# PsittaScene

Magazine of the World Parrot Trust

Spring 2025

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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. Nearly 30% of all parrot species are considered by IUCN to be globally threatened.

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. Over that time the WPT has led or aided conservation and welfare projects in 45 countries for more than 80 species of parrot.

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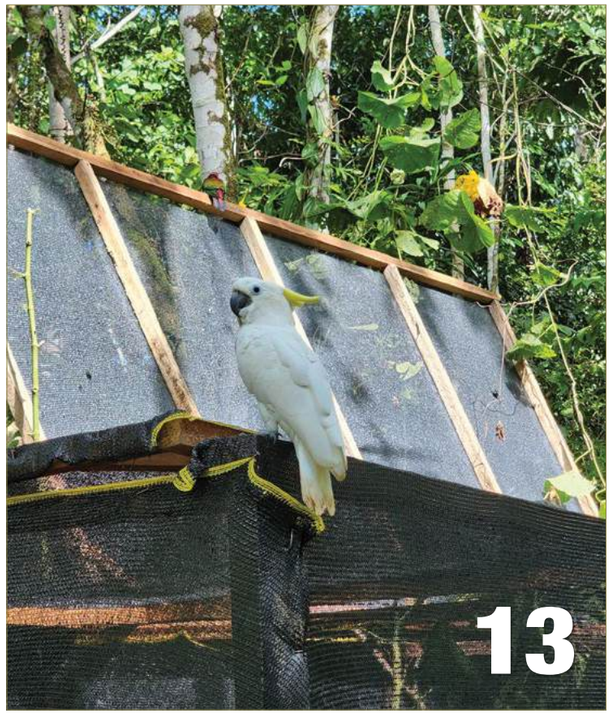



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**ON THE COVER**

**Orange-fronted Parakeet chick in nest**
Photo © **Sean McGrath**

A near-fledged Orange-fronted Parakeet chick peers cautiously out of its nest cavity. These parrots fledge at five to six weeks of age and begin learning how to survive outside the safety of their nest.

Learn more in ***Close Encounter with Nesting Orange-fronted Parakeets***, Page 5.

**Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre: Protecting Indonesia's Wildlife**

In the heart of North Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre provides a glimpse of hope for wildlife conservation. Founded in the early 2010s by Dr. Willie Smits, Tasikoki has become a crucial force in the fight against illegal wildlife trade, habitat destruction, and biodiversity loss.

As part of the Masarang Foundation, Tasikoki is dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating native species, with a special focus on Sulawesi macaques, birds from Wallacea and Papua, and other endemic animals. Many of these species face serious threats from deforestation and poaching. Tasikoki provides them with a second chance at life.

**A Strategic Location in the Fight Against Wildlife Smuggling**

North Sulawesi is a well-known hotspot for wildlife trafficking, making Tasikoki's work all the more vital. The centre plays an active role in supporting law enforcement to combat illegal trade, offering a safe haven for rescued animals. Here, dedicated local staff and volunteers focus on both physical and behavioural rehabilitation, preparing animals for potential reintroduction into their natural habitat.

But Tasikoki's mission goes beyond rescue—education and community engagement are at its core. Through conservation programs and outreach initiatives, they are inspiring local communities to protect and coexist with wildlife, fostering long-term solutions for a sustainable future.

**A Global Effort to Protect Indonesia's Wildlife**

Tasikoki's impact extends beyond the centre itself. With the support of international volunteers and conservation partners, it continues to make a lasting difference in preserving Indonesia's incredible biodiversity. Their work is not just about saving individual animals—it's about securing a brighter future for both wildlife and the people of North Sulawesi.

Through its unwavering dedication, Tasikoki is proving that conservation and community can go hand in hand, creating a world where endangered species thrive and future generations can appreciate a richer, more diverse planet.




***Top, Middle:*** *Female White-crested Cockatoo and Chattering Lories in their rehabilitation aviaries.*

***Bottom:*** *Confiscated and rehabilitated parrots being relocated from Tasikoki to their release site.*



*Male feeding chick in nest cavity © Sean McGrath*

# UPDATE FROM THE FIELD:

## Close Encounter with Nesting Orange-fronted Parakeets

*by Sean McGrath and Luis Ortiz-Catedral*

***The IUCN Critically Endangered Orange-fronted Parakeet (Cyanoramphus malherbi) — or Kākāriki karaka in Māori language — is the smallest parrot in New Zealand, measuring 20-22 cm in length (about the size of a common starling).***

***Historically, these charming little parrots were common on Beech forests in the South Island of New Zealand but like many other island species, they are highly vulnerable to introduced predators like stoats and rats, brought by humans to the New Zealand archipelago in the last 200 years.***

**Orange-fronted Parakeets were once considered common** at various locations across the South Island. Their somewhat intermediate colouration between the more common Yellow-crowned and Red-fronted Parakeets (*Cyanoramphus auriceps* and *C. novaezelandieae*, respectively) led to the speculation that Orange-fronted Parakeets were a hybrid or a subspecies. In 2000, a comprehensive molecular study of the entire genus *Cyanoramphus* confirmed their status as a distinct species. By the 1960s, the species was considered extremely rare, possibly even extinct. Between the 1980s and late 1990s, surveys in large tracts of Beech forest revealed a handful of populations in the Hawdon, Andrews, Poulter and Hurunui Valleys.

This study helped intensify conservation efforts. From 2005 to 2012, captive-bred Orange-fronted Parakeets were released on offshore predator-free islands: Chalky, Maud, Tuhua and Blumine. A number of "top up" releases to island populations have happened since, as well as releases in the Hurunui Valley. However, 2021 marked a huge leap forward in the conservation of the species, with the introduction of 20 parakeets to the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. The Sanctuary comprises 700 hectares of mixed forest with significant stands of beech, surrounded by a fence that keeps out stoats, feral cats and rats, among other introduced predators. Fenced sanctuaries are a staple of New Zealand conservation as these keep introduced predators at bay, allowing endemic species like the Orange-fronted Parakeet to thrive.

Fences require regular check-ups to ensure falling branches or landslides haven't created a point of entry for introduced predators, and this is achieved thanks to an army of volunteers that monitor the fence and keep an eye on species released on site.

The release of Orange-fronted Parakeets to the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary was a historic one, as the species had not been seen in the region for 100 years. The captive-breeding of these parakeets at the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust and Orana Wildlife Park, and their subsequent release into New Zealand Sanctuaries, has certainly helped in giving the species a fighting chance against extinction.

Recently Sean McGrath, a dedicated volunteer at the Sanctuary, had a wonderful encounter with Orange-fronted Parakeets:

> *"A volunteer checking the perimeter of the fence found a nest on March 7th; she saw an adult feeding nestlings at the nest entrance. So I passed by the following day to record the nest and add it to the database. An hour after I arrived the male arrived and fed his babies for a few minutes. I took a few photos and recorded a video. A few seconds after I started recording, the light went from deep shade / cloud to bright sunlight, so my settings were all wrong and the video was washed out.*
>
> *I decided to wait for the next feeding visit and leave video settings on 'auto' (white balance, ISO etc) and increase the chances of getting something worthwhile. I wasn't aware that the male was one of those infrequent nest visitors. It was two hours before his next visit. However, while I was waiting the nestlings made a few appearances at the nest entrance to keep me busy photographing and filming. The nest watch was 3 1/4 hours all up. I got back to the Sanctuary office at 5.30pm (after an 8am start!).*
>
> *I could confirm at least four nestlings in the nest. They were at the pre-fledgling stage, so are probably ready to leave the nest at any time; very likely within days of my visit. I made a five-minute composite video of my few hours at the site. It includes the nestlings on their own waiting for their dad to bring them lunch, and then the whole feeding visit (about three minutes' worth). I edited out about twelve seconds where the camera completely lost focus (probably trying to focus on the darkness at the back of the nest)."*

Sean's fantastic video can be seen in his personal blog at **SEANMCGRATH.NZ**, which chronicles wonderful encounters with the wildlife of the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. More importantly, these observations offer an invaluable insight into the biology of these rare birds at a mainland fenced sanctuary.

The resulting information could help fine-tune future releases of Orange-fronted Parakeets at other locations around New Zealand and bring the species closer to New Zealanders and visitors alike.


*The fence surrounding Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. © Sean McGrath*

# Ciencia Serrana:

## Working With Local Communities to Conserve the Santa Marta Parakeet

*by* Maria Paula Santos, DVM
Photos © Yurgen Vega

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia, is one of the most breathtaking places I've visited. Its beautiful beaches with turquoise water and white sand merge with tropical dry forests and mangroves. The region is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, making it feel like a true tropical paradise. As you ascend the mountains, the landscape and wildlife change dramatically.

**The views are stunning, with the snow-capped peaks of Colon and Bolivar visible on clear days. These mountains, the highest in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and Colombia, rise to 5,500 meters above sea level and are the highest snow peaks closest to the sea in the world. This unique area is home to a rich diversity of ecosystems, cultures and ethnic groups including indigenous tribes, Afro-Caribbean communities, and rural settlers from all over Colombia. However, despite its beauty and diversity, the region is threatened and urgent action is needed.**

The area's biodiversity includes the Santa Marta Parakeet *(Pyrrhura viridicata),* an endemic and endangered species, which became our focus. Our team studied the parakeet's distribution in parts of the Sierra where we suspected its presence. We selected two areas, with hopefully more in the future, for surveying to learn more about the species.

We quickly identified that habitat loss, particularly due to agricultural expansion, is a major threat to these birds. This compelled us to begin conservation actions, with organisations ProCAT Colombia and SELVA, to protect and restore their habitat while helping to boost the population. From the beginning, we knew that our efforts wouldn't succeed without the involvement of the local community. People who live in the area have the most intimate knowledge of the land and have the greatest impact on its future. Our goal is to empower local people with more knowledge about the conservation of their environment.

By collaborating, we believe we can achieve positive outcomes for both the community and these parakeets. This project has been developed in collaboration with local monitors, including women and young people, who are helping to monitor the areas where the parakeet is present. Together, we've built capacity to collect data to survey several areas across the Sierra, with in-depth monitoring in two key locations. Our field technician, Yurgen Vega, has trained five community members to assist with these efforts. They have been involved in various activities such as studying the parakeet's natural history, constructing and hanging nest boxes, and collecting data on the birds' preferred foods to guide reforestation efforts. In addition to being directly involved in these activities, we've prioritised sharing our work with the broader community through environmental workshops. These sessions, held in local schools and community centres, have reached over 200 children and adults. Through these workshops we explain the importance of the conservation strategies we're implementing, the natural history of the parakeet, and the need to conserve the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta for the benefit of both nature and people. As our work evolves, we plan to expand our outreach and continue building relationships with more local communities. Our ultimate aim is to provide the tools and information necessary for the people living in these areas to continue and expand the conservation efforts we've started.


***Left:*** *Anthony Nuñez climbs to hang a nest box in a Wax Palm.*
***Right:*** *An environmental workshops takes place at a local school.*

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is rich in biodiversity and steeped in cultural traditions. It is home to four indigenous tribes, many of which live in the higher regions of the mountains where the Santa Marta Parakeet is found. We are currently in talks with the Arhuaco tribe to collaborate on collecting parakeet data within their territories. This partnership will help us compile a list of bird species in the area and provide valuable information for territorial governance and stewardship of the land.

To address the threats to the Santa Marta Parakeet, we've developed both short and long-term conservation strategies. One immediate solution is the use of artificial nest boxes. The lack of nesting palms, particularly the Wax Palm *(Ceroxylon ceriferum),* is believed to be contributing to the parakeet's decline, as these palms are thought to be the species' primary nesting sites. We've installed nest boxes on private lands at altitudes of 2,400 meters above sea level to provide alternative nesting sites. By testing two different prototypes in two types of habitats we hope to determine the parakeet's preferences and replicate the successful design on a larger scale. In the long term, we are focused on habitat restoration. Due to the scarcity of palm trees in the area, restoring the forest is critical.

We are currently identifying the plant species the Santa Marta Parakeet relies on. Once we have a clearer understanding, we plan to establish a local nursery to facilitate active restoration efforts. The impact of these actions will be closely monitored to assess their effectiveness in increasing the Santa Marta Parakeet's wild populations. Our hope is that the lessons learned from these efforts can be applied in other regions of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, furthering conservation efforts for the parakeet and its habitat.

Ultimately, we aim to strengthen the relationship between local communities and the natural world, ensuring the long-term survival of the Santa Marta Parakeet and the protection of this incredible region.

*An artificial nest made out of PVC plastic hangs on a palm.*

*One of the local monitors, Jean Carlos Perez, records data.*

# Parrots of Australia

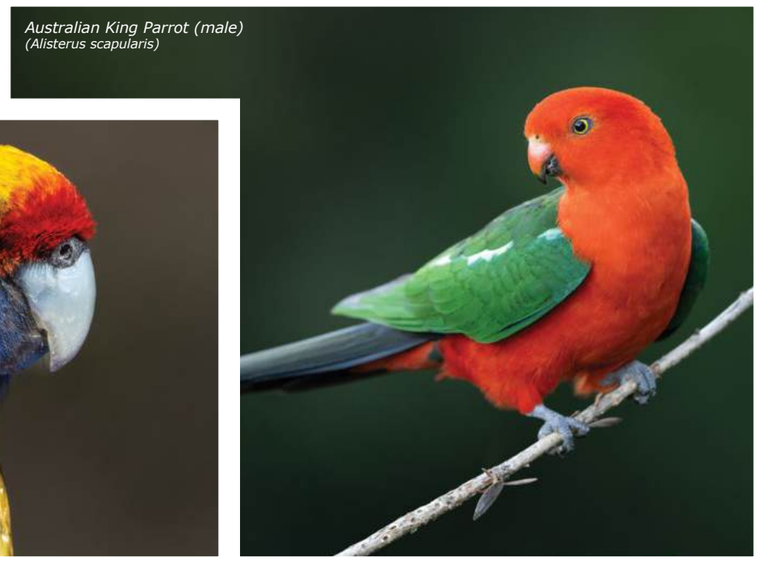
*Photos © Corey Raffel*

Australia's parrots display nature's artistry, their vibrant plumages painting the landscapes with hues of emerald green, fiery red, golden yellow and azure. Whether soaring through the vast Outback skies or foraging in lush rainforests, these remarkable birds embody the wild beauty of Australia's diverse landscapes.


*Double-eyed Fig Parrot (male)*
*(Cyclopsitta diophthalma)*


*Red-winged Parrot (male)*
*(Aprosmictus erythropterus)*


*Palm Cockatoo*
*(Probosciger aterrimus)*


*Australian King Parrot (male)*
*(Alisterus scapularis)*


*Green Rosella*
*(Platycercus caledonicus)*


*Pink Cockatoo*
*(Cacatua leadbeateri)*


*Rainbow Lorikeet*
*(Trichoglossus moluccanus)*


*Gang-gang Cockatoo (male)*
*(Callocephalon fimbriatum)*


*Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (Cacatua galerita)*


*Crimson Rosella*
*(Platycercus elegans)*


*Orange-bellied Parrot*
*(Neophema chrysogaster)*

*Purple-crowned Lorikeet*
*(Glossopsitta porphyrocephala)*

**ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER:**

**Corey Raffel** grew up in Palo Alto, Californa (USA) and has devoted his life to science and research. After completing medical school and obtaining a Ph.D. in Biology, he specialised in Neurosurgery. Before retirement, he was an active member of the American Association of Neurological Surgery, the American Academy of Neurological Surgery, and the American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery. Additionally, he served as a board member for the Pediatric Section of both the AANS and CNS.

Corey is deeply passionate about parrot conservation and photography, both of which he approaches with great enthusiasm. He has generously donated funds for WPT's field work and his outstanding photos for WPT's use.

*Glossy Black Cockatoo*
*(Calyptorhynchus lathami)*

*Galah*
*(Eolophus roseicapilla)*

*Swift Parrot*
*(Lathamus discolor)*

*Blue-winged Parrot*
*(Neophema chrysostoma)*



# UPDATES FROM INDONESIA

## ENDANGERED INDONESIAN PARROTS SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED TO THEIR NATIVE RANGE

**In June of 2024, 68 animals confiscated from trafficking were transported from Bitung on the northeastern edge of Sulawesi back to their native Ternate (North Maluku) and Ambon (Maluku).**

The group included 11 White-crested Cockatoos *(Cacatua alba),* 29 Chattering Lories *(Lorius garrulus),* four Violet-necked Lories *(Eos squamata),* 11 Red Lories *(Eos bornea),* nine Salmon-crested Cockatoos *(Cacatua moluccensis)*, a lizard and three snakes. These animals were rescued from the illegal pet trade by forestry department officers and handed over to the North Sulawesi Natural Resources Conservation Agency, or North Sulawesi Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam (BKSDA).

After undergoing treatment, disease testing and rehabilitation at the Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre, the group was declared healthy and ready to be released back into the wild. The head of the BKSDA, Askhari DG Masikki, stated that this translocation process is an important step in conservation and preservation efforts for Indonesia's endemic animals.

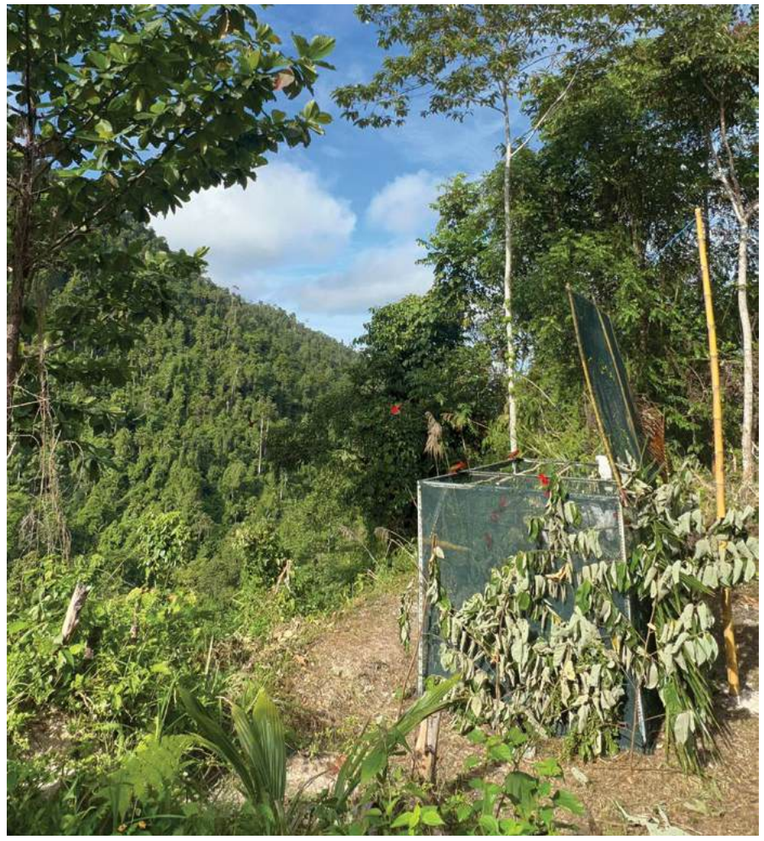
During the journey, the animals were monitored regularly by officers from the North Sulawesi BKSDA, who were accompanied by WPT staff and animal keepers and veterinarians from Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre. All the animals arrived safely at their destination, ready for a second chance at life in the wild. Staff and officials involved in the translocation continue to carry out regular and crucial outreach and campaigns to increase public awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation.

In addition, they are carrying out anti-trafficking patrols at port entrances and exits, including the trans-Sulawesi route.

On Ternate in North Maluku, the White-crested Cockatoos and Chattering and Violet-necked Lories were released and are being monitored post-release. All indications so far are that the birds are doing well and have been seen foraging in the local area. On Ambon to the south, the Salmon-crested Cockatoos and Red Lories are still awaiting release.

This vital effort was possible thanks to the support of and collaboration with the North Sulawesi BKSDA and its partners, including Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre, WCS-IP and the World Parrot Trust.

Thanks must also go to the North Sulawesi Agriculture & Livestock Service Office's Kesmavet Authority, Manado Animal, Fish & Plant Quarantine Centre, KSOP Bitung, PT Pelni Bitung branch, and PT Pelindo IV Bitung.



*Chattering Lory release © Fahmi Agustiadi*

## FROM NORTH SULAWESI TO WEST PAPUA: THE LARGEST PARROT RELOCATION TO DATE

**In December 2024, a monumental step for parrot conservation took place as 148 birds, originally confiscated from illegal wildlife trade, were relocated from the Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre back to their native habitat in West Papua. This operation was the largest of its kind so far, and its success sets the foundation for future large-scale releases.**

Illegal trafficking continues to pose a major threat to Indonesia's parrots: many of these birds had been seized from smugglers over some years and rehabilitated at Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre while some, including Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *(Cacatua galerita)*, had been repatriated from the Philippines in 2023. This relocation was not just about returning the birds home; it was about closing a long chapter of captivity and exploitation and giving them a second chance in the wild.

The relocation involved 61 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, 64 Black-capped Lories *(Lorius lory)*, 22 Papuan Eclectus *(Eclectus polychloros)* and one Rainbow Lorikeet *(Trichoglossus haematodus)*. The birds had undergone extensive rehabilitation to regain their strength, flight capacity, and foraging skills to ensure they were fit for release.

Executing a relocation of this scale required precise coordination across multiple agencies, including PPS Tasikoki, BKSDA Sulawesi Utara, BBKSDA West Papua, quarantine departments, and the World Parrot Trust. One of the biggest logistical hurdles was securing permission from the shipping company to transport live birds to ensure a safe and stress-free journey. The team built more than 50 transport boxes, each stocked with enough food and fresh water for the trip. Keeping stress levels low was critical; black cloth visual barriers were used to calm the birds and fruits, supplements like LoryMix and hydration salts were provided during the journey.

The team's journey was anything but easy. With the ship departing at 6 AM, the previous day was spent boxing the birds, requiring a full day of non-stop work. The team then endured an overnight road transfer,

*Sulphur-crested Cockatoos **(Top)** and Black-capped Lories **(Bottom, left)** in pre-release aviaries. **Bottom, right:** Final health checks and banding, readying for release. © Bal Singh*

clearing quarantine checks in the middle of the night before finally boarding the ship with the birds at dawn. After nearly 20 hours without sleep, they worked in shifts on board, feeding and monitoring the birds to ensure their well-being. Adding to the challenge, the birds were housed in a section of the ship where the lights could not be dimmed, disrupting their normal rest cycle. And while many birds remained calm, some of the cockatoos displayed high stress levels by damaging their cages. Regular checks and emergency repairs were required to keep them safe.

Upon arrival in Sorong, the birds were quickly moved from the port to BBKSDA Papua Barat for an official handover before embarking on another rugged two-hour journey over treacherous, muddy roads to reach the release site. By the time the team arrived at the release location it was already late afternoon. With nightfall approaching, the priority was to get all 148 birds transferred from transport boxes into the habituation cages before dark. The community had constructed these release cages but when we arrived, it was clear that last-minute improvements were needed; additional perches, better security, and minor structural fixes were all made on-site. Despite exhaustion, the team worked tirelessly to get every bird settled before sundown.

On December 10, after a final health check and acclimation period, the birds were released into the protected forest surrounding Malasigi village. For the local community, this release held great significance. Malasigi village is part of a growing responsible ecotourism initiative where community members act as guides for visitors eager to witness Papua's extraordinary birdlife. By ensuring the well-being of the released parrots, they stand to benefit from increased tourism, providing an incentive for long-term conservation. This model not only helps ensure the survival of the parrots but also empowers communities as active stewards of their natural heritage, creating a replicable approach to holistic conservation.

While this relocation was a success, it also highlighted areas for improvement, particularly in community coordination and release site preparation. The challenges faced and overcome in this operation provide valuable insights for scaling up future repatriation efforts. This relocation is more than just the end of a journey; it marks a new beginning for these parrots and a step forward for conservation in Indonesia. Beyond returning the birds to their natural habitat, this initiative also strengthens the connection between conservation and local communities.

***Top:** Sulphur-crested Cockatoo is poised at the open doors of release aviary.*
***Middle:** Released birds are seen resting in nearby trees.*
***Bottom:** Tasikoki centre staff, which prepared the boxes, paperwork, food and enrichment for the birds to travel by boat. All photos © Bal Singh*

# A Joint Effort:

## Recovering Hurricane-Hit Forests for Puerto Rican Amazons

*by* WPT Staff

**Medium-sized green parrots contact call each other and circle the forests on the wing. Generally found in pairs or family units, they feed on *Ficus* and other fruits, as well as nuts. Nesting is in a natural cavity, usually found only in large, mature trees. They are found on one Caribbean island, a place where these all-important feeding and nesting trees have been under siege.**

The critically endangered Puerto Rican Amazon *(Amazona vittata)* has faced many threats: past trapping for the wildlife trade and hunting caused population declines; now botfly parasites and non-native predators attack nestlings, and introduced honey bees, boa constrictors and rats sometimes take over nest cavities. The species once suffered competition for nesting sites from Pearly-eyed Thrashers, but this has been largely reduced by using specially-designed artificial nestboxes.

But the most serious threat of all has been the near-total loss of forest cover. Nearly eight years post-hurricanes, canopy cover ranges from 0-50% across parrot habitat in El Yunque National Forest. El Yunque National Forests of the U.S. Forest Service - U.S. Department of Agriculture, the WPT and local fieldworkers are directly addressing this through efforts aimed at restoring this parrot's native ecosystem. Early work is showing promising results, despite the many challenges posed by severe storms and other environmental pressures. These ongoing projects are not only helping to rebuild the island's ecosystems but are also giving hope to the recovery of this iconic species.

### Reforestation Efforts: Starting Strong

Reforestation work began with planting 60 native trees in a designated area. These trees were carefully selected for their suitability to the local environment and so far, results have been promising. Despite several storms, the trees have shown remarkable resilience to date with a 100% survival rate. This success highlights the importance of reintroducing native species to the forest to stabilise the environment and provide the necessary habitat for the parrots.

Looking ahead, the next plot is currently in the planning stages and while no trees have been planted yet, the area is a critical part of the broader reforestation strategy and recovery. In early 2025, the team have held discussions with US Forest Service personnel, and other parts of the forest that are to be planted under the reforestation plan have been visited and assessed. The forest staff in charge of the greenhouse, and other collaborators growing trees, have selected several species and when they have reached the proper size they will be planted in pre-marked and identified areas.

All plantings and plots are evaluated and finalised by US Forest Service personnel. This will ensure that future efforts will be as successful as the first plantings.


### Overcoming Storm Damage

One of the biggest challenges in this critical work has been recovering from the powerful storms that have hit the island, particularly the high winds generated by hurricanes. These storms have caused damage to some of the newly planted trees but their overall recovery has been strong. The affected trees have fully recovered, but the team has encountered another challenge—an increase in damaging tree-boring insects and fungi.

To combat this, field workers plan to use natural treatments such as neem oil, which is known for its ability to protect plants without harming the environment. Neem, also known as margosa oil, is a vegetable oil pressed from the fruits and seeds of *Azadirachta indica,* a tree that is indigenous to India and has been introduced to many tropical areas.

### Parrot Habitat Restoration: A Data-Driven Approach

The long-term success of the reforestation project is closely interlinked with Puerto Rican Amazon recovery. A key aspect of this effort is using telemetry data from parrot tracking - by monitoring the movements of the parrots, conservationists can identify critical areas that require restoration and prioritise these zones for planting. This science-driven method allows the team to ensure that the newly restored forests will provide suitable habitats for the parrots. Training for the telemetry project is scheduled for the near future, and the data gathered will help inform future decisions about where to focus conservation resources. This is a vital part of the team's strategy to not only restore forest cover but also to protect and expand the parrot's range, which is currently very restricted.

### Nest Maintenance and Protection

As of March of this year, a new breeding season is under way. A critical component of assuring successful breeding is natural and artificial nest maintenance. The team has collected data on nest locations and conditions to allow them to monitor the Amazons' breeding success and has been replacing damaged nestboxes and relocating others to suitable trees to ensure the parrots have safe places to raise their young. As part of their efforts, the WPT have implemented a new way of sealing nests, using PVC caps, during the non-breeding season to prevent other animals such as honey bees, rats and boa constrictors, from using them.

***Opposite page:*** *Juan Luigie Ramirez plants saplings.*
***Current page, top:*** *Nursery plants ready for planting.*
***Current page, right:*** *An artificial nest with modified cap, ready for installation.*
*Photos © Abner D. Hernández-Figueroa*

*Juan Luigie extracts bees from a nest*
*© Abner D. Hernández-Figueroa*

The Puerto Rican Coquí (a tiny frog species) seeks refuge in the artificial nests as do rats, which jump on team members when they check nests. Then, according to one team member, the rats get scared and the climbers even more so!

## Collaborative Efforts for Long-Term Habitat Restoration

The reforestation work is part of a larger, long-term task to restore the Puerto Rican Amazon's natural habitat, carried out in close partnership with local forest ecologists, biologists and forestry teams, all of whom are working together to address the many challenges facing the species. The project also involves local landowners and private property owners, who are being encouraged to participate in the broader habitat restoration plan. Partnership is critical to the success of the project, as it ensures that conservation efforts are aligned across the entire landscape.

*Diego, one of the volunteer students.*
*© Juan Luigie Ramirez*

## Community Outreach and Education

Although outreach activities have been delayed due to weather events, surveys are being conducted to assess local knowledge about parrot conservation. Once nest maintenance work was completed, the team resumed its educational outreach. At the time of this writing, efforts are still ongoing to gather information on sightings of birds visiting certain communities. However, the populations remain close to the Río Abajo breeding aviaries, possibly as they associate them with being a safe place and a reliable food source. As these birds move closer to communities, the team will see greater progress with local people locating and identifying their native species. These successes are essential for the long-term progress of the project, as local communities play an important role in protecting the forests and the wildlife within them.

## Ongoing Care and Recovery at Iguaca Aviary

In addition to the work being done in the forests, the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Iguaca Aviary at the eastern edge of the island is playing a central role in the recovery of the Puerto Rican Amazon. The aviary team has focused on securing nests for the breeding season, ensuring that the parrots have safe, undisturbed spaces in which to raise their young. The welfare of the parrot population is also being carefully monitored, with daily care also provided to the ambassador Puerto Rican Amazons housed at the El Portal visitor center.

## Working with Local and National Partners

The success of reforestation and conservation efforts is made possible through strong coordination with local and national partners. Organisations like the El Yunque National Forests of the U.S. Forest Service - U.S. Department of Agriculture, along with local conservationists and forestry teams, are playing key roles in sustaining the work. Their expertise and support are invaluable as the project moves forward, helping to ensure that the Puerto Rican Amazon has a future in the wild.

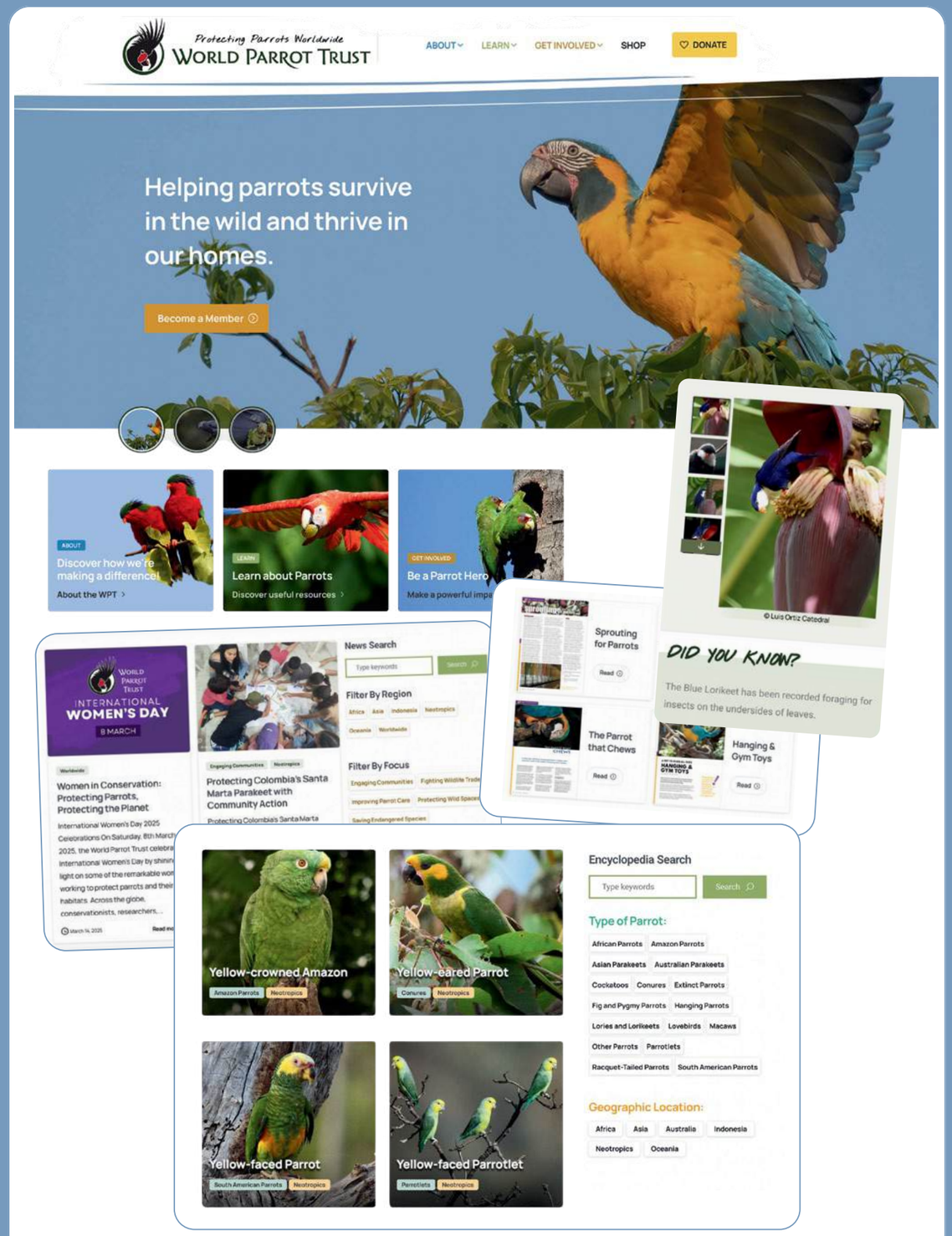
While the path to recovery for the Puerto Rican Amazon is long and challenging, ongoing reforestation and conservation efforts provide substantial hope for the future. Through careful planning, collaboration and community engagement, these efforts are not only restoring forests but also securing a future for one of Puerto Rico's most emblematic and endangered species.

With continued support and dedication, these Amazons may one day thrive again in Puerto Rico. As one team member put it, "We as Puerto Ricans think that the community should have the opportunity to participate of the conservation efforts of a [very] important bird for the Puerto Rican culture."



# New Website, New Look!

Feast your eyes on our shiny, brand-new website at **www.parrots.org**! It's chock-full of the most up-to-date information on wild parrots, companion parrot care, lots of beautiful photos and more.



# WHAT DO PARROTS DO... AT NIGHT?

## New technology provides insights into parrot behaviour after dark

Counting parrots can be pivotal for conservation, allowing us to understand how parrot populations are doing, where we should be focusing conservation efforts and measuring their impacts. But it can also be hugely challenging.

As many parrots come together to roost at night in large communal groups, this can present a good opportunity to get a handle on numbers, with "roost counts" being used to monitor populations in numerous situations. However, counting parrots arriving or leaving a roost can be fraught with difficulties. Parrots may repeatedly land and take off, mixing together with other flocks as they arrive and only settling after dark.

The WPT's Ifeanyi Ezenwa had the bright idea of using night vision binoculars to assist in counting African Grey Parrots in Nigeria, and with the support of funding from WPT and the Conservation Leadership Programme, set out to explore how this technology can help. His team developed a technique whereby a tripod-mounted camera was used to take multiple photos of a roost tree.

The photos were then stitched together, and the parrots counted using a wildlife counting software called dotdotgoose. Individual parrots could be distinguished from foliage due to the strong near infra-red signal from their eyes and surrounding area of bare skin. The method resulted in a dramatic increase in the consistency of population estimates between people doing the counting and has been published in the Journal or Ornithology[1] (Ezenwa et al., 2024).

As well as helping count parrots, night vision also provided some fascinating insights into parrot behaviour, revealing the antics of parrots after nightfall. In particular, we observed a lot of social behaviours, including the preening of other parrots, "head bobbing" as well as aggression, suggesting that gathering at roosts could play a role in the social functioning of parrots.




[1]Ezenwa, I.M., Orakwelu, C.H., Okechukwu, C.R. et al. *'Night vision' cameras as a tool for consistent and repeatable counts at communal overnight roosts for parrots.* J Ornithol (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10336-024-02219-3

## NEWS

### Dedicated Champion of African Parrot Conservation Passes

We at the WPT are deeply saddened by the passing of Pamela Isdell, a remarkable person who was a true champion for the conservation of birds and for Africa's natural environment. Pamela cared deeply about the natural world and had a huge passion and curiosity for parrots.

She was an active supporter of the World Parrot Trust's lovebird conservation programme, supporting research led by Dr. Tiwonge Gawa into Lilian's (Nyasa) Lovebirds which uncovered the importance of protecting stands of "cathedral" Mopane woodlands. More recently, the Isdell Family Foundation has supported population genetic studies of the "eye-ring" lovebirds led by Sascha Dueker, vital to inform conservation interventions, as well as research into infectious diseases and the use of nest boxes to support breeding.

Pamela leaves an important legacy, not just for parrots but for many other bird species and Africa's special wild places. As she said, "I think that the most important thing we must realise is that everyone—even just one person—can make a difference." She certainly took that to heart and exemplified that spirit through her life's work. Our thoughts are with Neville, Cara, Zac and Rory at this sad time.

### Thermal Tech Deployed to Protect Bilbies and Night Parrots from Outback Feral Cats

*Illustration of Night Parrots Elizabeth Gould (1804–1841), Public domain*

Twelve organisations have teamed up to protect endangered endemic species from feral cats in Queensland's Channel Country. As part of a cutting-edge project to monitor these predators, which hunt a wide variety of wildlife, thermal scopes, wildlife cameras, and bioacoustic recorders have been put to use.

A group of pastoralists, state agencies, First Nations rangers, and conservation groups in the state's west have teamed up to protect iconic species from the predator through these means. "Bilbies, Kowaris — which are marsupial mice — and the Night Parrot, which is pretty elusive," said Geoff Penton, Desert Channels Queensland program manager.

**Learn more:**
**tinyurl.com/2c38djut**

### Parrot Trade Front and Centre at CITES Meeting

At the beginning of February, the World Parrot Trust attended the meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in Geneva where a number of important issues concerning the trade in parrots were discussed. WPT supported the deliberations, ensuring the most up to date information from the field was considered and the voices of parrots heard.

Dr. Rowan Martin, WPT's Director of Africa Region and Bird Trade Programs spoke during assembly on key issues including the need to strengthen laws and protections for Grey Parrots in the DRC. WPT's Neotropics Regional Manager Jack Haines joined remotely to present on the importance of conservation translocations to support conservation breeding programs. The WPT also engaged on multiple other issues to support compliance with the convention and strengthen processes to ensure wild populations are not harmed by trade and that the convention does not unintentionally impede conservation programs.

The majority of parrot species are provided with some level of protection under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora but for many species trade remains a major threat to wild populations.

# PSITTASCENE
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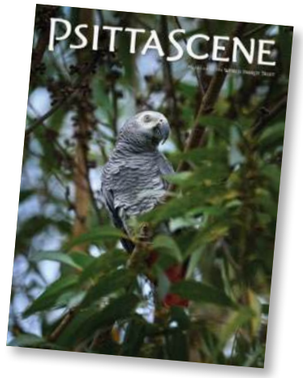


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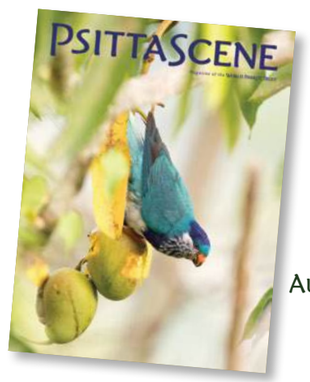


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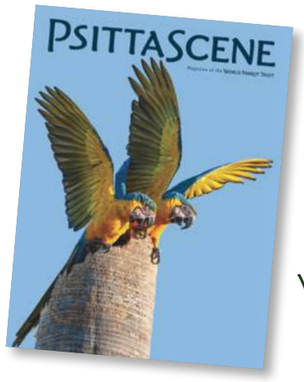


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- Parrots in the Wild: **Nanday Conure**

ACCESS PAST ISSUES AT: PSITTASCENE.ORG

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# PARROTS IN THE WILD:
## Budgerigar
*(Melopsittacus undulatus)*

Budgerigars, or Budgies, are widely distributed throughout the interior of Australia. Their population is generally thought to be increasing overall, but fluctuations in their numbers do occur during drought and migration.