

Psitta Scene

Magazine of the World Parrot Trust
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Cover Picture By © 2005 World Parrot Trust

Our cover shows an amazon parrot trapped in a mist net. The photographs were taken by WPT supported field researchers who are studying the legal, and supposedly sustainable, trade in parrots from Argentina. In the past, we have not printed photographs of wild birds in distress, but we feel it is important for those concerned about parrots, their conservation and welfare, to be aware that this is the reality for millions of birds a year. The Trust is working to put an end to these practices, and now more than ever, we feel that the European Union, which consumes over 90% of the world's wild-caught birds, must take action to end this cruel and destructive trade.

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Off to Europe?

A sad fate for Argentina's Amazons

By JAMIE GILARDI



As our members are well aware, we've generally avoided the use of graphic pictures of birds in trade - whether being trapped, shipped, or in especially gruesome cases, pictures of birds dead on arrival. In the context of the web pages and our video, "Where the Wild Greys Are," we feel the use of such images is indeed an essential part of the story and we've included them in what we hope is an appropriate manner. We are also acutely aware of the fact that our members are nearly all ardent supporters of a ban on this trade, so we are by no means drawing attention to the issue because we feel that you need convincing in any way. Rather, our aim here is to first thank you for all the ways in which our members have supported this effort over the years, second to review how we've used some of this support, and finally to explain in a bit of detail, just how little things like the TradeBands can have big consequences to our efforts to end this trade once and for all.

In recent months, we have sold many thousands of TradeBands to WPT members, through Paradise Park, and through a growing number of organisations and individuals who are enthused about this fun and effective way to help wild birds. We thank you very much for your help and support, and if you haven't yet had a chance, please "Get Banded" today by picking up a pack for you and your friends. We've also found the bands are popular items in pet stores, veterinary clinics, and bird clubs.

Are the TradeBands really working for the birds? We're thrilled to reply with an emphatic, **yes indeed!** In the last few months, we've been able to make rapid and effective use of these TradeBand funds by

supporting work in Argentina, which has documented the current trapping practices, which target Blue-fronted Amazons (*Amazona aestiva*). This is essential work for several reasons.

First of all, this trapping of amazons is the only harvest of a wild bird anywhere which claims to be sustainable. We're quite certain it is not, incidentally, and have been working (with your help at key times!) to let appropriate officials in the EU and USA know just how unsustainable this harvest is in practice.

Second, this work is sanctioned and overseen by the Argentine government, so they should be following their stated practices. However, our research indicates that these practices are frequently violated.



Blue-fronts recently trapped in the citrus groves of northern Argentina. By law, these birds should be at least 80% juveniles, the birds awaiting export this year were nearly 100% adults.

Photo: © 2005 World Parrot Trust



First, previously trapped birds are tied to a long stick and this stick is then attached high in a fruit tree with additional fruit and nooses to capture the free flying birds. Once the birds have been captured in the nooses they are unable to protect themselves against natural predators and some may be attacked by Hawks and other birds of prey.

Two obvious violations are the use of mist-nets to trap birds which is not approved by the management plan and the fact that most of the free-flying birds captured and sent off for export were adult birds (the legal limit is a maximum of 20% adults).

Third, right now, these birds nearly all go to the EU market. And for the last five years, the Argentine government has been urging the USA to open up its market. We therefore feel that clear documentation of

the practices of the trappers and traders is especially important in providing both sides of the Atlantic with current, accurate, and independent information.

So, you may well ask, "can buying some fun little wrist bands actually help save parrots?" We think it can, we can see that it is already doing so, and we look forward to finding new and creative ways to apply these funds toward ending the legal trade in wild birds.



Although the trappers are meant to target Blue-fronted Amazons, which are legally classified as 'pests' of the citrus groves, other non-target parrots like this Scaly-headed Parrot (Pionus maximiliani) are frequently caught as well.



TradeBands:

Green or **Red** or **Lemon & Lime** or **Blue & Green**

sold in packs of 10 minimum (thru the post)

please order soon as they are
'flying off the shelves....'

for **£10** / **€15** / **US\$20**



you can purchase
them via
worldparrottrust.org
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or
+651 275 1877 (USA)



Once removed from the trees and nooses they are packed tightly in cages and transported to large cities for export. During transport they must rapidly convert to a non-natural diet and they are frequently exposed to and die from the infectious diseases fostered by such crowded conditions.