

PSITTAScene

Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Spring 2026



Glanmor House, Hayle
Cornwall TR27 4HB UK
info@parrots.org +44 (0)1736 751026
www.parrots.org

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.

CHARITY INFORMATION

UK Reg. Charity No. 1212263
United States: EIN 62-1561595
Canada: BN 89004 1171 RR0001

Editor: Desi Milpacher

Layout, Design & Production: Michelle Kooistra
Fulfillment (INTL): Prospect Handling Ltd.
Fulfillment (USA): The Addressers

The World Parrot Trust does not necessarily endorse any views or statements made by contributors to *PsittaScene*, and will consider articles or letters from contributors based on their merits. Anyone wishing to reprint *PsittaScene* articles in full or in part needs permission from WPT and the author/photographer(s) and must state that it was copied from *PsittaScene*.

All contents © World Parrot Trust

CONTENTS



- 4** **Grantee Spotlight:**
Aves Argentinas
- 5** **Conserving Parrots in the Atlantic Forest of Argentina**
- 9** **My Experience:**
Personal Insight on Parrot Conservation Projects in Brazil
- 12** **Community and Conservation:**
Supporting Puerto Rican Amazon Recovery
- 16** **Flight of Hope:**
New Beginning for Hyacinth Macaws in the Pantanal
- 22** **Parrot Conservation Grants Program**
2026 Awardees: Plans and Actions
- 26** **PsittaNews**
Parrot news and updates
PS 2025 Index
WPT contacts
- 28** **Parrots in the Wild:**
Western Rosella

ON THE COVER

Vinaceous Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*)
Photo © Corey Raffel

Vinaceous Amazons are found in tropical and subtropical mixed evergreen forest; in Brazil, humid coastal forest and in E Paraguay *Araucaria* stands and *Euterpeedulis* woodlands.

Read more in '*Conserving Parrots in the Atlantic Forest of Argentina*', page 5.





AVES ARGENTINAS

In the Atlantic Forest of northeastern Argentina, Aves Argentinas is leading important efforts to protect one of the region's most threatened parrots — the Vinaceous Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*).

Founded more than a century ago and now with over 4,000 members, Aves Argentinas is the BirdLife International partner in Argentina. The organisation works to conserve more than 1,000 bird species and their habitats through research, conservation action, education and outreach, supported by a nationwide network of volunteers and more than 100 birdwatching clubs.

Much of their parrot conservation work takes place in Misiones Province, where the Atlantic Forest meets neighboring *Araucaria* forests. This diverse landscape supports remarkable biodiversity, with more than 570 bird species recorded. Unfortunately, it is also one of South America's most threatened ecosystems. Habitat loss, forest fragmentation, and capture for the wildlife trade have caused significant declines in several parrot species.

Among the most vulnerable is the Vinaceous Amazon, an endangered parrot that relies on mature forests and natural tree cavities for nesting. In the town of Tobuna, located in the San Pedro Key Biodiversity Area, Aves Argentinas is working with local families to protect one of Argentina's most important remaining populations. Supported in part by the World Parrot Trust's Parrot Conservation Grants, the project focuses on long-term conservation management. Artificial nest boxes are installed to support breeding, while annual surveys track population trends and reproductive success.

Community engagement is central to the effort. Through outreach, education and hands-on activities such as tree climbing and nest monitoring, local residents and children are becoming active partners in safeguarding the future of the Vinaceous Amazon.

Vinaceous Amazon © Marc Estornell, Aves Argentinas



Leave a Legacy

What will be your legacy?

Let your dedication to parrots live on! Leaving a legacy gift to the parrots through your estate may be one of the most fulfilling contributions you will ever make.

Visit our website at parrots.org/legacy or contact an office near you (see page 27.)



Vinaceous Amazon © Marc Estornell, Aves Argentinas

CONSERVING PARROTS IN THE ATLANTIC FOREST OF ARGENTINA

by Rodrigo Fariña and Sofía Zalazar
Atlantic Forest Project, Aves Argentinas

The Iguazú Falls, in the Province of Misiones, Argentina, are one of the most beautiful and attractive sites for nature-loving tourists worldwide. Despite the thousands of people who visit them, few know that this UNESCO World Heritage Site is only a part of more than 1,300,000 hectares (3,212,370 acres) of rainforest. This area connects the last remnants of the Atlantic Forest at the southern limit of this threatened environment's distribution between Argentina and Brazil.

Being at the limit of its range allows for the influence of neighboring environments, such as the humid Gran Chaco region or the grasslands arriving from the pampas in the centre of the country. Conversely, the highland region within the province features patches of Paraná Pine (*Araucaria angustifolia*). This mixture of environments correlates with a rich avian biodiversity, with more than 570 species recorded for the region.



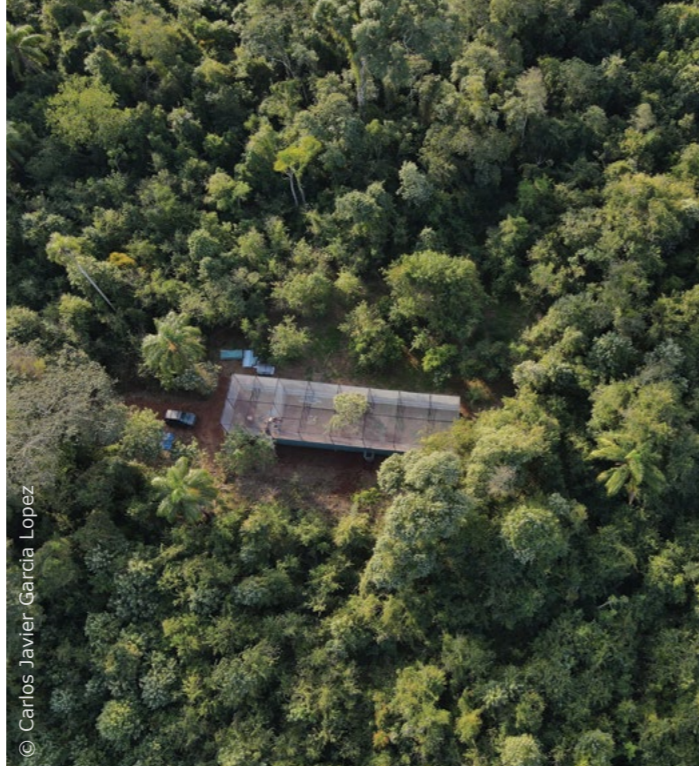
Iguazú Falls © David Aguilar, Getty Images



© Marc Estornell, Aves Argentinas



© Aves Argentinas



© Carlos Javier García López

Left, top: Blue-winged Macaws at feeding station
Left, bottom: Vinaceous Amazon chicks getting a thorough examination
Right, top: Bird's-eye view of the Blue-winged Macaw enclosure at El Puente Verde Reserve



Installing a nest box © Sebastián Navajas, Yetapá Studios

Parrot stories in the Misiones

This region has been inhabited by people since ancient times. Various South American peoples have lived in these fields and forests; all of them have kept parrots and macaws as pets, used their feathers as adornment, and even fed on their meat.

The first naturalists who travelled the basin of the Paraná River spoke of Red-and-green Macaws (*Ara chloropterus*) crossing its banks and described the now-extinct Glaucous Macaw (*Anodorhynchus glaucus*) nesting in cliffs not far from the forest edge. At the same time, these accounts also spoke of Vinaceous Amazons (*Amazona vinacea*) soaring through the skies over the forests.

By the middle of the last century, various research campaigns had collected Red-spectacled Amazons (*Amazona pretrei*), Blue-winged Macaws (*Primolius maracana*), and the aforementioned Vinaceous Amazon. All of these accounts attest to the

diversity of medium and large parrots in these forests.

On the other hand, we know that colonisation processes brought conflicts between parrots and people. Direct persecution began—as in the case of the Blue-winged Macaw—due to it foraging in maize plantations. These conflicts, combined with forest loss and fragmentation, and direct capture for the wildlife trade, led several of these species to a drastic decline in their populations, even resulting in local extinction for some.

The 1980s brought a conservationist perspective to the rainforest and

.....
 Once filled with macaws and Amazons, these forests now hold only echoes of their former abundance.

its fauna. Searches for endangered species also began, including re-recording populations of Vinaceous Amazons in the region. By this time, records of Blue-winged Macaws were already very scarce, and the Red-spectacled Amazon seemed to have disappeared from the *Araucaria* forests in Argentina. Simultaneously, the presence of the majestic Red-and-green Macaw was already under discussion, with suspicions that isolated records came from individuals who escaped from captivity.

By the early 2000s, research by new groups and individuals updated much of the information on these species and began conservation efforts. It was during this time that the town of Tobuna, the epicenter of the Vinaceous Amazon's distribution, proclaimed itself the “Provincial Capital of the Vinaceous Amazon,” turning this threatened species into a town emblem.

Almost twenty years later, Aves Argentinas, the national partner of

BirdLife International, dreamed of a new challenge: the conservation of the Atlantic Forest in Argentina. In this context, it identified the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) of the region and prioritised avian species to work with, always planning projects where research and active management intersected with coordinated work of the local community. Two major plans emerged from this beginning: strengthening the populations of Vinaceous Amazons in Argentina and reintroducing the locally extinct Blue-winged Macaw. Both projects aim for an impact that goes beyond the recovery of both species, driving the search for concrete solutions to reverse the threats that led them to their current situation in the wild.

Recovering a lost Natural Monument

The Blue-winged Macaw was a regular inhabitant of Misiones Province. Without a single apparent explanation, records of this species faded from

the 1980s to the present, and it is now considered extinct in this region by Paraguay, Brasil, and Argentina.

In this context, following the identification of the “Iguazú and surroundings KBA,” Aves Argentinas acquired the El Puente Verde Reserve, a key site for the conservation of this KBA on the banks of the upper Iguazú River basin. Among the priority activities, the “Proyecto Maracaná” seeks to reintroduce this species to the basin. As a first step, interviews were conducted with people living in the region to gain a better idea of the existing knowledge about parrots and their perceptions regarding potential impacts on crops. The results provided the necessary information to understand that the parrots were not considered a problem and that reintroduction would be welcomed.

Based on this, a network was created between breeders and zoological institutions to organise and enhance the breeding of this species.

Simultaneously, the necessary facilities were built at the reserve to receive and train the “maracanás”. Currently, arrangements are being made to receive individuals from other countries to strengthen the project's populations.

Species reintroduction will be a great tool to improve coexistence between small agricultural producers and wildlife, with help being provided to neighbouring families in the search for interactions without impact on crops.



Blue-winged Macaw © Marc Estornell, Aves Argentinas



School children gather around a Vinaceous Amazon chick © Aves Argentinas

Climbing trees, building nest boxes, and protecting chicks—local families are now leading the way in parrot conservation.

Scaling threatened populations

The town of Tobuna is located within the San Pedro KBA. It preserves one of the last remaining Paraná Pine forests in Argentina and a large part of the country's Vinaceous Amazon population. Although this town is proclaimed the Provincial Capital of the species and celebrates an annual festival to commemorate this beautiful bird, many of the behavioural changes necessary to improve its conservation status have not progressed. Land-use change, the felling of trees with active nests and the capture of chicks remain pressures. In this context, Aves Argentinas began the Vinaceous Amazon Project with the goal of improving the species' reproductive success by increasing the supply of cavities and managing chicks. All these objectives are carried out with the support of neighbouring families.

The great challenge is to generate change in a place where the species has been worked with for many years in the past. What to do differently? The answer came from the nest monitoring techniques themselves: climbing! Incorporating climbing as a playful activity for children provided a different approach to protecting the large trees and the lives of parrots. Climbing, playing, and being an active part of the conservation actions produced a significant change in family participation, where residents helped to hang forty nest boxes and monitor natural nests within the farms.




My Experience: PERSONAL INSIGHT INTO PARROT CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN BRAZIL

Article and photos by Reb Davis RVN APVN (avian)

New challenges

Thanks to the support of the World Parrot Trust, Aves Argentinas continues to work on parrot conservation in northern Argentina. Over the coming years, we will seek to strengthen existing projects, increasing the impact on parrot populations and acquiring land to ensure long-term conservation.

Within these new projects, we will aim to understand the health status of wild parrot populations, providing key information for future management decisions in upcoming releases. In addition, within the Vinaceous Amazon Project, we will work on restoring forest patches of importance to the species, enriching them with new saplings of tree species of interest. Simultaneously, new projects with other threatened bird species will be added, seeking to strengthen their populations and the participation of local communities. 



El Puente Verde Reserve © Sergio Moya

As a newcomer to the world of conservation, I wanted to get some real hands-on experience in the field. My background is in veterinary nursing and I have combined my love of parrots and my profession to qualify as an avian nurse. But I wanted to do more; I wanted to understand conservation and the challenges parrots face in the wild.

After much deliberation, I decided on Brazil as my destination; my next step was to find reputable projects. I contacted the World Parrot Trust as I was familiar with the work they do to support parrots. I was put in contact with the following inspiring conservation projects.



Area de Soltura Monitorada de Fauna Silvestre Cambaquara (ASM Cambaquara)

I spent the month of October on the beautiful Island of Ilhabela, east of Sao Paulo, volunteering my skills with ASM and learning about their project. ASM focuses on the Southern Mealy Amazon (*Amazona farinosa*) or Papagaio Moleiro as they are known in Brazilian Portuguese. This species of Amazon parrot, listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, is endemic to Ilhabela where it resides in the vast Atlantic forest that covers most of the island.

The main threats to their survival are illegal trafficking, cat and dog attacks, and impacts with windows. Due to the rise in tourism and Ilhabela's popularity as a destination to visit and live, there has been an increased demand for structural development. With the appeal for modern houses with large glass frontages, skylights and views of the ocean increasing, the parrots have suffered as a direct result, regularly flying into glass windows and balconies. As well as rescuing these casualties, providing treatment and rehabilitation, and eventually release back into the wild, ASM works on public and school education to highlight these threats, and offer advice on prevention and what steps to take if they find injured wildlife.

During my time at ASM, I followed the progress of many individuals. I had the privilege of assisting with the care and rehabilitation of two juvenile Mealy Amazons admitted to ASM by members of the public, one from a likely window collision and the other over concerns that he wasn't feeding well enough in the wild. On admission, they were assessed and their general demeanour monitored and luckily, they had not suffered injuries and seemed to be in good condition other than showing signs of stress.

They were quarantined for a period of time to ensure they were showing no signs of disease, had good appetites, and were able to move around normally. They were very resilient and before long were moved into a bonding aviary with other juveniles, where they were further monitored. The large aviary has several smaller aviaries inside to allow safe interaction between newcomers and the parrots already housed here. After the team are satisfied they are ready, they'll open door to the internal aviary to allow them to choose to socialise with their new flock-mates. Once they have fully integrated, they will all be moved into the much larger flight aviary to begin the rehabilitation process, which typically takes 6 months.

The large flight aviary is affectionately named "WPT," as its construction was funded by the World Parrot Trust back in 2015. The WPT aviary is located apart from the main facility in a more secluded area. Whilst I was there, the aviary housed 25 Southern Mealy Amazons as well as one Green-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos dicolorus*), whose release I was fortunate enough to witness! There, the birds are able to practice their flight skills and flock behaviour. Surrounded by native Atlantic forest, the flock is able to experience wildlife sounds and sights of life in preparation for their release. The parrots currently housed there are due to be released early 2026, when the aviary will be left open for them to leave at their own pace and come and go as they please - known as a 'soft release'.



Top: Vinaceous Amazon in aviary
Middle: Southern Mealy Amazon receiving a health check
Bottom: The author with juvenile Southern Mealy Amazons inside WPT aviary



Field Trip to Araucarias National Park


This placement I did not arrange through WPT; however, they do have links to the project. I was invited to take part in a fieldtrip to Araucarias National Park to monitor Vinaceous Amazons (*Amazona vinacea*) released by The Instituto Fauna Brasil (IFB).

It was incredibly inspiring to be involved with this project. These parrots favour the critically endangered *Araucaria* trees to build their nests in and use as a valuable food source with the *pinhao* (pine nut). The founder of IFB witnessed hundreds of Vinaceous Amazons being confiscated and rehoused into facilities where they would live in limbo, and wanted to rehabilitate them for release back into the wild. As this species had become extinct in Araucarias National Park, it was decided that the Park would be the release site. IFB developed stringent criteria that each parrot had to meet to be eligible for release, including blood tests, behavioural responses, activity and fitness levels, ability to forage and most importantly, a healthy wariness around humans.

The project team has successfully released over 250 individuals; the majority of these birds were, at one point in their lives, kept as pets. I am in awe of this project, never thinking this was possible! These parrots have adapted amazingly well and display very wild behaviours, including defending their nest sites with great aggression! During the fieldtrip we retrieved camera footage from nest boxes to monitor the health and wellbeing of the chicks, where challenges included heights, a dodgy ladder and very protective parents - the hard hats we wore were not only to protect against falling!

We also carried out a full assessment of one clutch of four chicks old enough to be safely removed from the nest boxes. They were all weighed, health checked, had feather plucks for DNA sexing, leg rings applied for identification, and samples taken of a common parasitic larvae for testing. The utmost care was taken to protect their health and welfare during this time: gentle handling and personal protective equipment (PPE) were utilised. These chicks, born in the wild, will go on to continue the conservation of the *Papagaio-de-peito-roxo* within the Araucarias National Park, where they are supposed to be!

My adventure exploring the world of parrot conservation, as well as this small part of Brazil, has been such a beautiful experience made even more special by the welcoming and kind people I have been fortunate enough to spend time with and work alongside. A huge heartfelt thank you goes out to each and every one of them. 📺

 Enjoy videos from my time at these projects on TikTok: @psittizen.squidge.squad



Top: An IFB team member retrieves footage from a camera trap **Bottom:** The author during a health check for Vinaceous Amazon chicks

Community and Conservation: SUPPORTING PUERTO RICAN AMAZON RECOVERY

by WPT Staff

Fast-flying parrots wheel around the forest, calling to each other and alighting on leafy branches in the canopy. You can imagine there being a lot of these expressive birds there, what with the range of whistles and squawks being given. In reality, there are only about 1,000 of them left in the entire world — and efforts to conserve them are, crucially, ongoing.

A Community-Led Effort Takes Root

But more help is at hand: a new community-driven initiative is taking root in Puerto Rico, where the endemic and highly endangered Puerto Rican Amazon lives. The multi-year project aims to reach out to and encourage island residents, school-aged children and educators to become involved in the conservation of their emblematic parrot. The program is anchored at the El Portal Rainforest Center, rebuilt after Hurricane Maria.

Maria and Irma severely damaged the center and caused significant mortality among the wild parrots. The facility, officially El Portal de El Yunque, is the main welcome hub for the El Yunque National Forest, offering maps, exhibits, ranger programs and featuring accessible paths and opportunities to see the critically endangered parrot. Here, communities will learn about and take part in Puerto Rican Amazon conservation efforts through education, habitat restoration and citizen science.

From Personal Passion to National Impact

Back in 2024, project lead Jorge Rivera, of Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium, approached the World Parrot Trust to explore ways to further the island's conservation efforts with a special focus on the Puerto Rican Amazon. He says, "The Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium Conservation Grant Program is a unique opportunity for any KC Zoo employee to partner with a cause they are passionate about to impact conservation efforts throughout the world.

"Throughout my career as an animal care professional, I have been a part of amazing moments in the conservation and animal care space. Perhaps the most rewarding work I've done has been launching this project in my home country of Puerto Rico, connecting people I care about with a cause that matters deeply to many, including myself. My hope while originating this project is that as we connect with students through our immersion workshops, we create a new generation of environmental champions that will carry the conservation torch."



Students aren't just learning about conservation — they're becoming part of it.

Building Partnerships for Lasting Change

WPT encouraged Rivera and the Zoo to establish the community-based initiative under the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Project, with an emphasis on education, outreach, and local engagement to help strengthen long-term conservation impacts for the birds. WPT's Neotropics Regional Director Jack Haines provided logistical expertise and encouraged collaborations from other organisations and individuals in the region, including Gretchen Ruiz Ramos and Jessica Ilse of El Yunque National Forest, Isabel Escalera Garcia of the US Forest Service (USFS), Carmen Portela and Nancy Merlo Hernández of Amigos de El Yunque, and Tanya Martínez from the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Project (PR Department of Natural and Environmental Resources).

Each contributed expert advice for all facets of the program and together worked toward the successful launch of the first phase, Student Workshops, at the Center. The first priority was school outreach and improved access to the site for under-resourced schools.

Restoring Habitat, One Tree at a Time

Liz Vega Acosta, WPT Parrot and Forest Restoration Specialist, has been working with the El Yunque National Forest Ecosystems team since November 2021. Since she began

Top, left: First education event August 2025, "pinta y siembra" (paint and plant), in collaboration with Conservation Opportunity
Top, right: School children during the Immersion Workshop

her work, the main tasks for her and the team have involved a lot of tree climbing to install and maintain artificial nests before and after the parrots' breeding season, and planting trees and restoring forest stands within El Yunque National Forest for future parrot habitat. When she started working for WPT she communicated the need for public education before and during the community engagement project.

Inspiring the Next Generation of Conservationists

In the first cycle of the five-year effort, the team selected schools near El Portal Visitor and Education Center to begin reconnecting young Puerto Ricans to their island's natural heritage. Encouraging a deep sense of stewardship with wildlife and the environment is important to the program, and teaching students about Puerto Rican Amazons is central to that. The lessons are structured to immerse the students in all aspects of the parrots' lives - their ecology, the increasing threats to them and the efforts to secure their recovery. There is strength in numbers, it is said - the team hopes to motivate a new generation of conservationists to do good for Puerto Rico's biodiversity and ensure the long-term success of Puerto Rican Amazon recovery.



Current page: Students take part, indoors and out, in the Immersion Workshop **Opposite page:** WPT team and the community at the Festival del Coco Luquillo (Coconut Festival)

Learning in the Forest, Not Just the Classroom

The first steps of the initiative are aimed at schools in the municipalities of Río Grande and Luquillo. The goal is providing the students and their educators with access to the El Portal Visitor Center, which is operated by the USFS. An immersive environmental education and interpretation program is being given by Amigos de El Yunque Foundation, and about 200 students and their teachers are expected to take part during the academic year 2025-2026, which began in September 2025.

The program has been transformative - students are becoming active explorers and, hopefully, stewards of their native environment. It starts with talks, including an introduction to El Yunque's unique plant and wildlife and the storied history of the Puerto Rican Amazon. Then come the walks out in the forest.

There, the students take in the sights, sounds and smells of their native surroundings. Importantly, they also become citizen scientists: observing wildlife, carefully recording their findings, and engaging in discussions on the link between healthy habitat, wildlife and the well-being of their community. Then there is a break for lunch and a ceremony, the Junior Ranger Pledge, where the students commit to becoming guardians of Puerto Rico's natural heritage.



This project connects people not just to parrots – it links them to their own natural heritage.

Early Momentum and Growing Engagement

As of October of 2025, Amigos de El Yunque's staff had given two workshops to 38 attendees at the El Portal Visitor Center. By then, the team had also given presentations to share knowledge about the project to local partners and educators, and shared a press release highlighting the project's launch. Jorge Rivera travelled to Puerto Rico to provide more support, observe workshops in progress, lead seminars for students, and to help build the next phase of the program with the Amigos de El Yunque team and US Forest Service in alignment with the World Parrot Trust's broader recovery plan for Puerto Rican Amazons. In 2026, educational materials will be created to be included in the project's fledgling community outreach program. So far, participating schools have shown strong enthusiasm for continuing through the next year.



From Local Action to Island-Wide Stewardship

The next phase will reach the wider Puerto Rican public to engage families, local organisations, and civic leaders to participate in community presentations, public events, and citizen science initiatives. The aim is to help shift public perception of parrot conservation from a highly focused scientific effort to a shared source of cultural pride and environmental stewardship - ensuring that the Puerto Rican Amazon's recovery can be a united achievement for and by the island's people. 📍



The recovery of the Puerto Rican Amazon can become a shared source of pride for the entire island.



The vast and beautiful landscape of the Bolivian Pantanal has an amazing capacity for natural renewal. The vibrant and highly intelligent Hyacinth Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) finds, in the San Matías Integrated Management Natural Area (ANMI) in the department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, an ideal and vital environment to establish its home and thrive.

Flight of Hope:

A New Beginning for Hyacinth Macaws in the Pantanal

Article and photos by Rafael Mounzón, WPT Project Coordinator / Fundación CLB Executive Director

In recent years Bolivia has gone through a critical environmental crisis. Large bush fires occurring between 2019 and 2024 severely impacted the rich ecosystem of the Pantanal, reducing wildlife habitat and causing a massive loss of essential natural resources. Faced with this reality, the current priority of local communities and conservationists is to act immediately to ensure that these birds live, reproduce and thrive fully in their natural environment.

To achieve this goal, a strategic and inter-institutional alliance has been formed, made up of the National Service of Protected Areas (SERNAP), the Loros Bolivia Conservation Foundation (CLB), the Phoenix Zoo, and the valuable support of the World Parrot Trust. This dedicated team is completing direct management actions, demonstrating that collaboration is key to providing immediate solutions for the species to be able to breed successfully and recover their populations.





CENSUS HIGHLIGHTS:



349 macaws recorded

representing a strong, resilient population in San Matías



33 sites monitored

by a



22 person team

One of the most coordinated surveys in the region

The “Big Day 2025” Census: Counting to Protect

To direct aid and conservation efforts effectively, we first had to know the current population of the birds. The Blue Macaw Big Day 2025 took place on August 16 and 17 and was an integral part of multi-faceted monitoring coordinated between Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay to accurately assess the health of the *metapopulation* (a group of separate, distinct populations of the same species that interact through migration and dispersal) in the Great Pantanal.

A committed multidisciplinary team of 22 people worked seamlessly thanks to comprehensive logistical support provided by the CLB Foundation, which financed transportation, necessary materials, and food for everyone involved. The results of the census confirmed very encouraging news: 349 individuals currently live in the ANMI San Matías. The records were divided into 170 individuals observed on the first day and 179 recorded on the second day of the expedition.

To protect the birds from any possible threats, we keep their locations secret, referring to them as northern, southern, or eastern zones. The *spatial analysis* (how ecological patterns and processes vary across landscapes) demonstrated an excellent state of population health in their critical refuges:

- The team monitored an impressive 33 sites simultaneously throughout the protected area.
- In a strategic northern zone, observers recorded 60 individuals, almost 20% of the known population in Bolivia, making the area a maximum priority for fire protection and continuous monitoring.
- In one corridor, we observed 27 individuals in full foraging and feeding activity, highlighting it as the most important foraging area.
- Towards the southern and eastern areas of the park, we sighted groups of 20 individuals each, clearly indicating good population health and stability in these specific zones.

Although the core population in the Brazilian Pantanal (Mato Grosso) remains in the range of 6,500 individuals, and northern Paraguay registers a sporadic, very low population of fewer than 50 birds, the 349 individuals confirm that Bolivia has a genetically vital and resilient population. The ANMI San Matías acts as an important “genetic corridor” that connects the populations of the western Pantanal, guaranteeing the long-term diversity of the species.



Left: A small flock of Hyacinth Macaws cling to a dead snag
Top right: A curious pair looks on
Bottom right: An adult bird investigates a tree hollow

The Ecosystem’s Engine and the Importance of Collaboration

Globally, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies the species as Vulnerable (VU). Locally in Bolivia, it is found to be Critically Endangered specifically due to severe habitat fragmentation. Helping the Hyacinth Macaw transcends the simple protection of a beautiful and charismatic bird; it is vital because it acts as a true “Ecosystem Engineer”:

- Scientific data confirms its unique role as a legitimate seed disperser over long distances, covering up to 1.6 kilometers during its daily flights. (Alarcon 2004, Aguilar 2001)
- Its powerful beak opens the hardest fruits of key palms such as the Motacú (*Attalea princeps*) and the Totai (*Acrocomia totai*), which other birds cannot.

- This helps ensure the natural regeneration of gallery forests and the forest islands immersed in the vast savanna. Feeding on Motacú occurred in riverine forests and biological corridors during the census, proving viable food patches still exist.

Without the continued presence of the macaw, the entire Pantanal ecosystem would suffer an irreversible loss of species diversity and complexity of plant communities.

Furthermore, it functions as a critical “Umbrella Species”. By actively protecting the vast territories this bird requires to feed and nest, we indirectly safeguard other threatened species that share the habitat, such as the imposing Marsh Deer (*Blastocerus dichotomus*) and the swift Maned Wolf (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*).

Building Homes After the Fires

The main threat to the bird's survival has been the massive loss of its favoured Panama trees (*Sterculia apetala*), directly caused by the megafires. These majestic forest giants take more than 60 years to naturally form cavities that are suitable for nesting. Their tragic destruction generated a severe "nesting debt" that today prevents the survival, from hatching to fledging, of new chicks into the breeding population.

The census confirmed that, out of the 349 individuals observed, we only detected three instances where birds were active near natural nests in certain areas. This extremely low figure proved that natural nests are critically lacking, justifying the urgent need to intervene with artificial nest boxes.

To effectively address this issue, the team immediately implemented an active management program:

- Five park rangers from the ANMI San Matías traveled to the Gran Mojós Municipal Protected Area in Beni to receive expert, specialised training where they learned how to construct nest boxes, climb trees safely, and monitor artificial nests.
- In 2025, these artificial nests were strategically placed in reserved sectors where the team had noted stable pairs that needed nest cavities.

Community Integration and Active Prevention

Hyacinth Macaw conservation positively empowers local people. The CLB Foundation, acting as a fundamental strategic partner, provided resources to ensure the operability of the park, financing the logistics of the census, covering transportation, materials, and food for a team of 22 people. This continuous injection of resources and teamwork generates local jobs and revitalises surrounding communities, creating a sustainable economy around conservation.



Far left: Installing a nest box for the macaws
Top: The CLB team with artificial nest boxes
Top right: Newly-hatched chicks in a natural cavity
Bottom right: Checking a nest with a pole and camera system

Beyond the population count, the team greatly strengthened the park's preventive response capacity against future incidents by:

- Helping purchase fuel and spare parts for the fleet of trucks and motorcycles, allowing for a rapid and efficient mobilisation of park rangers during active fires.
- Repairing official vehicles that were previously inoperable, ensuring the preventive patrol capacity of the ANMI.

With the partnership of these communities, the SERNAP authorities and the local ranchers, effective conservation can take place. Local people assume a leading role and become the main guardians of their own forest territory.

A Horizon of Blue Skies

The 2024 - 2025 effort improved Hyacinth Macaw conservation in Bolivia for the better by moving to active community management. This was kickstarted by highly-trained park rangers installing nest boxes to help improve breeding success among the macaws.

The immediate challenge we take on today is to ensure that these new nest boxes welcome life with the hatch of the next generation of macaws, ensuring the "blue" keeps painting the Pantanal skies. Thanks to the tireless dedication of the CLB Foundation, SERNAP, the Phoenix Zoo, the World Parrot Trust, and the invaluable local residents, we guarantee that the blue of hope will continue to fly high in the Pantanal for many decades to come. □





PARROT CONSERVATION GRANTS PROGRAM

2026 Parrot Conservation Grants Awardees: Plans and Actions

In 2023, the World Parrot Trust (WPT) and Natural Encounters Conservation Fund (NECF) began funding individuals and organisations engaged in parrot conservation.

Read on to learn a bit about the latest grantees and the vital work they'll do for parrots.

Fundación ProAves Colombia

Country: Colombia

Species: Fuertes' Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca fuertesi*) and Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*)

Status:
Fuertes' Parrot: IUCN-Endangered / CITES Appendix II
Yellow-eared Parrot: IUCN-Vulnerable / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: Conservation work for the two species will continue by increasing climbing capabilities for parrot nest protection, adding more nest inspections and maintenance interventions, and using a coordinated monitoring schedule during the 2026 breeding season. Data collected will include nest occupancy, clutch size and fledge rate, and will be compared with prior years to assess improvements in breeding success and nestling survival.

Use of Funds: Core field equipment, safety consumables and replacements, on-site training support for wardens, support for trained personnel conducting nest inspections, and data collection.



Yellow-eared Parrot © Fundación ProAves Colombia



Sociedad Salvaje Salvadoreña



Country: El Salvador

Species: Yellow-naped Amazon (*Amazona auropalliata*)

Status: IUCN-Critically Endangered / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: Continuing work from 2025, the project's aim is to confirm as many active nests as possible in the eastern region of Bahía de Jiquilisco, and maintain presence in the area to deter poaching while tracking and protecting Yellow-naped Amazons nests. Local workers, environmental police and El Salvador's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) will coordinate and undertake training for the project.

Use of Funds: Support for two-person patrols and transportation to and from fieldwork.



Maroon-fronted Parrot © Steve Milpacher

Aves Argentinas



Country: Argentina

Species: Vinaceous Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*)

Status: IUCN-Endangered / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: Building on previous work, the main objective is to rehabilitate, release and monitor Vinaceous Amazons formerly held in captivity, encouraging collaboration in protecting this species and its habitat. The team will conduct a census of the parrots in captivity and support local residents who wish to voluntarily surrender their birds for rehabilitation and release into the wild. The parrots will then undergo health checks, disease testing, training, and environmental conditioning to prepare them for life in the wild.

Use of Funds: Purchase of equipment and transmitters for tracking, enclosure build, binoculars for monitoring released birds, and educational materials.

Habitats Resilientes A.C.



Country: Mexico

Species: Maroon-fronted Parrot (*Rhynchopsitta terrisi*)

Status: IUCN-Endangered / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: The project's mission is to observe Maroon-fronted Parrot pairs in the Sierra Madre Oriental during the 2026 breeding season, determine the number of active nests at each cliff area, monitor breeding success, assess the physical condition of nesting cavities using a deep-cavity inspection camera, and build local capacity for long-term monitoring of the population.

Use of Funds: Lodging, travel and support for field staff, community monitors and students, along with monitoring equipment, cameras, and field uniforms.

Tera Barra Native Garden Bonaire



Country: Bonaire

Species: Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*)

Status: IUCN-Near Threatened / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: Strengthen the rehabilitation and soft-release program for the Yellow-shouldered Amazon by establishing an on-site facility, using standardised procedures to improve nutritional care and husbandry practices, and supporting coordination at the release site. The effort also includes preparing for increased intake of confiscated parrots from authorities and strengthening collaborations with governmental and non-governmental partners to best care for the birds.

Use of Funds: Building materials, kitchen equipment/appliances, weigh scale, and a whiteboard for record-keeping.

Pronature Alliance Ghana and Parrot Forest Association



Country: Ghana

Species: Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*)

Status: IUCN-Endangered / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: The Parrots and People project aims to positively impact Grey Parrot conservation in Ghana by conducting a survey of Grey Parrots near a village where the birds are found. The team will involve and train a core group of community-based parrot guardians to report poaching activity and illegal logging, and protect and restore habitat. Also planned are education and awareness initiatives in surrounding communities.

Use of Funds: Supporting personnel and purchasing equipment to complete field and educational activities.



Grey Parrot © Zohaib Ahmed, Getty Images

Fundación Ornitológica Txori



Country: Mexico

Species: Military Macaw (*Ara militaris*)

Status: IUCN-Vulnerable / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: Work will reinforce wild populations of the Military Macaw in the central region of Jalisco using captive-bred and government-confiscated birds, and through careful pairing will maintain genetic diversity. Macaws will be conditioned for life in the wild prior to release. The team will educate communities about the project, the legal protections for native parrots, and the ecological and cultural importance of the birds. Habitat will be restored and the habits and movements of released macaws will be noted. Partner teams will share expertise through workshops, training and outreach to strengthen conservation efforts. Field work will include citizen-science programs.

Use of Funds: Travel, aviary building materials, supplies.

Universidade Federal de Roraima



Country: Brazil

Species: Sun Conure (*Aratinga solstitialis*)

Status: IUCN-Endangered / CITES Appendix II

Project Focus: Create bilingual educational materials about the environment and Sun Conures, to be distributed to Macuxi communities located within the species' range. Continue investigating maize crop raiding and subsequent culling of birds by local farmers, using interviews and implementing crop monitoring. Gather data on population abundance by conducting monthly censuses and monitoring in the study area. Produce an information booklet about Sun Conures for children, youth and adults in the region.

Use of Funds: Fieldwork support, fuel and transport; camera, drone, GPS and binoculars for monitoring / documentation, and educational materials.



Sun Conure © Panu Ruangjan, Getty Images

El Jardín Botánico y Parque Municipal Summit



Country: Panama

Species: Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*)

Status: IUCN-Least Concern / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: To establish a managed breeding program for the rehabilitation and reintroduction of Scarlet Macaws at the Summit Botanical Garden. The team will combine biological, behavioural, veterinary, infrastructural, and social components to breed and reintroduce macaws into the area. An awareness and education campaign will highlight the ecological and cultural significance of the Scarlet Macaw.

Use of Funds: Aviary building materials, tools, feeders / waterers, misting / cooling systems, incubator, heat lamps, monitoring cameras, food, supplements, and educational / interpretive materials.

Sociedad Ornitológica de Córdoba (SOC)



Country: Colombia

Species: Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*)

Status: IUCN-Critically Endangered / CITES Appendix I

Project Focus: Strengthen the conservation of the Great Green Macaw through the implementation of collaborative management, monitoring, and habitat restoration strategies developed together with local communities. The team will also design and present training programs, specialised educational materials, and workshops targeting children, youth, teachers and community leaders.

Use of Funds: Support for field and community workers, transport to and from the field, camera trap or camera for nest monitoring. Supplies for nursery / planting, educational materials and workshops.

Birdman George, leading conservationist from the Cook Islands, passes

We at the World Parrot Trust are deeply saddened by the passing of George Teariki Mataki Mateariki, on December 17, 2025. Affectionately known as “Birdman George” or “Uncle George,” he was a champion for the conservation of birds in the Cook Islands. His profound knowledge of the endemic birds of Atiu was instrumental in the recovery of species such as the Rarotongan Flycatcher and the Kuhl’s Lorikeet. In the early 1990s, the Rarotongan Flycatcher population had dwindled to just 29 birds, all confined to Rarotonga. When conservationists initiated efforts to establish a second population on Atiu, George stepped in to monitor the birds. Thanks to his unwavering vigilance, 40 flycatchers were successfully moved to Atiu between 2001 and 2008, leading to a thriving population.

In 2007, George assisted with the capture and transfer of Kuhl’s Lorikeets from Rimatara (in French Polynesia), to Atiu (in the Cook Islands). George also led the efforts to eliminate Mynah birds across Atiu, in one of the earliest examples of eradication of this invasive species. George also played a significant role in educating visitors about the island’s ecology and traditional practices as part of his guided tours. In recognition of his exceptional contributions, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund named him a “hotspot hero” for Polynesia and Melanesia in 2024, a fitting distinction to one of Atiu’s conservation champions. George’s impact went beyond accolades; it resonated deeply within the community, reflecting his unwavering commitment to protecting Atiu’s natural heritage. Uncle George’s legacy will endure and inspire future generations of conservationists.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family and the community during this difficult time.



Photo: George (left) with WPT’s Oceania and Indonesia Regional Director Luis Ortiz-Catedral

A voice for parrots at CITES CoP20

In November 2025, WPT attended the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP20) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The CoP takes place every three years and is a critical forum for the world’s governments to collectively decide how to manage trade in wildlife. The decisions reached at each Conference directly shape how the international community responds to the conservation needs of species affected by trade. They also influence broader strategies to address the interconnected pressures that wildlife face, from habitat loss and fragmentation to emerging diseases.

WPT’s Director of Africa region and Bird Trade programmes Dr. Rowan Martin travelled directly from rural communities in Sierra Leone to the polished floors of the Samarkand conference centre, swapping muddy boots for shiny shoes. The close connections between WPT’s field programmes and policy work ensures information from the conservation front-lines gets to decision-makers and that deliberations on the International stage reflect realities on the ground. At the meeting, numerous decisions affecting the management of trade concerning parrots were made including the re-adoption of Decisions concerning the trade in African Grey Parrots and measures to support the implementation of CITES in several important source and destination countries.

Many other species received increased protections including African hornbills which are often traded together with parrots illegally trapped in the wild.



WPT is delighted to be working with Northern Parrots for THINK PARROTS 2026, taking place at the **Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road East, Sunbury-on-Thames, UK on 7th June.**

This popular, annual event brings together parrot enthusiasts, experts and organisations for a day focused on parrot care, enrichment and wellbeing. The World Parrot Trust will be attending to share our work in global parrot conservation and how this connects with responsible companion parrot care.

Join us at our booth to learn more about how we protect parrots in the wild, support conservation projects worldwide, and promote high standards of welfare for companion parrots.

Get your tickets:
tinyurl.com/thinkparrots26

PSITTASCENE

2025 INDEX



37.1
SPRING

- Update from the Field: **Close encounter with nesting Orange-fronted Parakeets**
- Ciencia Serrana: Working to Conserve the **Santa Marta Parakeet**
- A Joint Effort: Recovering forests for **Puerto Rican Amazons**
- **What Do Parrots Do After Dark?** New technology provides insight



37.2
SUMMER

- Parrot Conservation: **Indonesia and Papua New Guinea**
- **Yellow-naped Amazons:** Breeding support for wild birds
- 2025 FlyFree Training Workshop: **A fellowship of conservationists**
- From Droppings Comes Data: **Harnessing gut microbiomes to combat parrot trade**



37.3
AUTUMN

- **Back to Bali: Return of the Mitchell’s Lorikeet**
- **Lost Lovebirds of Tanzania:** On the hunt for a **mysterious population of Lilian’s Lovebirds**
- **Communities, Nests and Trees: Helping neotropical parrots rebound**
- **Wings of Change: The decline of Brown-Headed Parrots in Malawi**



37.4
WINTER

- **An Out of Season Chick:** Against the Odds
- **The Unfiltered Story of Liberia’s First Parrot Release**
- **Kākā Dispersal:** How Far Do Young Birds Roam After Fledging?
- **The Wild Bird Trade:** Moving Forward and Learning
- **Macaw Conservation In Ecuador’s Threatened Dry Forests**

ACCESS PAST ISSUES AT: [PSITTASCENE.ORG](https://psittascene.org)

WPT CONTACTS

ONLINE

www.parrots.org
facebook.com/WorldParrotTrust
instagram.com/world_parrot_trust
tiktok.com/@worldparrottrust
youtube.com/parrotsdotorg

MAIN BRANCHES

UNITED KINGDOM (Main Office)
 World Parrot Trust
 Glanmor House, Hayle,
 Cornwall, TR27 4HB
 Tel: (44) 01736 751026
admininstrator@parrots.org

UNITED STATES
 WPT-USA
 PO Box 985, Travelers Rest, SC 29690
 Tel: (1) 864 610 2129
usa@parrots.org

CANADA
 Canadian World Parrot Trust
 PO Box 41104 RPO Winfield S,
 Lake Country, BC V4V 1Z7
 Tel: (1) 250 800 3202
canada@parrots.org

ADDITIONAL BRANCHES

Africa	Rowan Martin africa@parrots.org
Australia	Carolyn Pradun australia@parrots.org
Benelux	Ruud Vonk benelux@parrots.org
Belgium	Ronald Coens belgium@parrots.org
Indonesia	Luis Ortiz-Catedral indonesia@parrots.org
Italy	Cristiana Senni csenni@parrots.org
Netherlands	Ria Vonk netherlands@parrots.org
NZ/Oceania	Luis Ortiz-Catedral oceania@parrots.org
Latin America	Rosa Elena Zegarra centralamerica@parrots.org
Sweden	Maria Borgh sweden@parrots.org

PARROTS IN THE WILD:

Western Rosella

(*Platycercus icterotis*)

A welcome splash of colour against a pale background, the Western Rosella is seen in pairs or small groups that are quiet and fairly tame. The birds form larger flocks where food is abundant.

© Corey Raffel

