

IMPACT REPORT ISSUE

PSITTAScene

Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Autumn 2018



WORLD PARROT TRUST

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ABOUT THE WPT

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

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

Since 1989 the WPT has grown to become a global force that moves quickly to address urgent issues and support long-term projects for parrots. Over that time WPT has led or aided conservation and welfare projects in 43 countries for 70 species of parrot.

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CONTENTS



ON THE COVER

Yellow-headed Amazon
(*Amazona oratrix*)

Yellow-headed Amazons are listed as IUCN Endangered / CITES Appendix I. They are native to Mexico, Belize, Honduras, Guatemala and now...Stuttgart?

Amazingly, a small population has been living in southwest Germany for more than 30 years.

See *Wild Parrots of... Germany*, Page 8.

Photo © Bianca Hahn



SPECIAL FEATURE ISSUE

2017/18 Impact Report

Please enjoy this tribute insert with our thanks to you - our valued supporters.

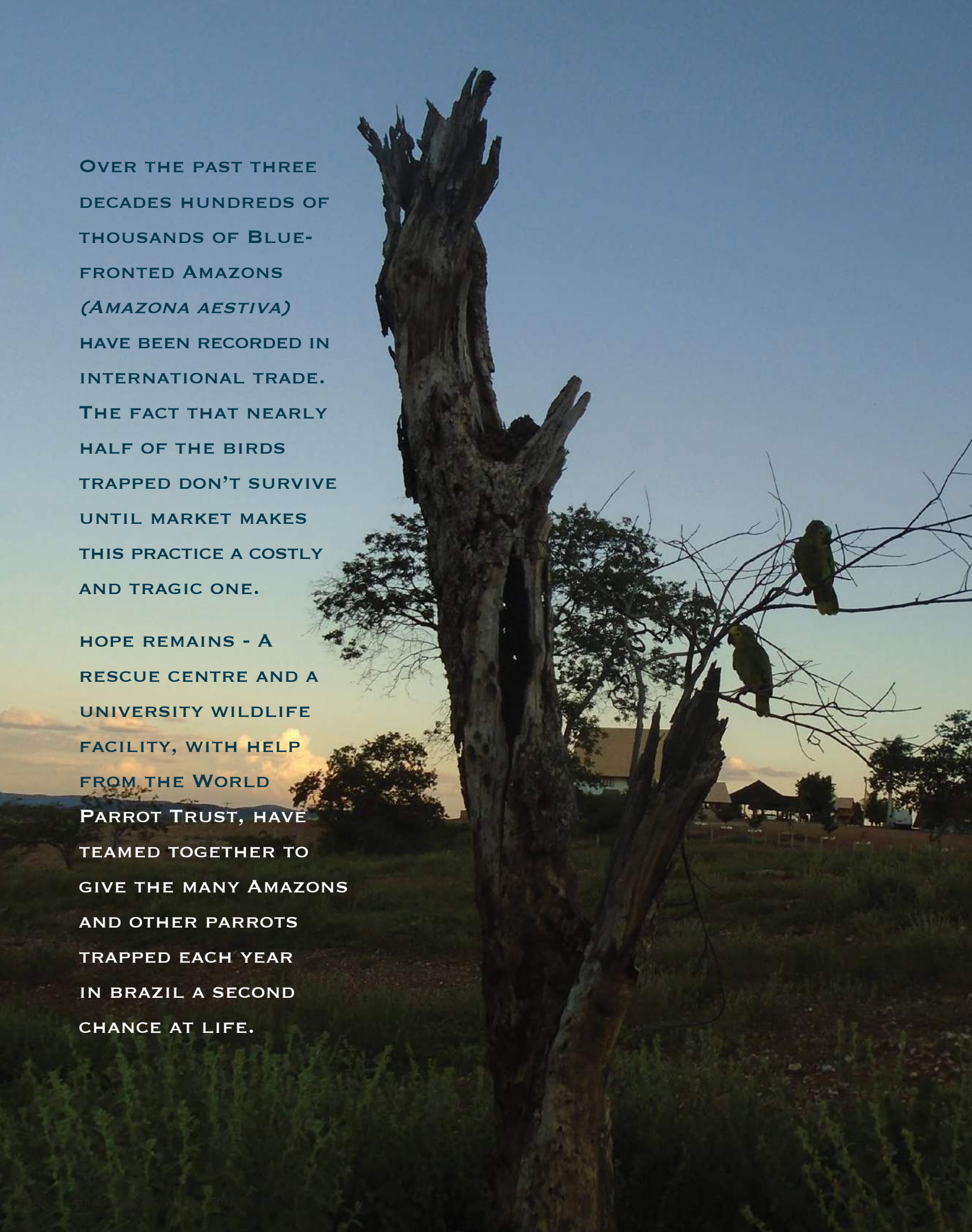
This past year, parrots have been rescued, wild populations conserved and habitat restored, all of which you helped to achieve.

Find it on Page 13.

Scarlet Macaw Cover Photo © Corey Raffel

- 4** **Second Chances**
In the Caatinga
- 8** **Wild Parrots of...**
Germany?
- 12** **Book Review:**
A Parrot's Fine Cuisine Cookbook
- 13** **2017/18 Impact Report**
Special Feature
- 38** **Recovery at Río Abajo**
Status of parrots after Hurricane Maria
- 42** **Kiwa:**
The story of a Macaw Rescue
- 46** **PsittaNews**
News and Updates, WPT Contacts
- 48** **Parrots in the Wild**
Ringneck Parakeet





OVER THE PAST THREE DECADES HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF BLUE-FRONTED AMAZONS (*AMAZONA AESTIVA*) HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE. THE FACT THAT NEARLY HALF OF THE BIRDS TRAPPED DON'T SURVIVE UNTIL MARKET MAKES THIS PRACTICE A COSTLY AND TRAGIC ONE.

HOPE REMAINS - A RESCUE CENTRE AND A UNIVERSITY WILDLIFE FACILITY, WITH HELP FROM THE WORLD PARROT TRUST, HAVE TEAMED TOGETHER TO GIVE THE MANY AMAZONS AND OTHER PARROTS TRAPPED EACH YEAR IN BRAZIL A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE.

SECOND CHANCES *in the Caatinga*

Article and photos: Yuri M. Valença, MSc. Rescue Centre CETAS Tangara – CPRH
Translation by: André Becker Saldenberg

THE BLUE-FRONTED AMAZON PARROT PROJECT began out of a necessity to have an appropriate facility to send the hundreds of these birds that end up in overcrowded wildlife rescue centres in Brazil.

The project was also started to address the fact that, because of heavy trade, vast swaths of its original distribution range in the semi-arid Caatinga are now empty of birds or self-sustaining populations. Although still considered Least Concern by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) it is clear, from observations in the field, that **in many areas this so-called common bird is now extinct.**

With this in mind, the Pernambuco environmental state agency's rescue centre in northeastern Brazil (CPRH CETAS Tangara), in partnership with the wildlife centre of the Caatinga (CEMAFAUNA) at Sao Francisco University (UNIVASF), created the

project in 2010 when the first confiscated parrots were rehabilitated and released. Besides the once-ubiquitous Blue-fronts, other species like Cactus Conures (*Eupsittula cactorum*) and Blue-crowned Conures (*Psittacara acuticaudata*) are also rescued and rehabilitated. Parrots come from different sorts of backgrounds, but they are all illegally captured in the wild in Brazil, most commonly as chicks.

Large numbers of these illegally kept pets are then brought to the centre by the environmental police as confiscations, or in some cases voluntarily given up by people who understand that their pet, even though it may be a beloved one, lost the freedom that it once had and that their captive conditions are far from adequate. This presents more challenges as all of these parrots demand a long training phase, behavioural evaluation, training to fear predators, health screening, and also in the case of chicks and juveniles, a long weaning

process, to be ready for release. There are many steps involved in their rehabilitation, but it is encouraging to see that most of the birds are able to recover and thrive once they are given a second chance to live in the wild.

The work involves two stages where the birds are screened and rehabilitated at the CPRH centre's medium sized flights, and then sent to large flights (8m high x 50m long) at the CEMA FAUNA for further developing their flight muscles. We can see how many of these parrots, in particular the Blue-fronts, have been sedentary for some time. They're like people that have to start going to a gym to begin the painstaking process of losing extra weight and gaining important muscles.

The end result is that as they look much healthier and are happier once they are able to fly and interact with others. Many pairs and flocks are seen together during the training phase, groupings which result in stronger bonds and greater success for upcoming releases.

After the first rehabilitation phase, the birds are transported to their acclimation flights in a difficult 7-hour drive starting at three in the morning. There, after being selected as candidates, the banded and microchipped Amazons will stay for approximately 40 days getting used to the climate, food and surroundings. There is a lot for them to learn before they can be freed.

Spreading environmental awareness to schools and local people in the release areas is a key part of the project. In addition, we reach a wider audience in the urban centres, through the local radio station and events at the town squares. One interesting effect of our work was the renewed interest in ecotourism in the region around the town of Exu where one of the nearby release areas is located on a farm. This was helped in part by television and radio programs, as well as the local and national social network, showing efforts to bring these birds back to the wild.

AS OF THIS WRITING, 289 BLUE-FRONTED AMAZONS HAVE BEEN RELEASED SO FAR IN TWO DIFFERENT PROTECTED AREAS WHERE THE SPECIES HAD DISAPPEARED, WITH MORE AMAZONS UNDERGOING THE REHABILITATION PROCESS. ABOUT 200 STILL WAIT FOR THEIR OPPORTUNITY.

Monitoring of these birds is also an important part of the whole project, and has been showing rewarding results: With the start of the rainy season in the semi-arid region, the breeding season is underway at the second release area in Salgueiro. There we have noted very positive successes with five active nests with chicks fledging.

One particular pair chose a dead tree stump for nesting and although it was their first breeding attempt, three plump chicks were recorded during the monthly monitoring activities. As of now, they have all fledged. It's an image we hope to continue to see for years to come! 📷



(far left, inset) A mother and her three chicks hunker down in a nest

(far left) An Amazon hen peeks out and surveys the researchers

(top) Author Yuri M. Valença transports birds to a large flight training aviary

(bottom) Yuri provides supplemental food for a newly-released group

A close-up photograph of a Yellow-headed Amazon parrot perched on a branch of a snow-covered evergreen tree. The parrot has a bright yellow head and a large, pale, hooked beak. Its body is covered in vibrant green feathers with dark green horizontal stripes. The background is dark and out of focus, highlighting the parrot and the white snow on the branches.

WILD PARROTS OF...
Germany?

The Yellow-headed Amazon is an endangered parrot species native to Central America.

Amazingly, there is a small population of this parrot in Stuttgart, southwest Germany, that has been thriving for more than 30 years.

Article and photos © Bianca Hahn

IT ALL STARTED IN 1984: a Yellow-headed Amazon (*Amazona oratrix*), presumably escaped from a private person, was repeatedly spotted on the grounds of the Wilhelma Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Apparently there were some unsuccessful attempts to re-capture the Amazon and rumor has it that an animal lover took pity on the lonely bird and purchased another one and released it. The two Amazons bonded and became a couple that raised three babies together in 1986.



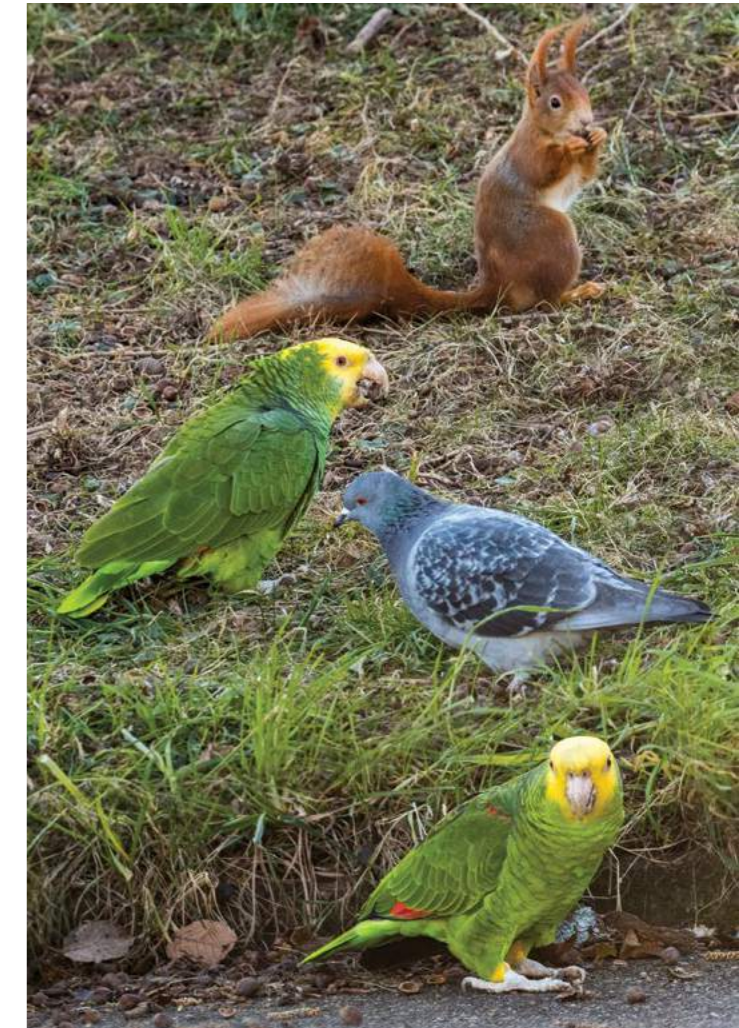
The population has been growing steadily ever since. In 1995, a total of 16 were counted and another ten years later 38. Towards the end of the 1990s, two Blue-fronted Amazons (*Amazona aestiva*) joined them. Nobody knew where they came from. One disappeared after a short while, and the other one found a partner and had offspring. Meanwhile, the population has risen to over 60 Amazons.

Nowadays, the Amazon parrot is recognized as a naturalised species in Germany, as it has been able to provide for itself independently for more than 30 years without external help and reproduce offspring over several generations. 📍

About the Author

Bianca Hahn is a professional photographer from Kornwestheim, Germany, who has a passion for the naturalised parrots of nearby Stuttgart.

Follow their antics on the Facebook page dedicated to them at: facebook.com/stuttgareramazonen.



(top left) A young Amazon dines on ornamental apples
 (top right) Youngsters about to fledge cautiously peer out of their nest
 (middle left) Two birds argue over a prime perching location
 (bottom left) An Amazon feasts on fruits from tree hazel (*Corylus colurna*)
 (bottom right) The birds forage with the locals

A Parrot's Fine Cuisine Cookbook & Nutritional Guide

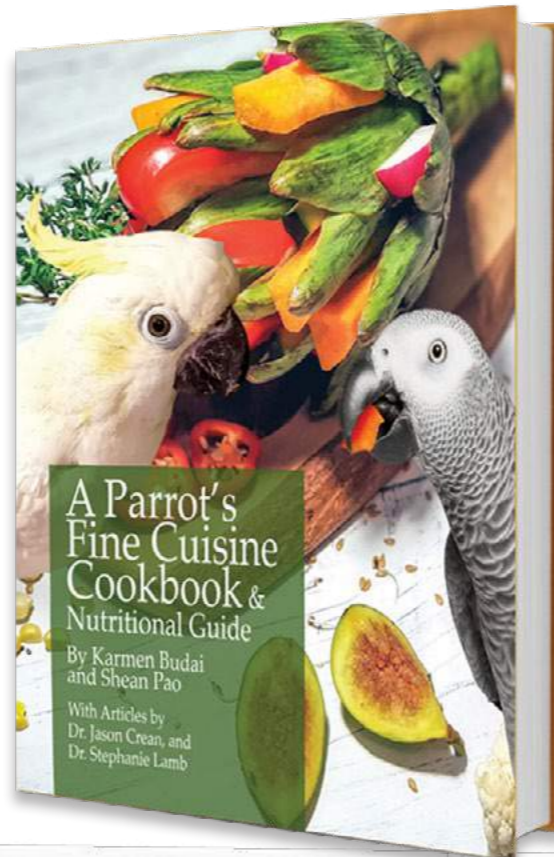
Authors: Karmen Budai, Shean Pao
 Publisher: Quietlight Productions Inc.
 ISBN: 1732320608

If you're looking for ways to create more healthy and interesting food and foraging opportunities for your parrot companions, then definitely consider including this volume in your library.

Featuring articles from leading authorities in the avian field addressing the importance of raw, whole foods, the nutritional powerhouse of soaking and sprouting, avian teas, and much more, this colourful, 122-page softcover book is brimming with tips, recipes and ideas sure to keep parrot and caregiver alike busy for days.

With over 60 recipes to excite even the pickiest of parrots — as well as a handy nutrition reference list if you want to branch out with your own creations — this well-rounded read is easily one of the most comprehensive books on parrot diets to date: from fruits to vegetables to herbs and back, the choices are endless.

Purchase your copy from Amazon.com, or through the WPT online store at parrots.org.



Parrot Booster Mash

Fresh

- 1/2 cup purple kale, chopped
- 1/3 cup red chicory, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup daikon (white) radish, diced
- Handful young spinach, chopped
- 1/2 carrot, peeled and sliced
- 1 sprig of fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 tbsp basil microgreens
- 1 tbsp cabbage microgreens
- 1/4 cup baby sweetcorn, sliced
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- 1 chili pepper, finely chopped
- 4 brussels sprouts, chopped
- 1/2 cup sweet potato, diced, lightly steamed
- 1/2 turnip, diced
- star anise pods, edible pansies to garnish

Sprouted

- 1 tbsp chickpeas
- 1 tsp each red and brown lentils

Soaked

- 1 tbsp pecans, shelled
- 1 tbsp almonds, shelled
- 1 tbsp cashews, shelled (unsalted)
- 1 tbsp buckwheat raw
- 1 tbsp milk thistle seeds (whole)
- 1 tbsp sunflower seeds
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1 tbsp natural sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp spelt grain

Dry

- 1 tbsp oats
- 1 tbsp organic coconut flakes
- 1 tsp ground flax (linseed) seeds
- 1 tbsp shelled hemp seeds
- 1 tbsp wild blueberries

Instructions

Prepare your sprouts and soaked items in advance. Chickpeas and lentils sprout fast but allow at least 2 days for the whole process, or until you see the first signs of little tails. Soak the nuts, seeds and grains for at least 8 hours prior making mash. (Sunflower seeds require only 4 hours.)

Chop up all the vegetables except the microgreens and place it all in a bowl. Meanwhile, peel and cut the sweet potato into small cubes, place them into steamer basket, and cover. Remove from steamer when tender and let it cool.

Combine ingredients together by adding the soaked items, followed by sprouts and last dry items. Mix gently, garnish with pansies and star anise.

Adjust the quantities of the ingredients as desired.

Parrot Booster Mash recipe created by Karmen Budai for the enjoyment of PsittaScene readers. Photos and content © Karmen Budai and Shean Pao. All rights reserved. Follow them on social media and the web at: www.parrotscuisine.com

Scarlet Macaw, Costa Rica
 (Ara macao)
 Photo © Corey Raffel



WORLD PARROT TRUST

IMPACT REPORT

2017/18

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[PARROTS.ORG](https://parrots.org) > ABOUT > GOVERNANCE & REPORTS



We are proud to have earned the **Gold Seal of Transparency** from GuideStar.org, an organization that gathers and distributes information about nonprofits.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to your support, we can continue to ensure parrots have ongoing protection from human and environmental threats in the wild, and receive the care and compassion they deserve to live well in captivity.

This report highlights just a few of the many successes you've helped make possible:

- Combatting trade in Africa and South America;
- Increasing wild populations of macaws in Honduras;
- Restoring and protecting habitat in Bonaire;
- Gathering new field data to help drive parrot conservation actions in Africa;
- Providing emergency aid to parrots in precarious situations in Puerto Rico and elsewhere;
- Encouraging communities to learn about and protect native cockatoos in Indonesia.

These successes – and many more – were made possible because of YOU.

As always, we're grateful we can rely on you to stand with us to protect the world's parrots.



Alison Hales,
Chairperson



Jamie Gilardi,
Executive Director

TOGETHER, FOR PARROTS

The World Parrot Trust is a wildlife conservation group dedicated to protecting parrots.

These birds belong to one of the most threatened families on Earth, with 1 in 3 species at risk of extinction.

As a leader in parrot conservation and welfare, WPT works with researchers, in-country organisations, communities, and governments to craft effective solutions that save parrots.

To date, WPT has led or supported conservation and welfare projects in 43 countries for more than 70 species of parrot.

Read a few of the many actions you made possible this past year.



MANY WAYS TO HELP STOP TRADE

Tragically, each year large numbers of wild parrots are trapped in Africa to supply global markets. Tackling this complex threat demands a multi-faceted approach, and WPT works hard on numerous fronts to end harmful trade. This year, our investigations have lifted the lid on how social media is used to promote illegal trade, and highlighted numerous opportunities to improve regulation and enforcement. We've ensured this research is published in leading journals and that it is understood by key decision-makers, and this year important decisions have been made to regulate international trade in species such as Jardine's (or Red-fronted) parrots, as well as Greys and Timnehs.

On the front-line we've continued to help parrots rescued from illegal trade, providing support for rescue centres and enforcement staff ranging from the construction of new aviaries, to the provision of veterinary care and emergency-response training for park rangers. This year WPT has supported rescued parrots in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Angola.

Wildlife care staff assess the health of a rescued parrot at the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Sierra Leone.

Inset: Rescued Grey Parrot surveys its surroundings in Angola.

Photos © Rowan Martin





BRINGING BACK THE MACAWS

Since 2011 WPT has had the unique opportunity to collaborate with Macaw Mountain Nature Park and Reserve, co-launching an effort to return free-flying Scarlet Macaws to Copán's famous Mayan archaeological park. The local government, Chamber of Commerce and Tourism of Copán, and the government of Honduras are all active supporters of the restoration effort.

Macaw Mountain has overseen the surrender of many former companion and confiscated birds to the facility and has nursed them back to full health. Other parrots have been captive-born and raised there, and after stringent pre-release tests, many of them have been set free in Copán, in the valley, and on islands off Honduras. Now, happily, several of the released macaws have started breeding and raising chicks on their own.

Macaw Mountain's close ties with and access to WPT's experience, advice, and technical and financial assistance have resulted in several successful macaw and Amazon parrot reintroduction programs throughout Honduras.

What began as a "bird park" with a strong focus on environmental education has evolved into Honduras's primary avian rescue and release facility.

~ Lloyd Davidson,
Macaw Mountain, Honduras



Released Scarlet Macaws fly at liberty over the Copán ruins in Honduras.

Photo © London Velasquez

NEW STUDIES IN AFRICA

Field activities with partners in Africa have celebrated a series of firsts: studies of Timneh parrots have seen Guinea-Bissau become the first country to publish a national status assessment for the species, while in Sierra Leone new surveys have uncovered at least one significant population outside of existing protected areas. The first scientific studies of breeding behaviour and diet have also been produced, and there was great excitement when WPT field staff caught on camera, for the first time, Timneh Parrots mating in the wild.

Surveys for Grey parrots in Nigeria have begun to build a picture of the status and threats to the species, identifying several areas where illegal trapping occurs, and highlighting the potential importance of plantations for protecting roost and breeding sites. Further south, surveys of remote woodland areas in Mozambique and Zimbabwe have enabled a detailed assessment of the habitat needs of Lilian's Lovebirds, and revealed this species has a much narrower distribution than previously thought.

In 2018, research conducted by WPT's Africa Conservation Programme has seen the publication of nine research papers in leading peer-reviewed journals.



Conducting field studies in Sierra Leone.

Inset: Wild Timneh Parrots in Guinea-Bissau.

Photos © Rowan Martin



RENEWING THE FRAGILE FOREST

Bonaire is a small island off the north coast of Venezuela that receives high amounts of heat and wind. The pervasively arid climate has produced dry forest on a good portion of the small isle. In spite of this it is home to the Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*), listed by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) as Vulnerable.

WPT has been working on Bonaire for nearly 20 years, and since 2010 with Echo, an organisation working to protect the Yellow-shouldered Amazon and its habitat.

In 2014, the team built a new native plant nursery to grow seedlings of the trees that once thrived on Bonaire. This nursery was doubled in size in 2016, and during the past year 4,335 native trees were planted into planned reforestation areas. Thirty-five hectares of these parcels were fenced to protect them from domestic animals introduced decades ago, still roaming free on the island.



*A wild Yellow-shouldered Amazon forages for fruits.
Inset: Young volunteers plant native trees, vital to the future survival of the parrots.*

Photos © Echo



HELP FOR PUERTO RICAN AMAZONS

When WPT staff arrived in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, there was surprise at the open views of the landscape and shock at the destruction that caused it. WPT was there to assist in ongoing recovery efforts at Río Abajo, and the Puerto Rican Amazon project.

Armed with funds generated by hundreds of deeply concerned supporters, they purchased batteries and other equipment and assembled the means to run emergency incubators and brooders to nurse chicks, and cameras and recorders for monitoring wild nests. WPT also brought equipment for climbing, and provided the training to use it. Finding sturdy enough trees to practice on that were not damaged by the storm was difficult, but still proved to be possible.

The best news of all — a good portion of the wild population and the entire captive breeding group at Río Abajo made it through the crisis. And, even though the birds had their lives turned completely upside down, some still had enough reserves to get on with the most important activity of all: breeding.



A wild Puerto Rican Amazon chick thriving after Hurricane Maria.

Inset: Forests immediately after the storm.

Photos © Tanya Martinez

Read more about the recovery of Río Abajo on page 38...

A SAFE PLACE FOR PARROTS TO LAND

The Kiwa Centre in the United Kingdom was born of an emergency welfare situation: over 170 macaws and other parrots were in need of rescuing from severe neglect. Joe Davenport, whose previous pet macaw Kiwa was being kept in dreadful conditions, contacted WPT to help spearhead an effort to rescue and re-home the distressed birds.

Thanks to Joe, and a dedicated group of volunteers from Paradise Park, Paignton Zoo and two veterinary clinics, today the birds are safe and thriving in expansive aviaries in a purpose-built facility in the UK. After disease screening and months of recovery, eight of the Scarlet Macaws were transferred to Dudley Zoo to act as ambassadors for their species, and 20 Red-and-green Macaws will wing their way to Argentina to take part in a rewilding program, in an area where they haven't been seen in over a hundred years.

It was a real treat for me, seeing my childhood friend Kiwa – after being locked up in a small space for so many years – start to make these little flights. They weren't big, just from one branch to another, but using her wings again. It was so rewarding to see her – and all the other rescued birds – starting to figure it out.

~ Joe Davenport
Kiwa Centre, United Kingdom



Read more of Kiwa's story on page 42...

Rescued macaws enjoying plenty of fresh air and sunshine at the Kiwa Centre.

Photo © Alison Hales



SEEING PARROTS THROUGH NEW EYES

The world population of the Yellow-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*), having been decimated by heavy trapping in past decades, numbers less than 2,000 wild individuals.

Illegal trapping still occurs. WPT researchers found physical evidence during recent fieldwork, and more data-gathering led the team to suspect that honey-gatherers, who also frequent these areas, might start taking young chicks. Efforts had to be stepped up to help protect the cockatoos.

Nature Conservation Agency Indonesia had already succeeded in getting former poachers to begin protecting instead of taking the birds; now, with WPT's help, they could start reaching the broader community. There, in collaboration with local biodiversity groups, WPT staff left field guides, notebooks and binoculars and worked to inspire interest in parrot watching, ecotourism and conservation. Students and villagers led visitors on birding trips, and held a tree planting session. Through this work local people are learning that that they can take part in protecting and benefiting from the cockatoos.



Local schoolchildren take joy in helping to protect their special cockatoos.

Inset: A wild pair inspects a cavity.

Photos © Oka Dwi Prihatmoko



You make our work possible.

People have many different reasons for supporting parrot conservation and welfare: it's the right thing to do, it makes us feel good, or we just love parrots for what they are: diverse, beautiful, and intriguing birds.

Whether through donating, volunteering or simply advocating on their behalf, by taking action you are helping to save some of the most endangered animals in the world.

Thousands of people like you — individual donors, members, foundations, corporate contributors, partners and sponsors — empower WPT efforts around the world.

This generosity has helped our in-country researchers and partners collect new data on ecology and trade threats, rehabilitate confiscated and rescued parrots, restore and protect critical habitat areas, engage local communities in helping parrots and people coexist, and advocate for better care of companion parrots worldwide.

“Over the years interacting with our parrots we have come to appreciate them for their intelligence, emotions and love... We have also come to realize that many parrots have suffered unspeakably for their beauty and talents... We support the World Parrot Trust for all [they] do in education for bird owners, stopping the importation of wild-caught parrots...and working to end the poaching of wild birds.

~ Bob Dulski

THANK YOU! Donors making a difference

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THANK YOU!

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We are immensely grateful for our supporters' generosity. Your gifts allow us to continue the all-important work of conservation and welfare advocacy for the parrots of the world.

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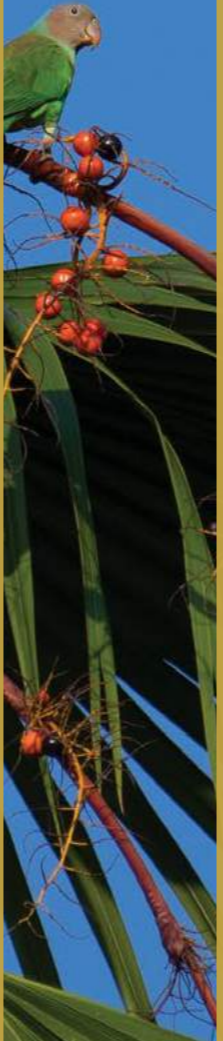
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Our deepest gratitude to everyone listed, as well as the many anonymous contributors and those who gave directly to WPT Project Partners.

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR PARROTS

By including the World Parrot Trust in your will, trust or beneficiary designation, you are creating a personal legacy that will have a lasting impact for parrots.

A bequest is a gift that ensures that the WPT can continue its critical work to protect parrots, and the places where they live, now and into the future. Every legacy donation we receive — large or small — is put to work helping to save parrots.

Let your dedication to parrots live on.

For more information on including WPT in your planned giving opportunities:

- Visit our website: [PARROTS.ORG/LEGACY](https://parrots.org/legacy)
- Email us: LEGACY@PARROTS.ORG
- Or contact the branch nearest you:

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WPT-USA

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1 864-610-2129 • usa@parrots.org

Canadian World Parrot Trust

4377 Gordon Drive, Kelowna, BC V1W 1S7
1 250-766-7828 • canada@parrots.org



“Parrots are the Jackson Pollock paintings of the animal world: intelligent, bright splashes of colour, enigmatic perhaps but none-the-less compelling and a joy to behold. And like art, parrots make the world a much more beautiful and rich place to be.

Unfortunately, their wild numbers are dropping for a number of human-related reasons, and while I am doing what I — one person — can do during my lifetime to keep them around for future generations, I know there is so much more work to be done than I alone can accomplish. It pains me deeply to know that an estimated 25% of parrot species are considered at risk because of what we have done to them and their habitats.

I have been a proud supporter of the WPT since the early 2000s because it is an established and well-managed international organization made up of passionate, dedicated and professional individuals with goals similar to my own. With its focus on conservation, research, welfare and education, the World Parrot Trust has built a strong foundation upon which my dream of a peaceful and compassionate world full of parrots can be realized.

It gives me both satisfaction and comfort to know that through my legacy support of this organization, my dream of a world painted with parrots doesn't die with me; I am certain the WPT will ensure that these magnificent creatures continue to colour the skies for generations to come.

~ Cheryl Rutherford
WPT Member & Legacy Supporter
Canada



Recovery at Río Abajo

by Jamie Gilardi, WPT Executive Director

When we arrived at Puerto Rico's Río Abajo rainforest in late May, I had an overwhelmingly positive first impression. It was bright and sunny, beautifully green, with great views of ridges and valleys I'd never seen in past years. Slowly it dawned on me what was wrong; after all, you don't normally get any views or see the sun in a tropical forest. It then hit me just how dramatically it had changed since my last visit.

On September 20, 2017 Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, leaving the entire island without power or water, most of the main roads impassable, and indeed much of the island's forests seriously degraded.

Many of the large trees were felled by the storm, and those remaining lost nearly all their leaves, branches...in some cases much of the bark was stripped from their trunks as well. Hence the newly open view from the Río Abajo aviaries and reintroduction site, with most trees that remained standing looking like telephone poles with desperate signs of new life sprouting from their trunks.

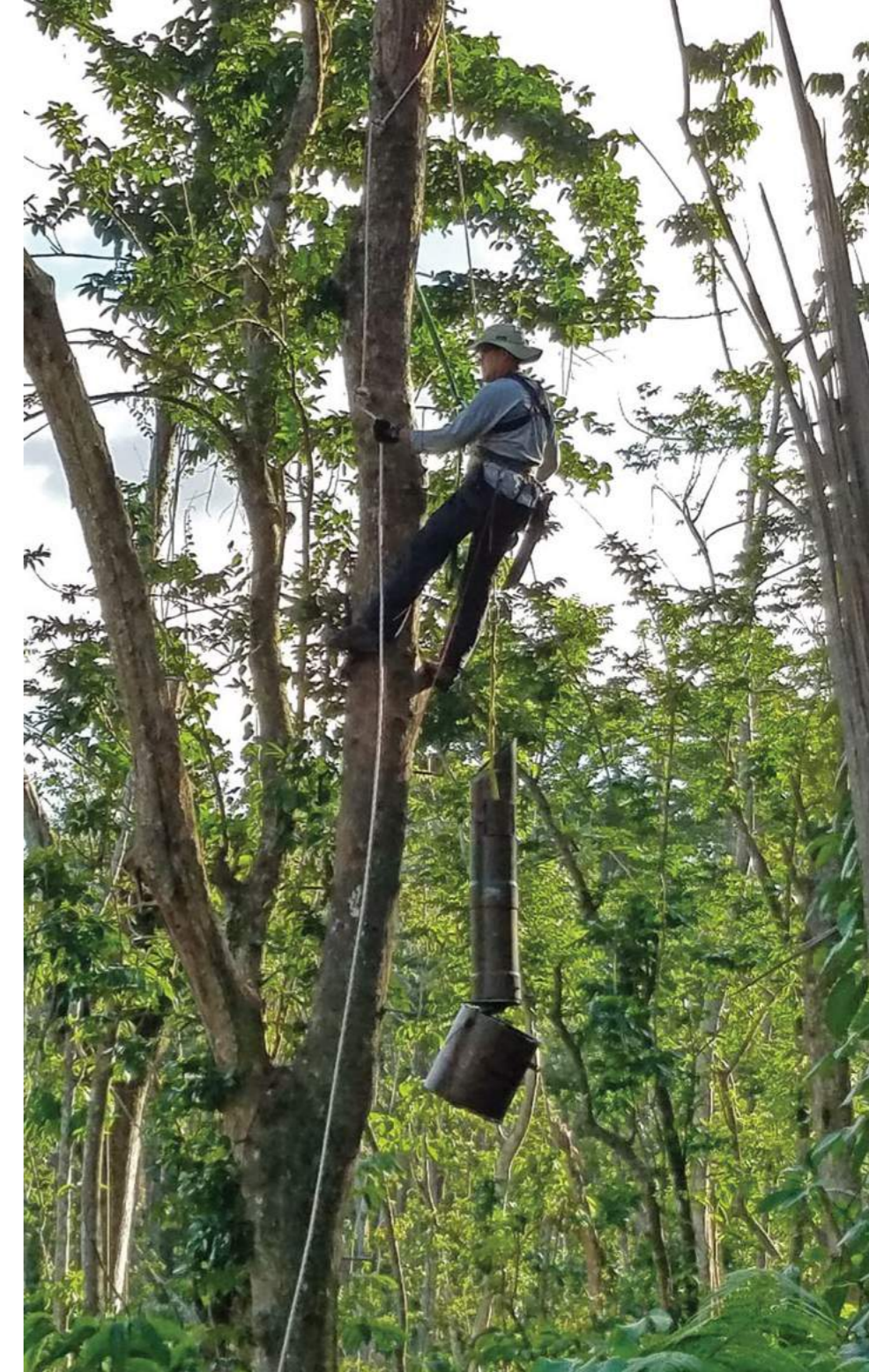
Indeed the lack of limbs on most trees became an issue a few days later when we sought a good climbing tree to practice techniques for accessing natural cavities and other parrot work high in the canopy - or what was left of it. One of the purposes of my visit was to work with an extremely committed field team from Puerto Rico's

Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) and share with them some tree climbing tools, including the use of an enormous sling shot to shoot ropes over very tall trees, and then to teach the use of safe methods for climbing and descending on ropes. But finding a stout tree with amply strong limbs to place the climbing rope proved surprisingly difficult, driving home the reality that Maria had stripped most of these trees of all such branches - just one of many experiences demonstrating just how such a hurricane can destroy the very structure of the forest itself.

For us the most pressing concern after the storm was the fate of the small population of reintroduced parrots - one of the rarest of all Amazona. In short, the great news is that a good number of the wild birds at this site in Río Abajo survived the storm, and although late by a few months, **a substantial number of the wild pairs not only survived, but actually made a serious effort at breeding this year.**



Above: Repairing and replacing nest boxes for the parrots has been ongoing since Hurricane Maria hit. Photos © Tanya Martinez



It never ceases to amaze me how quickly and generously parrot lovers around the world respond to wild parrots in crisis, whether that's a man-made crisis causing thousands of birds to be taken from the wild for the pet trade, or natural disasters like Hurricane Maria both killing birds outright and causing habitat destruction on a massive scale. Immediately after the storm, hundreds of supporters donated thousands of dollars to help save Puerto Rico's endemic parrot.

As we had an established relationship with the conservation team at the DNER, the World Parrot Trust was well positioned to both generate this support from around the world and then to work closely with our partners in Puerto Rico to ensure that the funds were (and are) focused as efficiently as possible on the recovery of the parrots themselves, both the captive and wild birds.

Naturally, there were a lot of pressing needs in the aftermath of such a destructive storm. The highest priorities were basic necessities like power and water - not only was power cut off to the Río Abajo aviaries, the whole power grid in the area was literally laying on the forest floor. So, in evaluating what was most critical, especially during the breeding season, the DNER team identified the need for a backup power system to ensure that incubators and brooders could be kept running overnight, particularly when generators were not running. With a combination of an inverter and charger shipped from the United States and locally sourced golf cart batteries, the team wired up and tested a system to do just that.

We were also able to use it to power the cameras and DVRs so we could continue monitoring three of our nests. The unexpected post-Maria breeding of the wild birds created other challenges as well, particularly as some pairs have begun venturing beyond nest boxes and are now using natural cavities.

When parrots choose their nest tree — rather than the field team carefully selecting a site to hang a nest box — new difficulties generally ensue and require new tools and tricks to monitor, protect, and support such nesting pairs. Sometimes they select a dead tree, making climbing it potentially treacherous, sometimes the cavity has bats or stinging insects in or near it, and sometimes the eggs are laid in deep cavities, well beyond arm's length.

In practice, many natural parrot nests have several of a long list of difficult features. On my last day in the field, we visited one such

natural nest site, and caught a glimpse of one of the parrots climbing out and flying off.

We discussed how best to climb and assess the situation, the value of lowering a camera into the cavity to see what, if anything, was inside, and how to cut an access door if that proved necessary. Upon closer inspection, the field team discovered the cavity was too deep and would require a door to manage any eggs or chicks. So we purchased a battery powered reciprocating saw so that could be done quickly and safely. As it turned out, behind that new door was a perfectly healthy Puerto Rican Parrot chick (*see images to the far right*), well on its way to fledging!

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These are just a couple of examples of the many ways parrot lovers' contributions in the aftermath of the hurricane are helping get the species and the conservation program back on its feet. And while this support is just a small part of an overall budget from the government of Puerto Rico and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, having the flexibility to quickly fill urgent needs as they come up means the WPT's contributions help enhance the agility of the conservation efforts with both captive and wild parrots at Río Abajo.

We're all looking forward to continuing with this collaboration, and hope to branch out in the future to support more technical exchanges and visits among projects elsewhere in the Caribbean and Central America. So, please stay tuned not only for upcoming articles from the team in Puerto Rico, but also new project developments in the coming year. ☐

IN THIS BRIEF UPDATE, I'VE FOCUSED ON HOW PARROT LOVERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD RALLIED TO SUPPORT THIS BIRD AND ITS DEDICATED PROTECTORS IN PUERTO RICO, AND HOW THAT SUPPORT IS NOW FOSTERING THE SPECIES' RECOVERY.

PLEASE STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING AND MORE DETAILED ARTICLES IN FUTURE PSITTASCENES IN WHICH WE'LL RUN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE AFTERMATH OF THE STORM, STORIES TOLD BY THE BRAVE AND CAPABLE CONSERVATIONISTS WHO EXPERIENCED MARIA FIRST HAND, AND HELPED PICK UP THE PIECES IN THE STORM'S AFTERMATH. I'M SURE YOU'LL ENJOY THEIR GRIPPING ACCOUNTS OF THE IMPACTS ON THE CAPTIVE BIRDS AND THE WILD BIRDS, AND THE PHENOMENAL CHALLENGES OF KEEPING EVERYTHING AFLOAT IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS AFTER HURRICANE MARIA.



©Tanya Martinez



KIWA:

The story of a macaw rescue

Article by Desi Milpacher
Photos by Alison Hales

How the love for a childhood companion became a mission to save hundreds of macaws.

Fresh off an enlightening and enjoyable working visit to WPT's founder facility at Paradise Park in Cornwall UK, we arrived at an out-of-the-way farm in the rolling English countryside for a visit of a different sort – a follow-up on a project begun a year or so prior.

It was no less than the rescue of over 170 macaws and parrots from a miserable neglect situation, and we were there to see and report about how they'd progressed. How would they have fared, I wondered with a mix of trepidation and excitement.

When you see the indoor/outdoor aviaries housing these birds now compared to where they came from, you'd think a bona fide miracle had happened. There are perches, natural logs and grass outside; indoors more feeding stations are set on easily cleaned sand. There are perches and ropes for less able birds, and heating in their night quarters. Most of all, there is ROOM TO FLY.

Quite different from their previous life, where the birds lived in small cages in a musty, dilapidated building. It was a complete change for a group of birds that had had virtually no hope of an enriching,

or even a reasonable, existence. One year on most are doing well.

It was especially gratifying to see them beginning to use their outdoor enclosures more (*progress is slow and steady after being locked inside for an age*), with some of them now venturing out to smell the fresh air and feel the warmth of the sunshine. Feathers that had been chewed or plucked are returning, plumages are brighter, and voices are stronger. Watching them wheel around the aviaries, fly from perch to perch, bicker amongst themselves and generally behave more like macaws was inspiring, and a relief.





It all began with a visit to a friend from the past. Joe Davenport, a native Brit who now lives in New Zealand, once had a Blue-and-yellow Macaw named Kiwa.

Sadly, after years of companionship, Joe had to surrender her back to the breeding facility where his parents had originally bought her while he set off to begin his adult life. She was never far from his thoughts, and as soon as he could he went back to see her. When he saw the conditions in which she and over

170 other macaws were living he was understandably stunned. He became deeply concerned for their fates, so after his visit he approached the World Parrot Trust to see about helping them.

Joe's resolve to give hope to these macaws set into motion a Herculean effort on the part of about 20 volunteers – Joe himself, eight zookeepers, four veterinarians, two vet technicians, and WPT staff - to catch, examine, treat and change the lives of this unfortunate group of birds. A staggering operation, to be sure.

David Woolcock, Curator at Paradise Park, and a number of veterinary personnel had already seen to the sickest birds. Some of them, after years of overfeeding, and lack of exercise and light, were sadly beyond help. That made getting the others to safety all that more urgent.

Once proper permission was in place, The Kiwa Centre, generously financed by Joe, was built. On the day of the move, everyone who was to be involved arrived at the old breeding barn, a dark, two-storey building that had

definitely seen better days. After being caught, and thanks to an efficient assembly-line set up, the birds were quickly anaesthetised, examined, had blood drawn for tests, were treated for injury/illness, and had nails clipped - as much as could be done given their overall condition.

When everything was completed and the birds had recovered from the sedation, each bird was gently bundled into a travelling box and transported by vans to the new location some miles away. The entire process took 24 hours over

two days and was a full-on effort by everyone.

Now that the birds are in their new quarters, what happens next? Some of the Scarlet Macaws have already been transferred to Dudley Zoo, where they will serve as ambassadors to educate admirers about their wild kin in Honduras, one of the remaining strongholds of these birds. A group of Red-and-green Macaws will be on their way to Argentina, where they will take part in a reintroduction program. Plus, Grey Parrots that were confiscated in Bulgaria a

few years back and are currently living in France will join the group at the Kiwa Centre, and then eventually go back to Africa where they belong. As for the remaining macaws and other parrots, they will live out their lives with proper care, security, good food, and things to play with and do.

And Joe and Kiwa, the main heroes in all of this, can bask in the certainty that they've done everything they can for these marvelous birds. ☐

NEWS

Glossy Black Cockatoos under pressure from development in NSW



The once-common Glossy Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) is losing ground across E Australia. One of its remaining strongholds south of Sydney is under threat from land clearing and development, which is severely affecting their nest hollow and food source trees. "They rely on large hollows for nesting, which are now really rare and vulnerable to things like clearing for firewood or bushfire hazard reduction burns," says Matt Cameron, threatened species officer with the Office of Environment and Heritage. In response, the office has launched a new project involving private landholders, reporting cockatoo sightings and mapping trees.

Read more online:
tinyurl.com/y7vxuvdr

Scarlet Macaw DNA points to ancient breeding operation

Archaeologists have released the results of a study where the mitochondrial DNA of macaw remains was sequenced, revealing that in the American Southwest or northern Mexico there are likely ruins of an ancient Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) breeding operation dating back to between 900 and 1200 C.E. This is much earlier than originally thought, with a previous find occurring at Paquimé, a Mexican site.

The areas where more ancient DNA was found are in the Chaco Canyon and Mimbres regions of New Mexico. The settlements there were abandoned long before the ones at the Paquimé site, meaning that the people at Paquimé could not have supplied birds to the American Southwest prior to the 13th century, making a native-run breeding operation in Arizona or New Mexico much more likely.

Read more online:
tinyurl.com/yat3jjz9

Who's a clever bird? Macaws play the odds when making decisions



A new study has shown that parrots – macaws in particular – are as adept as chimpanzees at making delayed-gratification decisions. Researchers call this "economic decision-making." The process involves a thorough assessment of a current situation, together with an understanding of future reward as a result of controlling one's impulses.

Study subjects included specialist fruit foragers such as macaws (*Ara sp.*) and Grey Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*). When provided with a choice between a food item and a token that could be exchanged for a more preferred food, all four species in the study selected the token more often, delaying their reward and maximising their pay-off.

Read more online:
tinyurl.com/y89f8obx

WPT OFFICE NEWS

New WPT-USA Administrator

Glenn Reynolds first became involved with the World Parrot Trust in 1998 when he joined with Founder Mike Reynolds (*no relation*) to create the Golden Conure Survival Fund. In 2001, Glenn stepped onto the Board of Trustees for WPT, but left that voluntary position when the Trust needed an Administrator for World Parrot Trust USA, Inc. in 2006.



As of this year, Glenn has handed the baton to Lauren Schmalz, who stepped into the position of Administrator in July. Lauren completed a dual Bachelor degree in Biology and Spanish and a Master of Environmental Studies. In the middle of her studies, she also spent several years living overseas in the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador), Costa Rica, and Bonaire.



Lauren first became involved with the World Parrot Trust while serving as the Director of WPT Project Partner Echo, a small non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot and its fragile dry forest habitat on the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire. She returned to the US from Bonaire in 2017, having stepped down from that role to dedicate herself to working full-time with the World Parrot Trust. She has a keen interest in environmental management, community outreach and education, and sustainable development that will harmonize with WPT's growing initiatives in parrot conservation, habitat restoration, and community engagement.

If you'd like to send a welcome note, Lauren can be reached by email at usa@parrots.org or by writing to her at the new branch location: **PO Box 985, Travelers Rest, SC 29690.**

GIFT IDEAS

Gift ideas for parrot lovers!

Looking for ideas for the upcoming season of giving? Come check out the new items that have been added to the World Parrot Trust stores. From exquisite art pieces, fun and festive apparel, exclusive pins, gorgeous jewellery to stunning calendars, you are sure to find something for everyone on your list.

And remember, all sale proceeds go towards conservation efforts to protect parrots. It's the gift that keeps on giving!

Start shopping:
www.parrots.org/shop



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English, Dutch, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish

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PARROTS IN THE WILD:

Ringneck Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)

The Ringneck Parakeet has the widest distribution of any parrot species, occurring in Africa, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Burma and Sri Lanka, and expanding their range into Europe through naturalisation. The birds can be seen in flocks of several thousand at a time, often with crows, Common Mynas and other parrots.

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