



LEARS MACAW: A Second Population Confirmed

By Dr Charles A. Munn III

In the late 1970's, Lear's Macaw was located in the wild by a combination of persons. It seems that macaw trappers and a macaw breeder from coastal Brazil first found out about a wild population of this species and then passed this information to scientists at the University of Rio de Janeiro, who subsequently took much of the credit for the "discovery" of this population. It may be hard to unravel the truth of this discovery, but for the purpose of setting the record straight and of evaluating the past conservation significance of information from bird trappers, it would be valuable to investigate further the details of this discovery.

In the mid 1980's, Carlos Yamashita studied the known wild population and published a short communication in the *Wilson Bulletin*. In 1987, while leading the international survey of wild populations of Hyacinth Macaws, Yamashita met and worked with Jorgen Thomsen of TRAFFIC-USA (a division of World Wildlife Fund-US). When Thomsen asked Yamashita what should be done for Lear's Macaw, Yamashita responded that a year-long field study of the feeding ecology and daily movements of the species would allow Brazilian conservation biologists to plan an effective recovery plan for the species. Thomsen and Yamashita located two Brazilian biologists, Ricardo Machado and Alex Brandt, to carry out the study. Very sadly, Alex Brandt died while working on the Lear's project. Judy Hart, MD, of

Houston, Texas, who is a dedicated macaw lover and conservation philanthropist, financed the one-year study. The results of the study suggested that the single known population was short of their main natural food, which is the endosperm or nut meat of the licuri palm (*Syagrus coronatus*).

To prove that the known population of Lear's Macaws was suffering from food shortage, Brandt and Machado's study really required a detailed follow-up study of nesting biology, nestling growth and survival, licuri nut availability within a few kilometers of active nests and ranging and foraging behaviour of breeding birds. The reason that such a study is so important is that even if there is a moderate food shortage, large

parrots such as Lear's Macaw can survive as adults relatively easily for years or even decades but may not be able to breed. To be certain of how severe the food shortage may be and if there will be a lack of recruitment of young birds to the wild population, it is critical to study breeding birds. In January 1993, I observed large numbers of licuri nuts in every stage of development and every age of healthy and young and old licuri palms in large valleys of thousands of acres of intact dry forest within a radius of five kilometers of what Yamashita believes to be active nests. Thus, the obvious question is: do the breeding birds at that nest cliff use the abundant nuts in the surrounding terrain or do they forage further away? Only by

watching the birds to determine if they have active nests and then observing the adults fly off to forage can one start to answer some of these questions. To this date, such a simple study has never been done, not because it would not be easy or important, but because Judy Hart decided unilaterally that detailed studies of nesting birds could provoke birds to abandon their nests or to reduce the amounts they feed to their nestlings. To make sure that no one was able to carry out such obvious and essential studies of nesting birds, Dr Hart repeatedly has asked Brazilian government officials and the owner of the main nesting cliffs of the first population of Lear's macaws to exclude me and my Brazilian



L to R: Yuri de Barros (wearing Hyacinth Fund T-shirt), Marcos Azevedo and two gentlemen who prefer to remain anonymous. In the background are the newly discovered nesting cliffs of Lear's Macaw. Photo: Yuri de Barros

“psittacine
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associates from the region.

Dr Hart told me on the phone in July 1993, that she was worried because she thought I would encourage and train Brazilian biologists to carry out detailed nest studies. During that conversation, which Carlos Yamashita also participated in, I tried to convince Dr Hart that nest studies were essential and harmless. I reminded her that my Wildlife Conservation Society macaw studies in Peru, Bolivia and Brazil had not encountered a single case of nest abandonment in over 200 nests of wild macaws of five different species. More than 25 of those nests were of Hyacinth Macaws, which are congeners of Lear's Macaw. I also reminded her that WWF studies of Hyacinth Macaws had looked into an additional 40 nests without any cases of abandonment. She was not convinced. At the time of our 1993 conversation, Dr Hart estimated that the total global population of Lear's Macaws might be only 40 or 50 birds. I asked her how small the world population would have to be before she would feel that it would be justified to look inside nests and possibly measure nestling growth rates and, if necessary, give the nestlings supplementary food or pull them and feed them in a field station for immediate release (a procedure that we call "assisted fledgling"). She said that even if the birds declined to 20 or even 10 in the world, she would never agree to allowing any biologist to go inside their nests. I told her that I thought that her stance was not a logical or helpful one, for the vast majority (if not all) conservation biologists in Brazil and around the world would feel that nest studies were both necessary and harmless. I also told her that I thought that she would have a hard time finding anyone to agree with her notion of letting the wild population decline to 20 or 10 birds (or extinction) without ever interceding to help boost the productivity of the wild nests. Our conversation ended with us agreeing to disagree on this matter.

If she had been content to let us proceed with reasonable plans for proper nest studies and monitoring of foraging behaviour of breeding birds, by now we would know something about the reproductive success of the wild nests. My Brazilian colleagues and I have found considerable bureaucratic resistance to any field work on this endangered species.

Dr Hart does deserve credit for having been the only source of financial support for critical environmental education work by Biodiversitas Foundation between 1989 and 1994 in the region of the first population of Lear's Macaw. Her financing made it possible for Biodiversitas staff members to fly



Lear's Macaw in flight

Photo: Zig Koch

the tremendous distance from Belo Horizonte to Salvador or Paulo Afonso (about 1,200 km) several times a year and give inspiring lectures to the local children and adults about the uniqueness, beauty and conservation crisis of this beautiful, acrobatic macaw. Unfortunately, this is simply not enough.

Despite these difficulties I was able to report at the January 1995 convention of the International Aviculturists Society, in late 1994, that Dr Pedro Lima of CETREL and his team of biologists and field informants repeatedly observed a flock (but never pinpointed a roost or nest cliff) of at least 20 Lear's Macaws in an area several hundred kilometers away from the previously known population of 117 birds. In June 1995, after several weeks of hard, dangerous field work, Mr Yuri de Barros and Mr Marcos Azevedo, working under the supervision of Pedro Lima, located the exact cliff that this second population uses for sleeping and presumably for nesting. The reason that the work may be dangerous is that small marijuana plantations are rumoured to be hidden in these incredibly remote, wildlife-rich dry valleys. The picture on page 1 clearly shows the desperate nature of the landscape.

Interestingly, interviews of former bird trappers and smugglers indicate that all former and present trappers know that a second population of Lear's exists somewhere in a huge remote area far from the first, well-publicised (and heavily trapped) population, but stay away for fear of being shot by marijuana growers. For this reason, all consider the first population to be the only birds that they can trap with comparative impunity. Reliable information from several sources indicates that over the past 2-3 years trappers caught and sold to bird smugglers approximately 20 of the 117 birds of the first, well-known population. Most or all of these birds were

caught with nets at night near the roosting areas in the Toca cliffs.

Much, if not most, of the trapping at Toca took place after the Toca cliffs were bought (but not guarded) by the Biodiversitas Foundation, which is a Brazilian conservation group based 1,200 kilometers from the Lear's macaw area. Biodiversitas purchased the Toca cliffs with a donation from Judy Hart MD, of Houston, Texas. The latest trapping of Lear's Macaw in Toca occurred in April 1995 when a lone trapper (who is well known by the authorities) caught one bird. With the help of an information network developed by WCS over the past two years, the Brazilian police were able to apprehend this trapper with the Macaw.

With regard to the fate of this bird, it is important to note that in November 1994 the Lear's Macaw Working Group met in Brazil (with Pedro Lima and Charles Munn representing CETREL, World Parrot Trust, and Wildlife Conservation Society) and decided among other things that any Lear's Macaws confiscated from trappers should be sent to the spacious wildlife rehabilitation facilities directed by Pedro Lima, DVM in the centre of the heavily guarded 1,700 acre property of Mr Lima's company, CETREL. The CETREL wildlife facility had several advantages over other options: 1. it is only 350 km from the Lear's macaw range; 2. Mr Lima is a trained, veterinarian with a lot of experience in wildlife rehabilitation; 3. there are no other parrots in the facility (thus reducing risk of disease transmission); and 4. the CETREL property has a substantial number of nut-bearing licuri palms (which could provide fresh licuri nuts for a captive Lear's Macaw). Despite the clear agreement of the Working Group on the issue of disposition of confiscated Lear's Macaws, the confiscated Lear's Macaw was sent to Mr Marcus da Re, who is the biologist in charge of the Spix's Macaw project (a project

administered by Biodiversitas Foundation, which has very good relations with the Brazilian authorities). The bird died some time during the subsequent weeks under circumstances that have not been revealed by the authorities or by Biodiversitas. It would seem odd that the same group did not provide protection for the birds on their property (despite specific warnings at the November 1994 Working Group's meeting on this matter), only to have the bird die rapidly without any public accounting.

Other news relating to the Lear's Macaw is that on 10 October 1995, CETREL, Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Parrot Trust won one of 13 major national environmental awards in Brazil for their joint work to help save Lear's Macaw. These awards which are called the Top de Ecologia (Top in Ecology), are the Brazilian equivalent of the "Oscar" for environmental protection.

Lima and Munn attended the prize ceremony in Sao Paulo. As part of the gala evening, which was attended by several hundred environmental leaders and prominent industrialists. CETREL was given special permission to show a 7-minute video of the macaw work because the prize jury generally felt that the macaw project and its video was particularly appealing. The video, will have its US debut at the IAS convention in Orlando in January 1996.

CETREL, WCS, and the World Parrot Trust won the award in recognition of three lines of action on behalf of the Lear's Macaw: 1. the palm project to grow, plant and fence in 50,000 licuri palms over the next few years; 2. the field work that uncovered the new, previously-unknown population of Lear's Macaws; and 3. the development of a network of local informants (some of whom are former bird trappers) that permits us to dismantle the illegal trade in Lear's Macaw and other rare parrots in NE Brazil.

So far, the first lot of 2,000 small palms are coming along well and a new lot, grown from several tens of thousands of licuri nuts (collected far outside of the Lear's Macaw foraging range) are being prepared for planting. The field work that uncovered the second population of Lear's Macaws also discovered that there is excellent palm regeneration in that area, which never has long droughts and also has no goats and virtually no people. The palm nuts are available year round in large numbers, so the birds should have no problem surviving there. The discovery of this new population in an area that clearly has no food shortage suggests that all concerned about Lear's Macaw need to rethink



Lear's at nest site. Toca cliffs.

Photo: Charlie Munn

carefully the overall conservation strategies for the species, for it now appears to us that it would not be wise to invest more than perhaps 20-35% of our limited annual budgets in palm regeneration.

Additionally, our unique information network is suggesting to us that there may be other previously unknown populations of the species in other remote, biologically-unexplored parts of NE Brazil. When one considers that the dry interior of NE Brazil covers an area about three times the size of California or five times the size of the United Kingdom, it would not necessarily be surprising that there could be other unknown, healthy, but probably fairly small populations of Lear's Macaw in remote corners. If this is the case, then conservation biologists with small budgets must tap into the vast network of local informants and former bird trappers in order to find possible scattered populations before the surviving trappers get to them. It's a race, and the team with the best information network will get to these birds first. We want to make sure that the winners are the conservationists and not the trappers, but the World Parrot Trust needs your support to keep ahead of the trappers and the rich bird collectors who drive the trappers who concentrate on very rare, spectacular parrots like Lear's and Spix's Macaw.

Incidentally, our information network provided us with information about a recent drop in the black market price of Lear's Macaws. In 1994, the price was quite high because bird collectors in the large coastal cities of Brazil, especially of SE Brazil, were eager to acquire Lear's Macaws for their collections. They were willing to buy black market birds at high

prices because they assumed that they would be able to work out some kind of deal with the Brazilian authorities that would allow them to legalise their birds for "scientific breeding": (a euphemism for legalised private collecting of rare bird species). To their credit, the Brazilian authorities held firm (unlike in the case of the Spix's Macaw) and refused to legalise any Lear's Macaws that were not already legalised many years earlier (there have been one or two legalised Lear's Macaws in private collections in Brazil for more than ten years). As a result of this wise decision, the black market asking price for Lear's Macaws has dropped to about 10-15% of the high price of 1994 because no collector can afford to be caught with a Lear's Macaw in his official or hidden collections for fear of having his entire collection confiscated, losing his license for "scientific breeding", and facing heavy fines and possible prison sentences. I applaud the decision of the Brazilian authorities to stick to their principles in the matter of not legalising recently trapped Lear's Macaws, but at the same time I would like to see the authorities honour all other agreements hammered out at the Working Group meeting for Lear's Macaws.

SUMMARY:

Starting in early 1993, the World Parrot Trust, Wildlife Conservation Society and CETREL corporation began working together to try to keep the Lear's Macaw from slipping down the slippery slope of collector-driven trapping to extinction in the wild. We first started by diagnosing and beginning to work on a solution to the apparent problem of lack of adequate palm regeneration in large parts of the range of the first population. We consulted with

Professor Alan Meerow of the University of Florida about palm production. We bought and shipped to Brazil 50,000 plastic palm pots for our palm nursery. Biodiversitas Foundation was helpful to us by lending their importation permits to allow us to import the palm pots without tax (thus showing that we are happy to work early and often with Biodiversitas if they only decide that they can accept us as collaborators). In 1994, we stumbled into some novel sources of information provided by former bird trappers and this information eventually led to our finding the second population of birds in an area very far from the first, an area that has no droughts or goats and thus, has excellent, healthy palm populations in every size and age class. In 1995, we found the nesting cliff of this second population of 22 birds and also received as yet unconfirmed information about several other isolated, widely scattered populations of this spectacular macaw.

The time has now come to spend money for Lear's Macaw on 1) checking the rumours about yet more populations; 2) protecting the second population; 3) protecting (finally) the first population; 4) producing more palm seedlings for the first population; and 5) testing models of ecotourism with the first population to produce some local employment related to the conservation of the first population. We look forward to receiving suggestions and support to help carry out all these activities. Above all, we would ask Brazilian authorities and NGO's to cooperate with us in a sincere and committed manner in order to save this remarkable macaw. Time is running out.

ENDANGERED RED-TAILED BLACK COCKATOOS: Their message to us all.

By David Baker-Gabb (*Director, Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union*).

Landowners in south-western Victoria and neighbouring South Australia no longer hear the evocative 'werloo' call of the Bush Stone-curlew at night as they did in their youth. Nor do they see any more the jaunty Grey-crowned Babbler, Speckled Warbler, Hooded Robin, Regent Honeyeater, Southern Whiteface and a host of other insectivorous birds. The regional extinctions of woodland birds in south-east Australia over the past few decades are surpassed only by the extinctions of mammals last century when Victoria lost 21 species of mammal, 20 of them from woodlands.

And now it is the turn of the magnificent Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. Has our misunderstanding of the land irretrievably set these graceful birds on the road to extinction, or can we arrest their decline and in doing so reverse the decline and loss of other woodland birds?

If you travel with me to south-western Victoria to the remnant stands of River Red Gums and Brown Stringybarks which are home to the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, and stand in the evening where they have made their nocturnal roost for the past few weeks, you will soon hear their

unmistakable calls. First at a distance and then closer and closer come the harsh, bugle-like calls of the flock, sounding like ancient windmills grinding away on rusty bearings. It won't be long before the great black birds are overhead, flying in a loose flock with deep, languid wing beats, with their distinctive silhouettes of long wings and slender bodies. The flock comes sweeping into the crown of a nearby tree. As they land, spreading their tails wide to slow down and steer themselves to a safe landing, the top of the tree is suddenly ablaze with colour as the broad scarlet panels in the tails of the males and the orange-yellow panels in the tails of the females are lit by the rays of the setting sun. As we watch I am planning what we can do together to save these magnificent birds from extinction.

The Red-tailed Black Cockatoo is now officially recognised as endangered. Fewer than 1,000 individuals remain and only about 10% of the population breeds each year. Why are these birds failing to survive where they once thrived? Over the last 100 years we have cleared over half Australia's forests and 30% of its woodlands have been removed or severely degraded. In Victoria, about 85% of

our woodlands and open forests have gone.

The Red-tailed Black Cockatoo feeds mainly on seeds in forests that are dominated by the Brown Stringybark and usually have low heathy plants beneath. The quest for fertile agricultural land has seen these forests reduced to isolated blocks surrounded by crop and pasture land. Fires which burn the canopy of the forest trees can disrupt the production of seed for up to three years, limiting the bird's food supply. The late summer diet of seeds from the Buloke, thought to be important for the newly flying young, is now found chiefly in the trees that remain on roadsides.

The scattered River Red Gums and Yellow Gums which still stand in the surrounding farm land, provide the large, deep hollows which are essential for nesting. Many of these trees are very old or dead and falling from natural decay. They are also being felled for firewood or just pushed over and burnt. Generations of stock and rabbit grazing has allowed little regeneration of young trees to replace the old, and suitable nest hollows do not form until the trees are very old and large - at least 200 years of age. This continuing loss of nest hollows is

one of the greatest threats to the survival of the Cockatoos. The bird's high value in the illegal bird trade also means they are a target for bird trappers, particularly for overseas markets.

The situation for the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo is far from ideal: its range is small and isolated and the birds breed in only part of it, population size is very small, and even though the birds are very long lived, they only raise one young at a time and may not breed every year. Their diet is specialised, nest requirements relatively specific and the places where they nest and feed are threatened. However, if we act boldly this situation is retrievable.

Recent work has identified many of the actions that need to be taken. Local landowners are being encouraged to fence any remaining blocks of forest on their land and particularly to protect nest trees. Replanting of stands of River Red Gums, Yellow Gum and Buloke to link existing trees is beginning. Even the use of artificial nest hollows is showing some success. The co-operation of local people is of vital importance in the retrieval of this species, but city dwellers are not exempt from responsibility and can provide the funds to assist landowners.

One of the main reasons for removal of the old and dead nesting trees is to supply firewood to the large regional centres and Melbourne. Many conservationists are outraged and vocal about the export of 4.8 million tonnes of woodchips each year, yet we consume over 6 million tonnes of native timber annually as domestic firewood. Most of this timber comes from the red gum and box/ironbark woodlands which contain many of our threatened birds and animals. If dead trees must be cut down then it is important that the solid ones, rather than those with hollows, are the ones that landowners select. Ideally our firewood should come from the waste generated by the milling of plantation timbers or from plantations themselves, not from the homes of our wildlife. The timber from demolished suburban fences, old houses and back rooms that make way for our new extensions should not be dumped as landfill but cut for



Joe Forshaw with a Red-tailed Black Cockatoo chick

Photo: Audrey Reynolds

firewood. One side fence and the waste from a small house extension has kept my winter fires going for five years.

What have we learnt from the decline of woodland birds, and have the northern States heard the message from the Red-tailed Black Cockatoos in the south? Unfortunately the destruction of woodlands continues apace to this day, with about 660,000 hectares of native vegetation being cleared in Australia each year. This is equivalent to about one football field every two minutes. The states of Queensland and New South Wales are currently the worst offenders being responsible for 90% of the vegetation cleared in 1990. In that same year, we in Victoria, despite native vegetation retention controls, cleared an additional 6,200 hectares of the little that remains. Tragically, 71% of the vegetation cleared in the 10 years to 1990 is described as "woodland and scrub" and therefore likely to be on land of low productivity which is highly prone to degradation.

Australia is vocal in the international arena in condemning developing nations for their poor environmental practices and destruction of virgin forest. However, our performance is not impressive. It is worse than Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines of whom we are often critical. Only Brazil, Indonesia, Zaire and possibly Mexico and Myanmar have a rate of forest and woodland destruction greater than ours. The rate of loss of bushland in Australia is enormous by comparison with the 105 countries for which there are comparable data. This is why we have hundreds of species of our unique wildlife on the threatened list, including over 150 species or subspecies of birds. That is why huge areas of our country are suffering from wind and water erosion, salinity and declining productivity. Nationally, as much as 51% of land in rural use is seriously degraded and requires treatment. The salinity of many rivers has increased between four and 19 times following clearing. This is why the numbers of all of our six species of spectacular Black Cockatoos around the nation are declining.

How much longer are we going to spend our scarce resources patching up the symptoms and not addressing the cause of the problem which is overclearing and decline of the health of remnant woodlands? We justifiably feel satisfied when we plant trees. Tree planting programs have their place but are too often used as a smokescreen and a political palliative because even today, for every tree that is planted 10 are removed by land clearing. Much



A magnificent River Red Gum in Black Cockatoo country.

Photo: Audrey Reynolds

more importantly, our plantings cannot hope to replace, in the short term, the complex plant communities that comprise the woodland web of life that our birds are telling us is in need of much greater care. Governments of every persuasion will not have the political strength to make the hard decisions and legislate for vegetation retention controls nationally - unless we give them the political strength through force of numbers. No government wants to be seen to remove individual freedoms nor to persecute the already suffering rural community. It does not have to. There are innovative ways of assisting landowners, who are the primary caretakers of the remnants of our forests and woodlands, to keep these vital resources intact. We, who are many in urban Australia, need to demand of ourselves and our politicians that there be a major transfer of funds to those who are few in rural Australia to assist with the fencing and management of remnant vegetation.

There are other far-reaching benefits from protecting our native vegetation. By halting the removal of our forests and woodlands we can substantially reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions. Australia has one of the highest rates of emission per capita in the world. Between one quarter and one third of Australia's greenhouse gases come from vegetation clearing and modification. CO₂ and other greenhouse gases stored in the vegetation are released after clearing, through burning or subsequent breakdown of material. Australia will fail to reach its

targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2000, unless there is a significant shift in the attitudes of both the government and the community. Controlling the destruction of our native bushland will be a cost-effective and beneficial way of reducing these emissions, and of meeting these targets. If industry has a short term problem in meeting emission targets then Governments should assist industry to buy "carbon credits" from landowners who forego productivity gains and retain native vegetation. There is more than just a national responsibility to do this, there is an international one.

The Red-tailed Black Cockatoos of Victoria and South Australia, like so many other bird species, are an indicator to us that we are not managing our environment in a sustainable way. Are we going to heed the warning or are we going to walk away from the reality of over clearing, land degradation, lost productivity and extinction? I want to be able to come back to this forest to see these magnificent birds flying through the evening sky, and to know that we have done all we could do to secure their future. The RAOU routinely involves hundreds of volunteers in its scientifically-based projects and raises funds to implement them. The RAOU has recently raised \$20,000 from its members and supporters to assist landowners and wildlife agencies in the management of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos. Why not join us?!

Further Reading

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ANY EXCUSE TO VISIT ITALY

By Michael Reynolds.

We had heard from our WPT Italy branch that there were a number of unusual developments in the parrot world there, so we took that as a good excuse to visit that most welcoming and friendly country.

In fact, it turned out that Italy is the unwilling recipient of a significant number of illegally imported parrots. We learned from our representative in Italy, Freddie Virili, that there is a continual flow of rare parrots coming into Italy from former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine and elsewhere. It is thought by Italian CITES that much of this trade is controlled by mafia elements based in Russia.

In 1994 CITES stopped a Mercedes coming from Hungary at the Austrian/Italian border at Tarvisio. Inside three very small boxes they found 2 Hyacinth Macaws, 7 Red-fronted Macaws, 19 Tucuman Amazons, and 4 Red-vented Cockatoos. The birds were confiscated and put in the care of Parco Zoo Punte Verde.



One of the smuggled Hyacinth Macaws.

Freddie Virili reports: "All the birds were very stressed and appeared to have been without food and water for several days. We put them in our quarantine station. The two hyacinth macaws were babies, and were much more sick than the others (see Pictures). They were dehydrated and underweight, and our tests showed vast infections of candidiasis and E. coli bacteria. We decided they needed day and night attention, so they were transferred to my home, where they were hand-fed for two weeks. It was a great emotion for me to discover that more than food they needed love, continuing physical contact and reassurance - more so than any other macaws I had reared. After this period they began to feed themselves, and in five weeks they were in good health and independent".

"After the first week or two, the remaining parrots were not showing signs of any serious disease, apart from the Red-vented Cockatoos which were in poor feather condition. When tested, three of the four were positive for PBF, and some months later all four birds died. Clearly, none of these cockatoos could ever have been used for breeding or reintroduction".

"After one year the remaining birds are all in good health and have tested negative to PBF. In our park these birds are constant reminders of a sad and dangerous situation, a symbol of a careless and greedy traffic which damages the chances of threatened species in more than one way I live only a few kilometres from ex-Yugoslavia, where such dreadful crime has been committed that wildlife crime seems of not too much importance. Even so, we must all do what we



Mike and Audrey Reynolds with Italian WPT members.

can to prevent such things. I would ask every genuine parrot breeder: PLEASE DON'T TAKE BIRDS FROM SUSPECT PERSONS OR WITHOUT PROPER PAPERS. ONLY BUY CAPTIVE BRED BIRDS".

We met up with Freddie and a group of WPT Italy members, and visited "Parco Ornitologico Martinat" at Pinerolo near Turin. This newly opened park has what is claimed to be the largest aviary in the world. At 13000sq. metres this may be true, and it was certainly very impressive with flocks of crowned cranes, flamingos, pelicans and many other birds in flight. There were literally hundreds of parrot aviaries, quite spacious but many lacking in 'environmental enrichment'. A pair of Blue-headed Macaws *Ara couloni* were on view (see picture). It would be interesting to know EXACTLY how they found their way into Italy.

We also visited a first class breeding facility owned by two WPT members. This was very impressive in its careful organisation, cleanliness, and detailed understanding of every bird's requirements. None of the more rare parrots are in this collection, but their rearing facility was absolutely full of macaw, amazon and African Grey chicks ranging from newly hatched to fully fledged. To our amazement we learned that the Italian CITES authorities had imposed a complete ban on the movement of parrots from any of the larger parrot collections in the country. This began in February 1995, and when we were there in September the ban was still in place. The effect is that they are unable to sell



Blue-headed Macaw *Ara couloni*

any of their young birds, on which this very committed couple depend for a living.

When you've been around the parrot world for thirty years you have a good idea about who is operating within the rules and who is not. It was clear to me that our members are above suspicion; they have a beautiful large aviary to house 13 Moluccan Cockatoos they've bred, and they are keeping them all for second generation breeding. Questionable parrot people don't do things like that.

Back in the UK, I wrote to CITES Italy and asked them if they could speed up the process of deciding which collections need further investigation or prosecution, and which can resume normal activity. I hope this may help the genuine aviculturists in Italy. As for the rest - the ones who encourage the illegal transportation of birds in cruelly inadequate boxes - I hope they discover that exploiting parrots in hopes of making a fortune is a delusion.



The two birds seven months later, with Freddie Virili

CONSERVATION OF THE RED-VENTED COCKATOO

By Marc Boussekey, EEP Coordinator, Espace Zoologique, (France).

I was able to visit the Philippines again, mainly Palawan from July 12th to August 12th 1995, just after the Red-vented Cockatoo breeding season, to see how the Conservation Program was going on.

My purpose was fourfold:

- to observe some of the latest viable populations of Philippine Cockatoos left on Palawan
- to evaluate the local captive population of this bird
- to meet our Philippine partners involved in the conservation program
- to meet some members of the *Sagip Katala* ("Save the Cockatoo") Movement

I was lucky to be successful on all these points so, we decided to intensify our conservation program in '96 on Palawan.

Red-vented Cockatoo Flocks Observed in the Wild

More than 100 wild Cockatoos were seen in the Palawanese area: 4 flocks from 4 different localities were observed in 4 different activities.

Flock No 1 was seen feeding in the forest surrounding the small village of Tagnipa. The birds were easily approached and were unafraid of man since they are actively protected by the local people even if some predation is made on the rice fields during the harvesting time.

Flock No 2 was observed roosting near the sea shore, on an uninhabited part of the island: again, the birds were not shy at all.

Flock No 3 was a bit more on the alert since the Cockatoos were feeding on the ground and were used to being chased off the corn field. Interestingly, when the flock left the place after half an hour to perch on nearby trees, I could clearly hear the very distinctive calls the juveniles produce when they beg for food. I could even observe one adult regurgitating food to one young. This means there are still some Cockatoo populations where hatchlings are not poached at all. I knew the mangrove area where I watched **Flock No 4** from a previous trip (October 92): local people confirmed to me that Cockatoos were observed daily.

These observations and other information obtained by our local partners indicate there are still some safe and viable populations of

Red-vented Cockatoos in the Palawanese province.

Cockatoos Observed in Captivity

Apart from about 40 Philippine Cockatoos seen at Antonio De Dios facility 12 more were found in private hands.

I was able to visit again the breeding farm of Birds International Incorporated: I was allowed to see some of the hand-reared hatchlings (26 bred this year), two groups of about 20 juveniles from one to two years old and several of the 20 current pairs, 10 of which are already breeding. This local captive population is healthy and really well maintained.

Our Philippine Partners

Priscilla ADRIANO and Art PALATINO are our major partners in the Philippines: the successful broadcast program they have conducted from September 94 to March 95 (and that we sponsored) enabled them to organise a network of local informants and protectors for the Philippine Cockatoo throughout the Palawanese province: the *Sagip Katala* Movement (see references). They were my companions during my field trips. All the places I visited had been checked by them before and all the people I met in the field were members of the movement. I was really impressed by the tremendous work Priscilla and Art have done in convincing villagers to protect the Cockatoo and poachers to stop catching the hatchlings from the nests.

The management staff of the Crocodile Farming Institute provided me with a car and a driver for our field trips: when you know the difficulty of travelling throughout Palawan on local transport, this help was much appreciated. I have had two official meetings with the representatives of the Philippine government in Manila (Quezon City) and in Puerto Princesa in order to discuss progress and plans for Red-vented Cockatoo conservation.

I met again Antonio De Dios: he kindly provided me with the detailed diet of the Philippine Cockatoos in his collection, the data of blood analysis he performed locally and gave me useful information about the management of his breeding Cockatoo group.



William Oliver's superb painting of the Red-vented Cockatoo has been used for education and fund-raising.

The Sagip Katala Movement

I was pleased to meet several members of the *Sagip Katala* Movement on 4 different places in the Palawanese province.

Interestingly, two of them were ex-poachers: they showed me several Cockatoo nesting trees and how they climbed the trunk in order to catch the hatchlings. I was impressed by the height of these trees: they are usually the tallest of the area with nest holes more than 30 meters high! The knowledge these ex-poachers have on the Cockatoos is now very useful for our conservation program.

I was guided and hosted on Dumaran island by one very dedicated member, Ralph CUDILLA who is very keen to protect wildlife on this small island off Palawan: he was sure that no poaching occurs in this refuge for the Cockatoo (one of the best: 100 birds are said to live there).

The students of the Palawan State University I met are very important to spread information at school: they were really active during the radio program.

Because of the good results obtained by Priscilla ADRIANO and Art PALATINO with their broadcast program, the hope to save the Red-vented Cockatoo in the Palawanese province is increasing, at least in the areas where viable populations can still be found. Our Philippine partners are really active and eager to succeed. The *Sagip Katala* Movement numbers 40 people involved in 5 different localities. The local government has recently

issued an official memoranda on Cockatoo conservation.

Nevertheless, three aspects can be improved in 96: to increase the awareness and participation of local people, to make sure the nests are not poached, and to offer a reliable and qualified facility for the confiscated birds. The problem of the occurrence of PBF in the wild population was also discussed. So, we have decided:

- to pursue the broadcast program and to set up a nest protection scheme with the help of the ex-poachers, giving incentives to them: Priscilla and Art will submit their proposal at the end of September 95.
- to build a quarantine and aviary within the CFI Wildlife Rescue Centre: a project will be ready soon.
- to initiate a PBF research program in testing not only the hatchlings in the nests (Nicolas RICHERT's veterinary thesis) but also the confiscated birds (Mundita SISON LIM's proposal)

I do hope we shall be able to raise enough funds to sponsor this exciting program: we have now the chance to succeed in saving the Red-vented Cockatoo on Palawan.

The World Parrot Trust has previously assisted Marc Boussekey's work with this cockatoo, by providing funds towards flights. The project is in a very positive phase so the Trustees have therefore decided to provide \$2000 (approx. £1300) towards a total requirement of \$17470.

TRUE FRIENDS OF THE PARROTS

by Mike Reynolds, Hon. Director, World Parrot Trust

I thought members might like an update on some of our activities, and news of new developments.

First, the New Parrot Action Plan, described in the August 1995 issue of *PittaScene*, is making steady progress. The Co-ordinating Committee has been formed, with Mariano Gimenez-Dixon representing IUCN, Colin Bibby representing BirdLife International, Noel Snyder representing the Association for Parrot Conservation and myself for World Parrot Trust. We hope shortly to appoint the experts who will compile the information, both centrally and in the three regions.

On a very different matter, we have had a most encouraging meeting with the UK's leading cartoon animation company, TV Cartoons Ltd (who made the internationally acclaimed 'The Snowman'), to discuss an idea we have to establish the parrots as environmentalists in their own right. We have designed a group of militant but humorous parrots known as 'THE PARROTROOPERS' (see illustration) and organised registered trade marks in all key countries. Our birds are based on actual parrot species, and use their

superior intelligence and powers of speech to resist the destruction of the world's natural wonders and resources. They invite the children of the world to join them in their mission. They have their own song, the last verse of which goes:

'So please come and join us, children who care,

'Cos you, just like us are endangered and rare.

Save the seas and the rivers, the rainforests too,

So there WILL be a future, for us and for YOU.'

Clearly, this project is a complete long shot and it would be unwise to expect it to succeed. Nonetheless, we will pursue it vigorously, and at this stage we are seeking funding to produce a pilot film of about three minutes length. This will cost £20000, so obviously it cannot be paid for from our WPT funds, which are committed to direct action to help the survival and welfare of parrots. What we need is an 'angel' who may like to fund what could lead to an outstanding international educational asset for the Trust and of course, substantial income for our conservation projects. If any of our members are friendly with

conservation-minded media moguls such as Ted Turner or Jane Fonda, please get in touch.

I've had a lot of discussion with a member who supplies four-wheel drive vehicles to a number of wildlife charities. The reason for this is that we have requests for such vehicles to help parrot-related projects in Africa, Brazil and Mauritius. New vehicles cannot be afforded, but a decent second hand Land Rover or Toyota can cost around £10000 or \$15000. We can currently get close to affording one vehicle but would appreciate any specific donations to help us buy the others; alternatively, does our membership include a financial genius who can work out how to buy 3 Toyotas for the price of 1?

We have a new plain paper fax machine (purchased by Paradise Park for the World Parrot Trust) which is a pleasure to use. It has one-button dialling for up to 100 numbers and can also send 'group' messages; this facility allows us, for example, to send the same message to all of our branches with the press of one button. The correspondence with our branches increases all the time. Memberships are growing well, mostly due to our being represented by competent, motivated members in (in order of founding) United Kingdom, Benelux, Canada, Denmark, France, USA and Italy.

New groups are now getting under way in four 'new' countries: Australia (contact Peter Sipek, 1 Rossell Place, GLENFIELD, NSW 2167, Australia, tel: (02) 829 2382. Membership costs AUD40); Germany (contact Gerry and Doris Harries, VodeStr. 39, 44625 HERNE, Germany. Tel/fax: 2323.40989. Membership costs DM35); Africa (contact Mike Perrin, WPTA, Private Bag X01, Scottsville, Natal, South Africa. Fax: 331.260.5105. Membership costs R100); Switzerland (contact Lars Lepperhoff, Sagemattstrasse 31, 3097 LIEBEFELD, Switzerland. Tel: 971.9452. Membership costs SFr.30).

Members in all countries are invited to refer potential new members to our contact addresses, all listed above or on page 15. Any ideas on fundraising, attending meetings, potential projects etc., will be most welcome.

On the subject of fundraising, we must highlight the remarkable contributions of David Johnston. You may recall that David donated a superb original painting of Lear's Macaw to the Trust. We made a

limited edition print of this, and it has been very successful, earning funds which have gone directly to help the conservation of this very endangered species. Incidentally, we can still supply this print at £38 or \$55 including postage. The fabulous original painting is available for a sum in the region of £3500 or \$5000. (Bear in mind that David's painting of the St Vincent Parrot was sold at the 1990 Loro Parque Convention for a reported \$36000).

About a year ago David rang us to say that he'd arranged for the Trust to receive a royalty from a series of commemorative plates using his parrot pictures. We thought no more about this until a cheque arrived this week for £3186! It seems the plates are a success, and we can expect further royalties. Sincere thanks to David and his generosity to the parrots.

Someone else who had a truly committed attitude towards the parrots was the late Keith Ewart. I wrote in our November 1991 issue of his deep concern for his birds; I believe he would be delighted to know that his pairs of Citron-crested and Roseate cockatoos are still happily breeding at Paradise Park. For the fifth year running the Keith Ewart Charitable Trust has made a substantial donation towards our work, this time to help the protection of the nests of the Red-tailed Amazon in Brazil.

Many animal lovers in the UK and elsewhere, will remember with pleasure the Kilverstone Wildlife Park in Norfolk. Established by Lord and Lady Fisher as a zoo specialising in South American species, it achieved many outstanding breedings, especially of the small primates that are Rosamund Fisher's special interest (as well as her tiny Falabella horses). We were surprised and delighted to receive a large donation recently from the Kilverstone Wildlife Charitable Trust. Logically, we are using these funds to help a number of our projects in South America.

We could mention one or two other supporters, but some are not anxious to find themselves on the 'hit lists' of larger charities who are able to employ rooms full of ruthless fundraisers. We must, however, express our thanks to the many members who add an additional donation to their basic membership fee and those who are kind enough to share windfalls with the Trust, as Sarah Reynolds (no relation) has just done. Thanks also



Parrotroopers!
Fighting for the World



Lear's Macaw
Anodorhynchus leari

From an Original Painting by David Johnston.

Limited Edition No.

David Johnston's Lear's Macaw painting. A print for £38, or the original for £3,500. ALL receipts go direct towards buying a 4WD vehicle.

to Mary Statz of Texas, who raised \$350 while studying, and Ethel Harris in Australia who keeps on selling our T-shirts and has just sent in details of five new members. Around the world we have at least 100 members who keep working away for the Trust, for no financial reward whatsoever. Above all, the members who run our national branches must be applauded for their efforts; these people are all true friends of the parrots.

Enough about raising funds - time to mention some current projects. First, we have just renewed our annual commitment towards the Echo Parakeet in Mauritius. We have increased our funding to £8000 and will send our trustee and consultant Andrew Greenwood to advise, once again, on veterinary aspects of the in situ breeding programme. This season's breeding is going well, with a seventh wild pair having been located and 5 chicks being reared under Ring-necked parakeet foster parents in the aviaries.

Together with Dresden Zoo and 'Fonds fur Bedrothe Papageien' we are continuing to fund the essential work in Brazil to protect the nests of the Red-tailed Amazon *Amazona brasiliensis*. To add to the effort, we are sending Joline Lalime, an Australian biologist currently working at Dresden Zoo, to help the

Brazilian team during the critical nesting period. To remind readers, we have previously reported that in recent years virtually ALL the fledglings of this species have been stolen by poachers.

Following the success of our fourth 'Parrot Bus' in Paraguay, we are now discussing similar projects in two new countries. We won't say which countries until we're sure the funding is available.

Because so many individual pet parrot owners ask us to help house their birds, or make arrangements for them to be kept in a safe and reliable manner after their owners' death, we are planning to build a 'Parrot Sanctuary' on land to be leased to the Trust for a nominal sum by Paradise Park. We are currently drawing up plans for this facility and here again, are seeking potential financial supporters. Any ideas from members would be welcome. So far we have not done as much as we would like for the welfare of pet parrots, although this is a clearly stated objective of the Trust. It seems that the protection of parrots in the wild always demands priority, because so many species are in a critical condition.

It's time, however, for WPT to raise funding specifically for welfare expenditure. This will include educational booklets for new pet parrot owners, posters for pet

stores, vets offices etc, and an eventual video on basic parrot care. Lobbying of governments, the media, and conservation authorities on parrot trade and welfare issues will be given more time.

As you will see in this issue, Lear's Macaw is in much need of funding for Charlie Munn's on-going work with his Brazilian associates in the dry and rugged north-east of Brazil. Our most urgent task right now is to get a Toyota four-wheel drive vehicle out there, to be used to protect the known populations and to try to find additional ones.

A word or two about people here at WPT-UK. Judith Venning, who has been with us as part-time Administrator for five years, has been away ill since August and will not be back until early January. Our thanks to all who have sent their good wishes to her. David Woolcock, Curator at Paradise Park and a Trustee of WPT, will in future devote more time to the Trust, as we have handed over some of his curatorial duties to other very capable Paradise Park staff. I will be spending a couple of months in the United States, where I will hope to be helpful to Cynthia Webb at our US office.

Finally, you will see elsewhere in these pages that Rosemary Low has returned to live in the UK.

Rosemary's commitment to the World Parrot Trust is total and this is demonstrated by the fact that not only does she give us a great deal of her time and speak out for us at every opportunity, she also gives half of her royalties from her book 'Endangered Parrots' to the Trust. (You can order this book direct from our UK office £20.50 inc. postage). Rosemary informs me that the Trust benefits from her will and will also receive her collection of 15000 parrot slides. By mentioning this she hopes to encourage other members and supporters to also think of the Trust when making their wills.

To end on a more cheerful and positive note, I would like to remind all World Parrot Trust members that their membership includes free admission to Paradise Park in Cornwall, and it's always a pleasure to have a chat with visiting members. It's been a wonderful summer, we've bred over forty species here this year (not only parrots, but cranes, owls, touracos, pheasants, woodpeckers, hoopoes, penguins, ibis etc. etc.), and we're busy building new facilities for next year.

Best wishes to all.



Free-flying Scarlet Macaws, waiting to meet you at Paradise Park.

THE ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF PARROTS IN THE BRAZILIAN ATLANTIC FOREST

By Mario Galetti (Wildlife Research Group, Dept. of Anatomy, University of Cambridge, UK).

The Brazilian Atlantic forest once covered 1 million square kilometres when the first Europeans arrived in 1500. Today less than 5% of this forest remains, mostly in small fragments. This forest holds a diversity of endemic parrots, including the Red-tailed Amazon *Amazona brasiliensis*, Red-browed Parrot *Amazona rhodocorytha*, Blue-bellied Parrot *Triclaria malachitacea* and the Ochre-marked Parakeet *Pyrrhura cruentata*.

Nowadays there are few large and well-protected reserves in the Atlantic forest in which parrots can be studied in the wild. One of these forest is Fazenda Interales (now Interales State Park) a splendid reserve covered by 490 km² of luxuriant forest located 4 hours drive from São Paulo city. In this reserve occurs about 350 bird species, a diversity higher than in many localities in Amazon forest.

Six parrots can be observed frequently at Interales: the Reddish-bellied Parakeet *Pyrrhura frontalis*, Plain Parakeet *Brotogeris tirica*, Blue-winged Parrotlet *Forpus xanthopterygius*, Scaly-headed Parrot *Pionus maximiliani*, Red-capped Parrot *Pionopsitta pileata*

and the Blue-bellied Parrot *Triclaria malachitacea*. Two other species also occur in the area but are extremely rare, *Amazona vinacea* and *Touit melanonota*. Almost nothing was known about the ecology of these parrot species until, together with two Brazilian ornithologists (Marco A. Pizo and I. Simão) from the State University of Campinas, I started a long-term study in 1989. In fact, only the Scaly-headed parrot has been studied by myself in a dry semideciduous forest, where the diet of this parrot was composed mainly by leguminous seeds and flowers.

Leguminous fruits are not so common in the Atlantic forest and the dominant families are Lauraceae (avocado family), Rubiaceae and Myrtaceae (guava family). We were interested mainly in the feeding behaviour and flock size seasonality. Financial support was provided by ICBP-PACS Program, World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Fundação O Boticário.

To study parrots in the wild is very difficult and time consuming because they are well camouflaged among the vegetation and live in

forest canopy. They are rarely captured in mist-nets and I believe that this is the main reason why there are so few publications about the ecology of parrots in the Neotropics, since they are the most abundant birds in this area. It is surprising that even for common parrots, such as the Plain Parakeet of the Blue-winged parrotlet, information about their ecology and distribution are mainly anecdotal. At Interales our daily routine starts at dawn, when we try to locate the first parrot flocks leaving the night roosts. The first species to begin daily activity is the Blue-bellied parrot, one of the most unknown and secretive species in the whole Atlantic forest. This parrot flies through the understorey vegetation, swooping between the trees like bats. They live in small flocks, up to 5 birds, and the Blue-bellied parrot is almost silent and has a flute-like song similar to a thrush instead of a parrot.

The Red-capped Parrot was observed perched or eating just twice (both observations eating *Solanum* fruits) and certainly it is the most difficult species to study, not only because they are scarce, but also because they fly very high and may use a huge area to locate food. The Blue-winged Parrotlet is observed mainly in the edge or secondary vegetation and lives in small flocks up to 15 parrots.

We observed the parrots eating flowers, fruits and leaves of 40 plant species at Interales. All parrot species are mainly seed predators, but they also include some amount of flowers (usually rich in nectar) in their diet. The plants most used by them were the *Cecropia* spp., figs *Ficus* spp., the palmito *Euterpe edulis* and some Myrtaceae species. It is important to emphasise that parrots eat many flower species and this item is usually neglected by aviculturists in caged birds. It is well known that Australian parrots eat flowers (nectar) and it seems that Neotropical parrots also need essential amino acids or nutrients found mainly in flowers.

Breeding season occurs from September to December but we failed to find nests, because the large amount of epiphytes covering the trees makes them extremely difficult to find.

At Interales, poaching and trappers do not occur, mainly because of good patrolling in the reserve. However, the state government was forced to sack half of the forestry guards due to the bad economic situation. Now poachers and palmiteiros (people who harvest palm heart) are free to enter Interales. The "palmito" palm fruit are an important food source for parrots and another 20 fruit-eating birds during the winter. Also the impact of parrot trappers on the populations can extirpate some species in a few years (see PsittaScene August 1994 on *Amazona brasiliensis*). As well addressed by Dr Charles Munn (see PsittaScene of May 1995), the first parrots to disappear (by poaching) are macaws, followed by Amazon parrots. We are concerned that after the extinction of these large species in the Atlantic forest, the illegal poaching starts to look for other exotic parrots, such as the Blue-bellied parrot.

Although the Atlantic forest has received much attention and support from the international media and NGO's, it seems that it has not been enough yet to preserve its biodiversity for future generations. More than creating new reserves, it is also necessary to protect the already established ones. Most reserves are understaffed and poorly equipped. Now the second step for the conservation of the Atlantic forest is to find resources to maintain the protection of these reserves.

It is essential to have monetary help from national and international environmental agencies to protect not only Interales, but all reserves in the whole Atlantic forest.

If you want to help the protection of Fazenda Interales, please write to Fundação Florestal, Av. Miguel Stefano, 3900, 04301-903, São Paulo, SP., Brazil.

This article was based on information on:

Galetti, M. 1993. Diet of the Scaly-headed *Pionus maximiliani* in a semideciduous forest in south eastern Brazil. *Biotropica* 25: 419-425.

Pizo, M.A. Simão, I. and M. Galetti (in press). Diet and flock size of sympatric parrots in the Atlantic forest of Brazil. *Ornitologia Neotropical*.



Blue-bellied Parrot *Triclaria malachitacea*.

Photo: Rosemary Low

STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK-CHEEKED LOVEBIRD

By Tim Dodman

We were, by all accounts, an unusual team. I, by virtue of getting everyone together, was leader and therefore assigned strategic decisions, such as how much curry powder to add to the kapenta (cardboard fish). Vincent Katankwa, Acting Director of Livingstone Museum shunned a mountain of paperwork to disappear into the bush, bringing with him Aaron Muchindu (Ornithological Research Assistant) and a vehicle. Vincent possessed the usual skill of being able to turn dried kapenta into a delicacy, whilst Aaron beat the nshima (maize meal) like a skilled oarsman paddling through mud. Joseph Bowa, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Biologist, watched such proceedings from the veranda of his 15 man collapsible palace; and Bob Stjernstedt, master of Zambian bird noise and broken Tanganyika jacks, informed us, whilst crudely chopping bulbs of garlic, of the respective merits of being bitten by different life stages of tsetse fly. Dylan Aspinwall, Chairman of the Zambian Ornithological Society (ZOS), also provided an able assistant - Shati Sakala, the necessary wheels, and about seven different pickles to accompany a cold nshima breakfast. Mwape Sichilongo, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society of Zambia (WCSZ) left us on the infamous Mulobezi Sawmills train, which miraculously failed to derail. Teamwork is all important when you spend a couple of months together in the bush. Although team numbers and personnel fluctuated somewhat during the survey the aim remained the same: to crack the Great *Agapornis* Mystery in south-west Zambia.

The Black-cheeked Lovebird *Agapornis nigrigenis* is an endangered species and Africa's most localised parrot. It is a beautiful bird, with dark brown head contrasting with bright red beak and comical white eye ring. It is sometimes considered conspecific with Lilian's Lovebird *A. lilianae*, which occurs further east. The two species are separated by a block of unsuitable miombo *Brachystegia* woodland along the Zambezi Escarpment. Both inhabit mopane *Colophospermum mopane* woodland, which is a characteristic

of low lying valleys of southern Africa. Mature mopane trees provide roosting and breeding holes for lovebirds, and actively suppress perennial grasses, thus allowing annuals to proliferate. These produce large quantities of seeds which are an important component of the lovebird's diet.

The first lovebirds we saw came to drink at a small pool on the Ngwezi River. Like many seasonal rivers, the Ngwezi is reduced to a series of pools in the dry season. However, there has been a definite decrease in dry season availability of water in the last few decades, mirrored by the pattern of decreasing rainfall. Earlier this century the Ngwezi used to flow all year round according to older villagers. Now people have to dig wells in the riverbed to obtain water in the dry season. A similar pattern has affected other rivers. The majority of lovebird sightings during the rest of the survey were around water sources, especially at riverbeds. Like people, lovebirds need a regular, probably daily, supply of water. *A. nigrigenis* used to occur more widely, with reliable past records from the Bovu and Sinde catchments and mopane woodland east of Livingstone. Although serious trading activities have occurred in the past, it is dry season desiccation due to climatic change that has had a more lasting impact on its status and distribution.

The Black-cheeked Lovebird was a common target for trapping earlier this century. Older villagers remembered the trade well, which offered a welcome income for a bird widely regarded as a pest of sorghum and millet crops. The Mulobezi Sawmills railway was an important route for the trade, and the 16,000 trapped in four weeks in 1929 reported by Moreau are a good indication of its scale. Several villagers reported that the train drivers themselves were the main buyers, whilst others remembered a white hunter who paid for cages of birds to be carried 200 km to Kalomo. Nowadays, trapping is only really carried out for local consumption, mostly in opportunistic non-specific wire or hair snares set around water sources and grain heaps.

Over 350 interviews were conducted, and formed an important part of the survey. Most results were reliable, though there



Black-cheeked Lovebird.

Photo: Rosemary Low

were exceptions, notably when the whole village of Bombwe appeared completely drunk, yet insistent on offering a series of garbled opinions. Many older people gave intriguing accounts from the 1920s and 1930s, often with astonishing consistency, such as the price of 1 shilling and 6 pence (old UK currency) they received for selling one lovebird. Headman Magumwi, whose area supported the highest lovebird population density, reported that lovebird numbers were much lower now than in the past, attributing their decline to the wide reduction in sorghum and millet in favour of maize, especially in the 1950s. He told of raised platforms in grain fields where people would be stationed to set off bells in parts of the field where crop-raiding birds were present, by pulling on long strips of connected sticks.

As we moved through the survey area, we quickly became adept at recognising prime lovebird habitat. The most profitable method for getting an idea of population size was by conducting early morning pool watches, when all lovebird arrivals and departures at pools were recorded between 05.30 hrs and 07.00 hrs, with their associated direction. In this way, a good picture was obtained of relative population density in the area and the distribution of roost or breeding sites. Altogether 2,127 Black-cheeked Lovebirds were

recorded in two months, with an estimated population of 10,000.

Mopane woodland does not support a diverse avifauna, and other habitats in south-west Zambia are better represented elsewhere, so any Important Bird Area should be defined specifically for the Black-cheeked lovebird.

The survey was enormous fun and a great success, especially in the close collaboration fostered between participating organisations. This in-country approach to survey work can be efficient and extremely cost-effective and is an excellent way to encourage active national enthusiasm in (bird) conservation. It is hoped that further joint ventures will take place.

Acknowledgements

This survey was funded by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds as part of BirdLife International's IBA-Africa Programme. Participating organisations in Zambia were National Museums, NPWS, WCSZ and ZOS.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS ROUND-UP



BENELUX

WPT Benelux at Pakara meeting

On October 14 and 15, Pakara staged its second convention. This is a Dutch organisation whose members are devoted to breeding the true parrots (ie, mainly Amazons, Pionus, Cockatoos and Macaws). In conjunction with speakers who covered various subjects, but especially legislation which affects aviculturists, there was a show of owner-bred birds. These were staged in attractive aviaries, each of which contained an entry (a pair, a single bird or even a group) from one exhibitor. In this area WPT Benelux had an attractive stand, manned by Tineke and Driets Vilters and Pierre Claassens. Here they sold T-shirts, videos and greeting cards, made new members and educated visitors about the work of the Trust. An attractive display illustrated various projects which the Trust has funded. We would like to thank these three enthusiastic members for promoting WPT Benelux so well.

On the first evening a small auction was held (appropriately enough, a Dutch auction!). The proceeds were divided between several organisations and we thank the organisers for giving DF302 to the World Parrot Trust. In addition, Witte Molen, a Dutch bird food company, generously donated DF250 of its proceeds from the meeting to WPT, a gesture which was greatly appreciated.



Tineke and Driets Vilters ran a very successful WPT stand at PAKARA.

BOLIVIA

Last year Gran Canaria - this year Bolivia

Laura Neufeld, former aviary manager for John Doole in Winnipeg, spent two months last summer in Gran Canaria. There she assisted Rosemary Low at Palmitos Park in hand-rearing such rare species as Pesquet's Parrot and Pretre's Amazons. In September she entered university, with the eventual aim of a degree in zoology. Early this year she met Charlie Munn at a convention - with an exciting outcome. She spent two months in Bolivia during the summer, helping Charles Munn's researchers.

Her enviable task was that of studying the activities of macaws at their nests - including the Blue-throated Macaw *Ara glaucogularis*! In June she wrote as follows from an Eco Bolivia camp in Caquiahuara, situated in the forest.

"The people here are wonderful. There are seven men who spend their days going through the area on the trails, watching for, among other things, hunters and woodcutters. A group of 18 were caught and the navy was brought in to remove them.

I spend most of my days at the bottom of the cliff where Green-winged and Severe Macaws and White-eyed Conures nest. I spend hours observing and taking notes. We have found quite a bit of competition for nest sites. Just

watching the macaws fly is so incredible - almost beyond words... Today the director of Eco Bolivia, Rosamaria Ruiz took us on a hike to the top of the cliff which I watch from the bottom every day. I sat in the trees and below and above me were the three species mentioned. It was so exhilarating to watch them! The Green-wings are so beautiful; their colours never cease to amaze me. Quite a few Severs were coming over to look at us and chattering. Next location will be further south, where I will be observing Blue-throated Macaws".

How fortunate are today's young people who have such opportunities to assist in the conservation of endangered species! Laurel is certainly one who deserved such an experience and whose enthusiasm, help and observations will benefit the project.

COLOMBIA

COLOMBIA'S WILDLIFE HAS BEEN DEVASTATED BY SMUGGLING OF ENDANGERED SPECIES. NOW DRUG TRAFFICKERS HAVE ENTERED THE LUCRATIVE TRADE.

Last month, Colombian wildlife officials raided a marketplace in Girardot, three hours to the south of the capital, arriving in a motorcade, sealing off the area and swooping up the captives: monkeys, songbirds and raptors, dozens of endangered animals.

"It was a perfect operation," said one official, exulting in having prevented the sale and possible slaughter of the protected species.

Raiders recovered more than 32,000 illegally sold animals last year in lightning operations reminiscent of Colombia's more publicised raids on traffickers of cocaine and heroine.

But they could not prevent smugglers from moving tens of thousands of other endangered animals to the United States and Europe as pets or skins or, in some cases, aphrodisiacs and folk cures.

Colombia's fauna has been devastated as a result. Native monkeys, birds and reptiles such as the bare-faced tamarin, the toucan barbet and the Magdalena caiman are in danger of extinction. The country's 1,600 species of birds are in steady decline. Wildlife authorities say they are hard-

pressed to fight an illegal trade whose global value the World Wildlife Fund estimates at \$20 billion a year. Interpol says the animal trade is the world's second largest illegal business after drug trafficking.

Interpol agents point out that with US demand for illegal reptiles and reptile parts worth an estimated \$1 billion a year, it is impossible to stop the illegal export of iguanas and caimans. The scarlet macaw, which can be bought for \$1.20 in the Colombian jungle, will sometimes bring \$2,000 in a US pet store.

Wildlife experts say that Chinese, Japanese, Sicilian and Russian gangsters are also heavily involved in the wildlife trade. The Cali drug cartel also participates, using regional fishing fleets to smuggle both drugs and animals through the Caribbean to the United States and Europe.

"Police agencies around the world are facing the fact that the drug smuggling goes hand-in-hand with wildlife smuggling and vice versa," said Craig Van Note, the executive vice president of Monitor, an international ecological association.

Penalties are generally lax here for drug offenses and they are practically non-existent for animal trafficking. No Colombian has ever served the mandated six-month to three-year sentence for the crime.

"According to Interpol statistics, crackdowns on drugs in producer nations have encouraged drug traffickers to put their money into animal smuggling, where controls are looser and penalties much less severe," said Manuel Burgos, the director of the National Institute of Wildlife Resources.

Colombia's 70-year old animal smuggling business has traditionally consisted of informal networks. In the vast Amazon and Choco jungles, in the densely wooded eastern plains and on the largely unguarded Pacific and Caribbean coasts, impoverished families have been supplementing their incomes for generations selling macaws, lizards and monkeys.

The United States, with only a few hundred customs agents assigned to monitor the animal trade at airports, is ill-prepared. Inspectors miss an estimated 90% to 95% of animal shipments arriving at John F Kennedy

International Airport in New York, according to Myles Frechette, the US ambassador in Colombia.

A vast internal market complicates the situation. Colombians delight in collecting native parrots, tortoises and monkeys as pets. The late Medellin cocaine boss Pablo Escobar bought and smuggled more than 1,900 animals and imported rhinos and kangaroos for his private zoo.

Superstitions and folk cures abound. In Bogota, a small group of urbanised Indians sells feathers and teeth from exotic species as charms.

On the coast, hundreds of iguanas die each year when locals extract eggs from the females. Eggs of endangered marine tortoises also are eaten and said to have aphrodisiac qualities.

The Colombian government, desperate to stop the destruction, licensed about 150 animal nurseries during the last 10 years. It allowed entrepreneurs to "borrow" iguanas, caimans, boas and other animals from the environment, raise them in captivity and then exploit the second or third generation commercially. The idea is to allow a sustainable use of the animal population.

But officials seem to agree that the best solution is to somehow reduce the insatiable and ever-increasing demand in the United States, Europe and Asia.

DENMARK

WPT'S Danish founders off to Peru

Line Wadum and Michael Iversen, who founded WPT Denmark three years ago and have won over 200 members for us in Scandinavia, are currently spending three months in Peru, helping the work at the Tambopata Research Station where Charlie Munn has been responsible for a number of conservation initiatives. They may also spend some time in Bolivia.

We will look forward to a full report from them on their return.

ECUADOR

Massena's Parrot

After nearly two years of appeals for donations, the Pionus Breeders Association (in the USA) has raised enough funds for an important study. The little-known Massena's or (inaccurately) White-headed Pionus *Pionus seniloides* is to be studied in Ecuador. Ana C. Sosa de Asanza was due to spend a month in Ecuador in June. Her aim during this period was to obtain information on its numbers, distribution and social behaviour! It probably has not been studied in Ecuador since 1926. The intention of the PBA is a long-term study. On



Massena's Parrot, *Pionus seniloides*.

this first occasion, counts will aim to establish the relative abundance of the species at this time, recording frequency of observation and maximum and minimum numbers of individuals. Areas of distribution will be mapped. Comparisons will be made in future years. Massena's Parrot will be surveyed along both sides of the Ecuadorian Andes. It also occurs in the Andes of Venezuela, Colombia and Peru. This *Pionus* is believed to be declining due to habitat destruction and could be the most endangered member of the genus. It is extremely rare in aviculture. The bird depicted is at Loro Parque, Tenerife, where I was partly responsible for hand-rearing the youngster which was reared there in 1988. Another breeding success has occurred since then, but the species has not proved easy to breed. I have a long association with this, my favourite *Pionus*. It dates back to 1969 when I bought a female Massena's for the sum of £13 from a trade stand at the National Exhibition! In those days interest in South American parrots was almost nil! Massena's Parrot is now considered to be a sub-species of the also little-known Plum-crowned Pionus *P. tumultuosus*. However, treating them as separate species may be important for their future conservation. - ROSEMARY LOW.

GERMANY

IPF provide funding for the new Parrot Action Plan

We were delighted to receive a firm commitment of \$4000 from the INSTITUT FÜR PAPAGEIENFORSCHUNG of Germany, towards our target of \$30000 to cover the cost of producing the New Parrot Action Plan.

This institute was formed in 1988 and has 400 members. Its

aims and objectives are very similar to those of the World Parrot Trust, and they have independently funded a number of important parrot conservation projects around the world.

Their chairman, Stefan Luft, has written to say it is vital for there to be a Parrot Action Plan, and their

organisation has no hesitation in committing funds to its achievement.

We are very pleased to have this funding to add to the \$5000 already pledged by WPT. We now have \$9000, with a further \$21000 to be found. Further pledges will be most welcome.

PARROT STUDBOOK COORDINATORS

I = International Studbook

EEP = European Breeding Programme

R = U.K. Regional Studbook

ESB = European Studbook

BLACK CHEEKED LOVEBIRD

(*Agapornis nigrigensis*) *R*

Ann Williams, Bristol Zoo Gardens, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3HA United Kingdom

BLUE-EYED COCKATOO

(*Cacatua ophthalmica*) *R*

PALM COCKATOO

(*Probosciger aterrimus*) EEP*

Dr. Roger Wilkinson, Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, Cheshire. CH2 1LH United Kingdom

BLUE-STREAKED LORY

(*Eos reticulata*) *R*

GOLDEN CONURE

(*Aratinga guarouba*) *R*

c/o The Parrot Society, 108b Fenlake Road, Bedford. MK42 0EU United Kingdom.

BLUE THROATED CONURE

(*Pyrrhura cruentata*) *R*

Stephen Standley, Blackpool Zoo, East Park Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 8PP. United Kingdom.

BLUE THROATED MACAW

(*Ara glaucogularis*) *EEP*

MOUNT APO LORIKEET

(*Trichoglossus johnstoniae*) *ESB*

RED CROWNED AMAZON

(*Amazona rhodocorytha*) *EEP*

RED & BLUE LORIKEET

(*Eos histrio*) *ESB*

Roger Sweeney, Loro Parque, Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife.

BUFFON'S MACAW

(*Ara ambigua*) *EEP*

Martina Müller, Vogelpark Walsrode, Am Rieselbach, D-29664 Walsrode, Germany.

CITRON-CRESTED COCKATOO

(*Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata*) EEP*

GOFFIN'S COCKATOO

(*Cacatua goffini*) *R*

RED-FRONTED MACAW

(*Ara rubrogenys*) *EEP*

David Woolcock, Paradise Park, Hayle, Cornwall. TR27 4HY United Kingdom

CUBAN AMAZON

(*Amazona leucocephala*)

GREEN CHEEKED AMAZON

(*Amazona viridigenalis*) *EEP*

LILACINE AMAZON

(*Amazona autumnalis lilacina*) *R* & *EEP*

Mark Pilgrim, Chester Zoo, Upton by Chester, Cheshire. CH2 1LH United Kingdom

GOLDEN CONURE

(*Aratinga guarouba*) *R*

Bengt Holst, Copenhagen Zoo, Sdr.Fasanvej 79, DK-2000 Frederiksberg, Denmark.

HYACINTHINE MACAW

(*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) *R*

Colin Bath, Paignton Zoological & Botanical Gardens, Totnes Road, Paignton, Devon, United Kingdom.

HYACINTHINE MACAW

(*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) *EEP*

RED TAILED AMAZON

(*Amazona brasiliensis*) *EEP*

Dr. Herbert Lucker, Zoologischer Garten Dresden, Tiergartenstrasse 1 D-8020 Dresden, Germany.

KEA (*Nestor notabilis*) *EEP* & *R*

Duncan Bolton, Bristol Zoo Gardens, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3HA United Kingdom

MOLUCCAN COCKATOO

(*Cacatua moluccensis*) *EEP*

David Field, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 6TS Scotland, United Kingdom.

RED-VENTED COCKATOO

(*Cacatua haematuropygia*) *EEP*

Marc Boussekey, Espace Zoologique, St. Martin-la-Plaine 42800 Rive de Gier, France.

MEXICAN MILITARY MACAW

(*Ara militaris mexicana*) *ESB*

Stephen Vansteenkiste, Antwerp Zoo, Koningin Astridplein 26, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium.

SCARLET MACAW (*Ara macao*) *R*

Chris Gough, Dudley Zoo, 2 The Broadway, Dudley DY1 4QB. United Kingdom

THICK-BILLED PARROT

(*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) *R*

David Jeggo, Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust Les Augres Manor, Trinity, Jersey, Channel Islands.

For all Amazon Studbooks contact:

The Amazon Society

c/o Mrs J. B. Perry, Ways Green House, Queensway, Winsford, Cheshire. CW7 1BH United Kingdom.

For other Lory Studbooks contact:

Trevor Buckell 01980 622573

For all Poicephalus Studbooks contact:

Ken Maddock

c/o Poicephalus Section, The Parrot Society, 43 Churchill Drive, Tarporley, Cheshire. CW6 0BZ United Kingdom.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

After 8 1/2 years in the Canary Islands, first as curator at Loro Parque, then at Palmitos Park, I have returned to the UK to live. This is the result of a decision to drastically reduce the breeding programme at Palmitos Park. I was very sad to leave the wonderful birds I worked with there. However, my move back to England means that I will be able to devote more time to the World Parrot Trust, especially with regard to editing *PsittaScene*. I hope that you will write to me with your comments on and suggestions for this publication. Please let me have your views on content and presentation, either via the Trust or to me at PO Box 100, Mansfield, Notts NG20 9NZ, England.

Incidentally, contrary to rumours which have been circulating, I will not be employed by any bird park. I intend to fill my time by writing and looking after my own small collection of birds.

Rosemary Low

LOVEBIRDS

Lovebirds rank only after budgerigars and cockatiels as the most popular pet birds in the world. In spite of this, comparatively little is known of their lives in the wild. Of the eight species of lovebird, three (the Peach-faced, Masked and Fischer's) are common in aviaries while the remainder are much less prevalent. The Black-cheeked Lovebird is an endangered species, while the Swindern's Lovebird has never even been kept successfully in captivity, let alone bred.

To fill the gaps in our knowledge of these delightful little parrots, the World Parrot Trust will launch Project Lovebird in 1996. To be administered by Leslie Reissner and Linda Anderson in Canada, with the assistance of the Canadian World Parrot Trust, the Project intends to underwrite field research in Africa and provide a better understanding of the situation of lovebirds in the wild. Project Lovebird will be in several phases, with the ultimate goal of assisting local authorities in the conservation of lovebirds.

Project Lovebird will be funded separately from other Trust projects and will be a way for keepers and breeders of lovebirds to become involved in international parrot conservation.

Project Lovebird may be reached directly at 160 Dunbarton Court, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1K4L6 (e-

mail: tdragon@synapse.net) or through the World Parrot Trust.

MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FUND REPORT

From Kirsty Swinnerton

Dear Mike

There follows a brief report by the Echo parakeet team for September. The season has got off to a good start. We have located 5 nests with eggs so far. One pair (who bred last year) seem to have divorced and the male has been seen with a new female so we are unsure at the moment how that will progress. So far we have harvested eggs from two pairs (and left them to recycle in the wild) and three chicks have already hatched in captivity from one of these clutches. The chicks are now about 5 days old and are doing well. In addition, the parrot team has located a new pair (number 7) in the wild at Bel Ombre (a mid-level forest area within the National Park but quite a long way from the main nesting area). The pair were investigating a cavity there, but as yet have not settled down.

Our eight captive birds continue to do well. The breeding pair has not laid eggs yet but we are still hoping she will. The building of a new extension to the present aviary compound in Black River has just begun and we are told should be completed by early February 1996. This is being constructed under the Black River National Park development and includes up to 15 new aviaries for Echo parakeets.



Male Echo Parakeet, Black River Gorges, Mauritius, Nov. 1994

Photo: Tim Lovegrove (who also supplied the shot of a pair of Echo Parakeets on page 16 of the August 1995 *Psittascene*).

We are hoping that there will be no delays and that they will be ready to put this year's fledglings into.

We have started a release of ring-neck parakeets into native forest. We are doing this as a model for an eventual release of Echo parakeets. The 8 birds we are using were hand-reared last year. Later this season, we will be carrying out a second release using fledgling ring-neck parakeets and compare results with the release of the older birds. We are developing the release techniques for these birds and addressing any problems that may arise. Ring-neck parakeets are already well established in Mauritius. All our birds were screened for disease by Andrew prior to release but we are aiming to retrap the birds once we have finished this exercise.

We will keep you in touch with the work as the season progresses.

Best wishes
Kirsty

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ms Low

I want to congratulate you on the recent issue of *PsittaScene* Vol 7 no 2. While all issues are excellent, this one was especially valuable with its emphasis on parrot conservation. In future issues, could you please indicate precise mailing address for donations to organisations such as ARCAS in Guatemala?

I was delighted to finally see a story on Cape Parrots. I have a Cape x Jardine's cross, bred by someone else. She is an incredible bird and I am delighted to read of your love of Capes. She's very bright and active with an endearing personality. She loves to whistle, makes clicking sounds and talks a little, what a little imp! However, I was disappointed that all pictures I have seen of Capes, including yours, make the hens look drab! The forehead and crown is a stunning bright, deep orange and most spectacular. Her underparts are a luminescent emerald which is truly beautiful.

She is very tame and affectionate. Apparently her original owner took her to hospitals and nursing homes to cheer up the patients.

Lastly, I want to thank you and your colleagues at WPT for all you do for parrots. In recent years my life has been greatly enriched by these endearing birds. They merit everything we can possibly do for them! Thanks!

STEWART METZ, M.D.
Madison
Wisconsin 53719

5 ENDANGERED BIRDS FROM OUR PARROT PORTFOLIO

St Vincent Parrot *Amazona guildingii*

In 1993 the Trust sent the third of its Caribbean 'parrot buses' to St Vincent. It has also funded a report by Andrew Greenwood MRCVS into the breeding programme in the government aviaries on St Vincent, and the improvements and avicultural support which will follow.



Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*

The World Parrot Trust has funded biological studies of this species by Dr. Charles Munn and his Brazilian colleagues. Further field work is now under way, and our



HYACINTH FUND needs help.

Echo Parakeet *Psittacula echo*

The World Parrot Trust is in partnership with Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust in a longterm programme to save this parakeet, which is the world's rarest parrot with only about 30 remaining.



Red-tailed Amazon *Amazona brasiliensis*

Only 1,000 birds remain and many chicks are taken from nests for the pet trade. We are working with the Brazilian biologists, Dresden Zoo and ZGAP to protect them.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo



Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne

The Trust has a six year commitment to this programme to help preserve an endangered sub-species of this cockatoo in Victoria and South Australia.

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE SURVIVAL OF ANY OF THESE BIRDS.

AIMS OF THE WORLD PARROT TRUST

The objective of the trust is to promote the survival of all parrot species and the welfare of individual birds.

1. By educating the general public on the threat to parrot survival, and seeking their interest, concern and support.
2. By action to protect and preserve the natural habitats of parrots.
3. By gathering and disseminating information on the status of parrot populations in the wild and in captivity.
4. By advocating effective controls on the international trade in wild-caught parrots, and its replacement by captive-bred birds.
5. By encouraging co-operation in the breeding of parrots by aviculturists and zoological institutions and better liaison between the captive breeding community and conservation bodies, with the aim of creating self-sustaining populations of endangered species.
6. By promoting high standards in the keeping of parrots as pets.
7. By encouraging research projects, i.e. the veterinary care of parrots and the preservation of genetic diversity.
8. By any other means that may be appropriate.

Members receive our quarterly newsletter *PsittaScene* with news about parrot conservation, aviculture and welfare.

Please send your completed form to:

UNITED KINGDOM
World Parrot Trust, Glamor House,
Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4HY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PO Box 341141, Memphis, Tennessee
38184, U.S.A.

CANADA
Mike Pearson, PO Box 29, Mount Hope, Ontario LOR 1W0, Canada.

BENELUX
Mrs. J Fiege, Graafseweg 37, 54 51 NA-MILL Netherlands.

FRANCE
M et Mme Prin, 55 Rue de la Fassierte, 45140 Ingre, France.

DENMARK
M Iversen, Alsikemarken 48 2860 Søborg, Denmark.

ITALY
Freddie Virili, via Matarus w.10, 33100 NIMUS (UDINE) Italy



HELP SAVE THE PARROTS OF THE WORLD

Please join the Trust, or encourage friends to join.

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- UK and Europe (Single) £15
- UK and Europe (Family) £20
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I heard about the World Parrot Trust from.....

PARROTS IN THE WILD



RED-VENTED COCKATOO *Cacatua haematuropygia*

Brief report from Marc Boussekey, EEP Coordinator for this species:-

In the Summer of 1995 I was able, once again, to visit Palawan in The Philippines, and found that there is hope of saving populations of the Red-vented Cockatoo.

In the field more than 100 birds were observed in four locations, carrying out different activities: two flocks were feeding, one on wild seeds and the other on a corn field, another flock was roosting at night, and yet another was seen foraging in the mangrove. These populations are no longer disturbed by the local people. Regarding cockatoos seen in captivity, the colony at Antonio de Dios's facility is breeding well with 26 hatched this year. The local trade is slowly going down, with only three birds seen for sale and some private pet owners are ready to cooperate.

Our Philippine partners, mainly Priscilla Adriano and Art Palatino, are really active on Palawan. They run a weekly broadcast programme and have organised an efficient local network of informants and protectors: this is called the 'Sagip Katala Movement', or 'Save the Cockatoos'.

Three projects are planned for 1996 on Palawan. First, to protect known nesting places. Second, to build an aviary and quarantine facility for confiscated cockatoos. Third, to test for the occurrence of PBFD in the wild population. To achieve these aims more funds are still needed - see our report on page 7 of this issue.

Photo of tame but free-flying Red-vented Cockatoo on Palawan by J. Saint-Pie and Marc Boussekey.

We intend to continue this series of 'Parrots in the Wild', and would welcome suitable photographs from readers.