dirk Lanning in 1982 failed to reveal the presence of either species of macaw.

Now that several locations for A. glaucogularis have been discovered, the opportunity to undertake fieldwork to more accurately assess the macaw's distribution and population density has begun. The timing of Munn's re-discovery coincided with the foundation of Asociacion Armonia, now the BirdLife International Partner Organisation for Bolivia. In 1993 Armonia began to undertake an exhaustive survey of the existing A. glaucogularis population in several potential locations in the Beni Department. Headed by Alan Hesse and funded by WCS, these included the original site discovered by Munn and four additional sites discovered to the north-east and south of Trinidad, the capital of the Beni Department. It became evident that *A. glaucogularis* appeared to be dangerously low in density and extremely patchily distributed within a relatively confined area. Alarmingly, current estimates indicate that there may be no more than 100 birds distributed over 15,000 square km.



Above: Blue-throated Macaw in Motacu palm. *Photograph: G. Duffield*

This figure is very different from the general estimation provided by interviews with bird exporters in the early 1980's that suggested a total population of between 500 and 1,000. If this new figure is anywhere near correct, we are indeed justified in our fears for the species' survival.

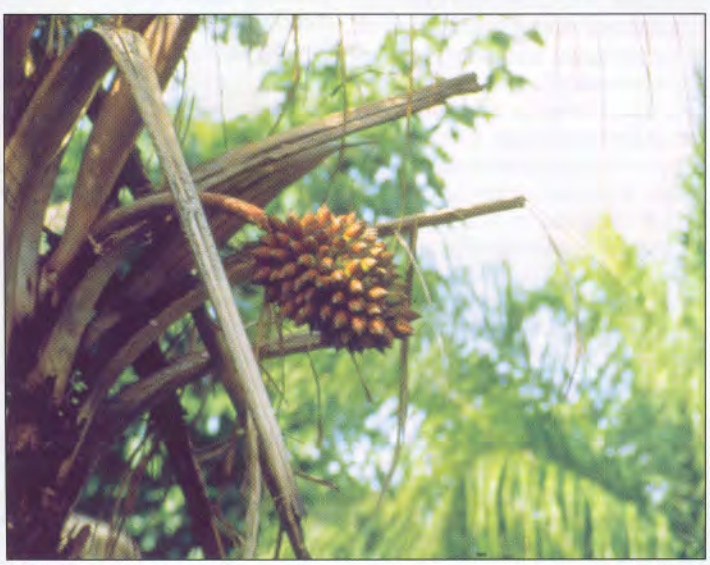
HABITAT

A. glaucogularis' favoured habitat lies within humid lowlands at an elevation of 200 to 300 m. Contrary to earlier supposition that A. glaucogularis frequents gallery forest, field observations to date suggest that this information is incorrect and this might be explained by confusion with A. ararauna, which inhabits gallery forest as well as open land. The limited data gathered so far suggest that *A. glaucogularis* inhabits more open terrain. All locations so far discovered have been in seasonally flooded savanna, in which are scattered patches of forest distributed unevenly in ribbons and islands of varying size. These islands tend to be dominated by the locally abundant "Motacu" *Attalea princeps* and "Totai" palms. They also contain tall deciduous trees including "Tajibo"(*Tabebuia impetiginosa*). The surrounding savanna is typically scattered with the widespread Copernicia alba palms.

Contrary to previous belief, the habitat of *A. glaucogularis* does not necessarily have to be remote from human presence. Macaws have been observed in the immediate vicinity of inhabited human settlements. Nevertheless, there is a very low human population in these areas, typically 2 people per square km. There are very few roads in the zone corresponding to *A. glaucogularis*' known distribution. It is noteworthy that this habitat, which includes large tracts of wetlands, also supports considerable biodiversity, with abundant avifauna and mammal species. It is important to resident and migratory bird species and to several threatened species of mammal, including the Giant anteater, Marsh deer and Pink river dolphin.

ECOLOGY

Interactions With Other Macaw



Above: Fruit of Motacu palm. *Photograph: G. Duffield*

Species: *A. glaucogularis* also shares its habitat with other species of macaw, namely *A. ararauna*, the Red and green macaw *Ara chloroptera*, and the smaller Chestnut-fronted *Ara severa*, and Golden-collared *Ara auricollis* macaws. According to reports from trappers, A. glaucogularis travels in pairs and occasionally in small flocks of up to 5 individuals, but is never seen in large flocks like those of *A. ararauna*. *A. glaucogularis* had been seen to occasionally mix with *A. ararauna*. Observations in the field confirm these reports, and we can speculate that a mixing of birds in flight could suggest communal roosting with *A. ararauna*.

DIET

Reports from bird trappers had indicated that *A. glaucogularis* feeds mainly on palm nuts and this has been substantiated by observations in the field. Munn reported the macaw feeding on the fruits of the palms *Attalea phalerata* and *Acrocomia aculeata*. Furthermore, we have indirect evidence from remains of discarded palm nuts that the macaw feeds on the fruit of Motacu *Attalea princeps*, which appears to be the most dominant palm in the macaw's preferred habitat.

REPRODUCTION

Trappers reports and limited field observations shows A. glaucogularis nesting in tree cavities from November to March and raising up to two young. Interestingly, all previously observed nest sites have been in palm trees, namely *Acrocomia aculeata* and *Attalea phalerata*, but in November 1996 we observed for the first time a pair of *A. glaucogularis* nesting in a hollow in a live deciduous tree probably of the genus *Calycophyllum*.While observations in the wild have been limited, captive breeding has been very informative. The incubation period for *A. glaucogularis* is 26-28 days, newly hatched chicks weigh about 18 g, the young leave the nest 90-94 days after hatching, and the clutch size is two to three eggs. It has been reported that *A. glaucogularis* breed very effectively in captivity, matching the breeding success of *A. ararauna*. This does pose several questions regarding the low density of *A. glaucogularis* in the wild in contrast to the high density of *A. ararauna*. In fact, in the wild *A. glaucogularis* is outnumbered by *A. ararauna* by a factor of twenty.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

Bird-Trade: The Blue-throated macaw is considered a threatened species because it has a small population and it has been exploited by the cage-bird trade. It has been reported that the gross international trade in *A. glaucogularis* between 1981 and 1992 was 390 birds, the majority of these having been exported between 1981 and 1984. *A. glaucogularis* was placed on Appendix I of CITES in 1983 thereby prohibiting all international trade. Furthermore, exportation of live animals from Bolivia was banned in 1984, and in 1986 this was supported by Supreme Decree that extended the ban indefinitely. Therefore, in recent years the pressure of the captive bird trade on the macaw has become significantly reduced. However, it has not entirely vanished. There is still a flow of illegally exported macaws between Bolivia and neighbouring countries, and Armonia is aware of active traders interested in *A. glaucogularis*. Thus, the threat of the bird trade is always present. In fact, as recently as December 1996, six captive, but wild bred, *A. glaucogularis* vanished from Santa Cruz Zoo in Bolivia. With the help of the Bolivian Government, Armonia is in the process of unveiling a major trafficking route which has been sporadically active over the last decade.

COMPETITION

It is possible that the low population size of *A. glaucogularis in* the wild is as a direct consequence of competition with other macaw species for nesting sites and food resources. *A. ararauna* appears to be the major culprit, since it represents overwhelmingly the more dominant macaw population in the region. The fact that *A. ararauna* is a larger species also supports this claim. For example, captively bred *A. ararauna* have an average weight of 1000 g as opposed to 750 g for *A. glaucogularis*. In contests for access to limited resources it is likely that the larger macaw would win.

LOCAL ECONOMY

All *A. glaucogularis* discovered so far are located on private land used for cattle ranching. The macaws are potentially threatened by two activities associated with the local industry and human activity. Clearance of trees, both directly, or as a consequence of the annual burning of the savanna provides more fertile land for cattle grazing. This unfortunately removes potential nest sites in palm trees for macaws to breed in and possibly limits food availability normally provided by fruiting palms.

The Armonia team speaking to local people about the need to protect the Blue-throated Macaw. *Photograph: G. Duffield*

Furthermore, the cattle have a direct destructive effect on the forest island habitat. They trample on and feed on vulnerable undergrowth plants, thus reducing the plant diversity and rejuvenation of forest islands that were once impenetrable with lush vegetation.

PEOPLE

Many of the above mentioned threats and potential threats are as a general consequence of human activity. Until Armonia's efforts to develop a working relationship with the land-owners becomes a firmly established reality, the area remains an unprotected zone. This unfortunately leaves the future use of this land and the protection of *A. glaucogularis* unclear. However, recent contact with the Federation of Cattle Ranchers of the Beni Department has been fruitful, having recently declared their full support in writing for the *A. glaucogularis* project. Since the very beginning of the project, Armonia have taken the essential approach of reducing the macaws vulnerability through education. We believe that the guardianship of *A. glaucogularis* ultimately lies with the local people.We have promoted awareness through informal talks to school children and farm personnel, supplemented by small donations of classroom materials to a chosen rural community.

It is the intention of Armonia to use these close links with local people and sympathetic landowners to set up a sort of 'vigilante network' to deter the activity of macaw trappers.

THE FUTURE

Now that we know our educational approach works with local people and since we have received a favourable reaction from the Federation of Cattle Ranchers, the objectives for the future are to continue the educational programme wherever the macaws are located. In parallel to the protection of *A. glaucogularis* in its natural habitat, there must also be heightened vigilance at an international level to curb the illegal trafficking of this species.

Whilst the active protection of the macaw is a priority, scientific investigation must continue with the distribution and population census to expand into the first behavioural ecology investigation of *A. glaucogularis*. Further funding is being sought.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Giles Duffield is a final year Ph.D. student at the Department of Anatomy, University of Cambridge and U.K. Representative for Asociacion Armonia. Alan Hesse is the Vice-President of Asociacion Armonia and project coordinator for its Ara glaucogularis research programme. Both studied Zoology together at Nottingham University and were members of an expedition in 1992 that focused on locating A. glaucogularis in the wild. They have both been actively involved in Bolivian avifaunal conservation and research ever since.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & LETTERS

UK

FUND RAISING SUCCESS AT STAPELEY WATER GARDENS

Only four parrots live at The Palms Tropical Oasis at Stapeley Water Gardens near Nantwich in Cheshire, but their personalities have captivated their visitors for years.

Jaffa and Jasmine, the blue and gold Macaws, and Fred and Ginger, the somewhat smaller though none the less demanding White-fronted Amazon Parrots are now justifiably proud, since they have helped to raise a total in excess of £5000 for The World Parrot Trust.

Stapeley began fund raising for the Trust four years ago after the introduction of their colourful information boards. Their education officer, Valda Fillery and two full-time keepers, Mike Bentley and Emma Beran, have worked closely together ever since to ensure that not just their birds, but all their many and varied displays, are used to maximum advantage to intrigue each and every one of their visitors. "Their response to displays-such as the one illustrating the work of the World Parrot Trust makes all our efforts worthwhile, and we always ensure that we keep them updated on how their money is being used!".

Andrew Greenwood, World Parrot Trust Trustee, recently visited The Palms in order to carry out an inspection to renew their zoo license. Valda asked if he would be willing to accept this cheque on behalf of The Trust while he was there so that they could promote the Trust in the local press. -He is pictured here, with Fred and Ginger who as usual stole the show!

Above: Andrew Greenwood receives a large cheque from Valda Fillery.

PERU

In South America, a number of species new to science have been discovered in recent years. They have tended to be relatively inconspicuous birds, overlooked by ornithologists in the localities. But last summer, an amazing "new" species, a brightly coloured Barbet, was found in an isolated rainforest in eastern Peru. The discovery was made by John O'Neill from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This extraordinary ornithologist has now chalked up a total of 13 birds new to science, found by him and his associates in Peru. John is also an outstanding bird artist whose work is known world-wide. His painting of the new Barbet shows a very handsome bird, with red head and nape, a red crescent above the yellow underparts, white eye stripe, black upperparts and white throat. Why had such a colourful species remained unknown for so long? Because it inhabits the top of a cloud-forested mountain where few have gone before.

In a recent letter, John O'Neill described the wealth of parrots in the area. There were small flocks of Spot-winged Parrotlets *Touit stictoptera* and one of the red-fronted sub-species of the Painted Conure *Pyrrhura picta* was common. He was amazed "by the sheer numbers of Canary-winged Parakeets. There may never have been many trappers up the Cushabatay river - and now that exports are almost non-existent, these small birds probably build up their populations quickly. One roost in a cane thicket held more than 10,000 birds, with a thousand or so White-eyed Conures *Aratinga leucophthalmus* and a smattering of Dusky-headed Conures *Aratinga weddellii*. I almost forgot; a thousand or so Cobalt-winged Parakeets *Brotogeris cyanoptera*. Quite a scene!"

It is good to know there is one place left in the Neotropics which is untouched by man, where parrots are as abundant as they were in years gone by.

USA

PARROT SMUGGLER GUILTY PLEA

William A. Keefer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and Kevin Adams, Special Agent in Charge, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, announce that Adolph "Buzz" Pare, 63 of Miami, Florida, doing business as "Gators of Miami, Inc.", pleaded guilty on April 29th 1997 to two counts of an indictment charging him with conspiring to illegally smuggle African grey parrots into the United States and to defraud the United States Fish & Wildlife Service by filing false importation documents on twelve different shipments of parrots, in violation of the Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec 3372(d); and the smuggling statute, 18 U.S.C. Sec. 545. The defendant also pleaded guilty to one count of making and submitting a false record for a shipment of 600 parrots in violation of the Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec, 3372(d)(1). In a plea agreement filed today, Pare agreed to pay fines and restitution totalling $300,000; the largest sum ever in a federal wildlife smuggling case in the United States. The defendant faces a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and up to $250,000.00 in fines on each of the two counts when sentenced on July 10, 1997 at 9.30 a.m.

According to the Indictment and public documents, "Gators of Miami Inc." was the nation's largest importer of African Grey parrots during 1988, 1989 and 1990, having imported approximately 24% of all such birds. Between February 1988 and August 1991, the defendant, doing business as "Gators of Miami, Inc."., conspired to smuggle into Miami approximately fourteen shipments of over 4,000 "Congo" African Grey parrots which had been illegally taken from their wild habitat in Zaire, where the commercial trade in grey parrots had been completely banned.

These particular parrots were smuggled from Zaire to the laundering country of Senegal, and then exported using false CITES export documents to the United States. The CITES export documents falsely stated that the parrots originated in Guinea or the Ivory Coast.

GERMANY

The seventh annual meeting for parrot enthusiasts organised by Dr Peter Wüst took place on April 26. The place was Bietigheim and the theme was endangered species. The day was highly successful for two reasons: the excellence of all the speakers and the good organisation. Dieter Schraps paid particular attention to the Horned Parakeet *Eunymphicus cornutus* of New Caledonia. Dozens of nest-boxes have been erected and their use has resulted in greatly increased breeding success. But due to the popularity of this species as a pet, many young birds are removed from nests.

Rosemary Low followed, by describing the works and the aims of the World Parrot Trust. Thomas Mangold described the terrible toll of the parrots of Seram as a result of trapping. He has visited the island on ten occasions. Despite being

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placed on Appendix 1 of CITES, the Moluccan Cockatoo has almost been reduced to extinction. Trade continues unabated, with birds going to Hong Kong and China. The stress involved in trapping wild-caught cockatoos can only be described as terrible. The habitat survives but the cockatoos have almost gone. J.Hartl discussed a more encouraging aspect of cockatoos: increased breeding success with the use of infrared cameras in nest-boxes. These nervous birds previously broke their eggs or killed their young as the result of nest inspection. Now that nest inspection does not occur they rear their own young. Video taken in the nest showed a Triton with three chicks; all fledged. Mr Hartl emphasised that currently the market is flooded with hand-reared birds but eventually parent-reared cockatoos will be considered precious and their prices will rise.

The embryonic development of parrot eggs was the subject of a fascinating lecture by Professor Dr Helga Gerlach. She helped everyone to understand some of the reasons for embryo mortality. These include nicotine on the eggshell - so smokers take note. Veterinarian Frederick Janeczek gave a detailed account of hand-rearing. He concluded by saying that even pet parrots need the companionship of their own species. More consideration should be given to buying two pets. Finally, Dr Rosina Sonnenschmidt spoke on homeopathic cures for parrots, especially those which pluck themselves. She warned that psychological problems with hand-reared parrots will increase during the next 20 to 30 years because so few people understand parrots, especially the demands of those which have been hand-reared.

A Dutch auction during the evening raised funds for conservation. The proceeds were generously donated to the World Parrot Trust. Dr Wüst also made a personal contribution. The Trust acknowledges with thanks the generosity of everyone who donated.

CANADA

This year the *Canadian World Parrot* Trust continues its funding contributions to the **Cuban Parakeet and Parrot Project** administered by Drs. Rosemarie Gnam and Jim Wiley. The objectives for 1997 are:

a) To determine the Cuban Parakeet and Cuban Parrot's status and distribution in Cuba and the Islade la Juventud,

b) To characterise habitat of the parakeet and parrot, including breeding, feeding and roosting habits;

c) To determine their diet and foraging ecology;

d) To investigate the species' breeding biology;

e) To examine the general ecology of the parakeet and parrot, with emphasis on interactions with competitors, predators, & parasites;

f) To determine causes of the parakeet's decline, from which a strategy for its conservation can be developed;

g) To train local scientists and field staff in techniques used in investigating threatened species.

This is a three-year project and this year they are expanding their efforts to the east-central and easternmost (Oriente province) parts of the main island of Cuba.This also reflects a shift towards more intensive work on the parakeet populations, which are more common in the eastern part of the island.

CANADIAN PARROT SYMPOSIUM

The 8th Canadian Parrot Symposium is being held November 8-9, 1997 at the Toronto Airport Hilton Hotel, 5875 Airport Road, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

Topicis include: Husbandry - Avian Medicine - Housing - Behaviour - Conservation - Nutrition - Nursery Management. Further information from Jacquie Blackburn,Canadian Parrot Symposium, 108 Meadowvale Road, West Hill, Ontario, Canada M1C 1S1: Phone 416-282-7375 Fax: 416-282-8995

SPECIAL THANKS

The Canadian World Parrot Trust would like to extend a special thank you to **Mark Hagen** of the Hagen Avicultural Research Institute (HARI), and the Rolph C. Hagen Company who generously donated over $2,000 to the Canadian World Parrot Trust at the 1996 Canadian Parrot Symposium. **Mark Hagen** also made a generous personal donation of $1,000 to the Catherine Soos/Laurel Neufeld, Bolivia/Peru project in 1996. Many thanks to Mark, HARI and the Hagen Company for their continued support of the *World Parrot Trust.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESPONSIBLE AVICULTURE

I would like to comment on the statement "Responsible Aviculture" in the February 1997 issue of *PsittaScene*. It is correct to say that it is no longer acceptable to take birds from the wild. We breed enough in this country for the pet trade and for breeding. At the present time there are too many birds; breeders cannot sell their 1996 young into caring pet homes or to responsible breeders. Yes!-You can sell to dealers but that is NOT responsible aviculture.

Many parrots are "factory-farmed". Every egg is taken from the time it is laid, causing emotional distress to the birds. While there is money to be made, there will be factory farming, unless laws are brought in to improve the conditions under which birds are kept. It should be made illegal to clip the wings of young birds. There is so much cruelty involved in this practice. When birds begin to pluck themselves, wing clipping is often at the root of the problem. In over 20 years of keeping parrots I have restricted flight only to stop aggression in male parrots kept in an aviary. I believe there needs to be more awareness about the effect of wing-clipping. The subject needs a lot of publicity - perhaps even a campaign.

The need to rescue or re-home birds is another serious problem. It will get worse, as it has become fashionable to keep a parrot as a pet. Many parrots are bought on impulse. There are some people setting themselves up as "rescuers" but, sadly for the parrots, this may be a means of making money. Not everyone is aware that birds which have been pets cannot always adjust to aviary life. Every bird must be assessed individually. This takes time, a lot of tender, loving care and experience.

Pam Fryer, Cornwall, UK

IT'S A WEIRD WORLD

Thank you for your fine magazine. I have tried to recruit some new members and have given them my copies of *PsittaScene*. It was nice to have the good news about the Echo Parakeet but I became quite depressed reading about the Lear's Macaws found at Paris Airport. It's a weird world when billions of dollars are spent on destructive weapons but it is hard to raise funds to obtain just one vehicle to protect one of the rarest birds on earth.

Bjorn Ulander, Sweden.

TROPICAL BIRD RESCUE

This is to acknowledge and thank World Parrot Trust, USA for its generous contribution to the Tropical Rainforest Coalition's Tropical Bird Rescue Program. Your generous grant of $500.00 will allow the program the financial support necessary to ensure that our mission of finding suitable foster care that will allow the individual birds to thrive will be successful.

Some of our accomplishments during the past year have been to select and train prospective foster owners; offer a tax deductible donation alternative for birds in need; gather support from the industry and to continue to educate the community with our mission. Our emphasis is to ensure the birds are placed in environments that will allow them to thrive. All of our 10 placements have been a great success, for both the birds and the caretakers.

One such success is *Bogie*, a Double Yellow-headed Amazon who came to us from an abusive home where a darkened room, poor diet and neglect were part of his daily life. Today, he is a loving member of the Werth family. Maria Worth was quite taken with *Bogie*, and embraced the challenge to nurture him back to good health and into an interactive relationship. After only two weeks in Maria's home, *Bogie* had gained strength, taken to his new diet and was even speaking with Maria's Swedish accent. Maria is now an advocate of our program and takes part in our training classes.

This is exactly the type of scenario that our program is striving for. With your continued support, we can continue our efforts.

At this time we are ready to begin our third series of orientation and training programs for foster parents. We have already placed the initial birds into selected homes and have many more waiting in the wings. As soon as training is completed, we can continue the placement of the second set of 10 birds.

Your gift will be acknowledged on our Internet homepage at "www.parrots.org" as a sponsor. Again, our many thanks for your generous donation and for all you do.

Fern Van Sant, DVM, USA

ACTION PAGE

New Opportunity for USA Members

Alan Lurie, Connecticut,
Layne David Dicker, California
Co-ordinators of the Active Members Group,
World Parrot Trust - USA

Dear US Member,

Re: World Parrot Trust - USA Active Members Group

On behalf of the trustees of *World Parrot Trust, USA*, we would like to invite you to join the *WPT-USA* Active Members Group (AMG). We are a group of dedicated *WPT* members who have been asked to expand the activities of the Trust in the United States.

The goals of the AMG will be to increase membership, corporate sponsorship, contributions and volunteerism within the *WPT-USA*. Both to this end, as well as of and by itself, it is also important that we increase people's awareness of the plight of all parrots and seek to improve their conditions not just in the wild but in breeding, home and retail situations. How we are to do this is essentially up to us. Mike Reynolds and the remainder of the *WPT* board will be involved in our activities but recognise the unique nature of our commitment, abilities and understanding of the workings of American aviculture. Accordingly, our suggestions and decisions will carry great weight with respect to the working of the Trust in this country.

Mike has asked us (Alan and Layne) to get the ball rolling. So, here's what we had in mind:

1. If you are willing and able to help, please contact one of us with the following information:
   a) The extent to which you would like to be involved and the areas in which you feel that you could be most helpful,
   b) some of the ways that we could pursue our goals, and
   c) the names and telephone numbers of others that might be interested in participating. We would like for participation in the AMG to be open to all members who would like to give "a little extra" in the way of time and commitment.

2. A short term plan would be formed for the purposes of establishing the AMG as a viable entity by deciding on our initial "activities" and preparing an insert letter for the next *PsittaScene* (August 1997). This would be directed at all US members to announce our formation, describe these initial activities and invite further participation. Please feel free to suggest other inclusions in this letter.

3. One of the initial ideas we are discussing would be for the *WPT-USA* members to "adopt" a certain project, the Blue throated or Buffons macaw for instance, and devote all membership and other proceeds towards its goals. It would be as if we were a team within a team, working toward a very focused objective.

4. Once we are established, we plan to launch a twice yearly newsletter for *WPT-USA* members.

In essence, we must find a way to convince many, many more parrot owners and breeders to assume their mandatory responsibilities to all parrots, and to educate them on what we know to be the essential truth: that our companion birds are direct descendants of and ambassadors for the parrots in the wild and that parrots in the wild are among the most severely threatened species on the planet. Given that participation in aviculture is a privilege, it becomes everyone's obligation not only to do the best job we possibly can for captive birds, but also step up to the plate and help out with those birds that are left in the wild. This is the message we must get across.

We very much look forward to being a part of this group, its inevitable productivity and enthusiasm, and to its positive impact on the lives and environments of parrots throughout the world. Thank you in advance for your vision, your wisdom and your efforts and we look forward to hearing from many US members in the immediate future.

Sincerely,

Alan Lurie, Layne David Dicker

Contacts:
Alan Lurie: 94 Wright Drive, Avon, CT 06001.
Phone/Fax: 860-676-8610. email mmacaw@worldnet.att.net
Layne Dicker: 16414 Tuba St., North Hills, CA 91343.
Phone 818-893-4495. Fax: 818-893-1552 (call phone first). .email ldicker@mail.idt.net
Cynthia Webb, WPT USA Administrator: PO Box 341141, Memphis, TN 38184
Phone/Fax: 901-873-3616. email cwebb@wspl.wspice.com

If members in other countries want to set up similar groups, please contact Judith Venning, Administrator at World Parrot Trust, UK.

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!

World Parrot Trust

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 ☐

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

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO 'WORLD PARROT TRUST' AT:-

UNITED KINGDOM
Glanmor House, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4HY

USA
Cynthia Webb, PO Box 341141, Memphis TN 38184

BENELUX
Romain Bejstrup, R. Bejstrup, Boomgaardstraat 76, B2070, Zwijndrecht, Belgium

CANADA
Mike Pearson, PO Box 29, Mount Hope, Ontario LOR 1WO

DENMARK (SCANDINAVIA)
M Iversen, Alsikemarken 48, 2860 Soborg.

FRANCE
J & G Prin, 55 Rue de la Fassiere, 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.

PARROTS IN THE WILD

KAKAPO
Strigops Habroptilus

On April 12 1997 on Codfish Island, Don Merton took this historic picture of a female Kakapo feeding her 12 day old chick. At 2 a.m. he obtained the picture he waited so long for. The first and only other breeding attempt on Codfish occured in 1992 when at least four females laid. Three hatched chicks. Sadly the rimu crop failed and all but one of the six chicks died. The survivor was Hoki, destined to become one of the most famous birds in the world. Prior to this season, the last chick hatched (on Little Barrier Island) in 1993. It disappeared at three days old – believed taken by rats. The Codfish Island birds are unlikely to breed again until the rimu trees mast once more – in about five years' time! The hatching of four this year gives renewed hope for the survival of this "the most wonderful, perhaps, of all birds". It also endorses the intensive efforts of Don Merton and his team who, this season, initiated new measures to ensure the survival of any chicks hatched. We will bring you the full story in the August issue of *PsittaScene.*

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