

PsittaScene



IN THIS ISSUE

A Rare Western Ground Parrot
In Search of Blue-headed Macaws

August 2008

More Greys Released...

...For the full story
see *PsittaScene*
February & May 08
and parrots.org >
current projects >
African Grey

Update from Felix Lankester, Limbe Wildlife Center (LWC)

Back in December 2007 we rescued 1,220 illegally trapped African Grey parrots. Approximately 700 birds were released almost immediately. The remainder of the parrots had damaged feathers from the glue that was used to catch them or from being purposefully cut by the hunters. Each of these injured parrots was treated in January 2008 with the help of a veterinary team from the World Parrot Trust, and they have been recuperating ever since. Now, four months later, some of these parrots have shown, through their ability to fly strongly in the flight cage, that their plumage has recovered enough to begin the final release phase.

However, these will be different from the previous releases, as, rather than taking the selected birds to a nearby forest to be set free, we have decided to simply open their flight cage and allow them to fly off in their own time. The decision to opt for this LWC-based "soft-release" strategy was taken after we saw how well a few parrots who had escaped from the flight cage were doing living free. On Sunday 18th May, the roof of one of the flight cages was peeled back and the first batch of 12 recovered parrots were freed. The sight of a flock of parrots flying strongly through the trees of the LWC is a truly wonderful sight, all the more so when one considers the absolutely appalling conditions in which they arrived 6 months ago.



The Battle Continues

By Fidelis Pegue Manga excerpted from *The Post* (Buea 12 May 2008)

Two "notorious" parrot capturers, Roger Atangana and Ignace Onana were recently arrested and detained pending trial, for illegally trapping African Grey Parrots. The duo is responsible for the capture of over 5,000 parrots each year in Lobeke National Park and its buffer zone, in the East Province. Their arrests were orchestrated by local forest and wildlife authorities, in collaboration with the gendarmerie, facilitated by WWF.

Atangana was arrested in his house after a scuffle which resulted in his being shot in the arm. Onana was arrested while attempting to capture parrots in a forest clearing inside Lobeke (right). They have been operating in complicity for over 10 years. So far this year they are suspected to have slaughtered some 1,000 parrots, exporting the heads and tails for alleged medicinal purposes, according to wildlife authorities.

Eighty percent of parrots exported from Cameroon are captured in Lobeke which harbours a significant population of Grey Parrots. About 15,000 birds are taken out of the region every year, though almost half of this number perishes in transit due to poor handling.

Capturers mostly transport the birds in the night to avoid the numerous law enforcement control posts. The African Grey Parrot is a Class A (totally protected) species in Cameroon and can only be captured upon obtaining a special authorization from the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife.



WPT Launches African Grey Fund

Imperiled species gets a helping hand

Formerly widespread over equatorial Africa, the Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) is now threatened throughout much of its natural range and is disappearing from many countries. Wild populations are in decline due to poaching, capturing for the domestic and international pet trade, habitat destruction, and from land use resource conflicts. WPT's SAVE THE GREYS FUND has been launched to help these charismatic and popular beautiful parrots to survive. The fund's objectives are to protect wild Greys by:

Ending the **trade** in all wild caught African parrots

Parrot populations across Africa have suffered continued losses for decades due to capture for the pet trade. One of the hardest hit species is the Grey Parrot. During the period of 1994-2003, over 359,000 wild-caught individuals were reportedly exported from range states and have most recently suffered from trade for traditional medicines. Our efforts will continue to encourage regional governments and local NGOs to endorse trade bans, support efforts to capture poachers, and to enforce wildlife laws.

Aiding **rehabilitation** and release efforts for confiscated birds

When local efforts succeed in stopping illegal wildlife trade confiscated birds are often left in need of housing and rehabilitation before they can be reintroduced to the wild. With over 20 years of experience, we at the WPT are uniquely positioned to provide veterinary assistance and advice on appropriate care to aid these birds.

Encouraging **sustainable** alternatives to parrot trapping

The trade in wild caught parrots continues due to high demand. This trade creates an income for individuals and local communities, which benefit from the trade. When enforcement efforts succeed in halting the trade, alternative sources of income must be sought for these communities to permanently alter their reliance on income from the parrot trade. We will work to help find sustainable alternative sources of income that help protect parrots.

Re-establishing **wild populations** in suitable areas of their former range

Grey Parrot population declines have been noted in many Africa countries. Although suitable and protected habitat may remain in national parks and reserves often no birds remain. We will work with local governments and NGOs to re-introduce recently confiscated parrots into former range areas to re-establish the species in suitable and protected environments.

Raising **awareness** for the plight of wild Grey parrots

We will continue our efforts to educate in local communities and by increasing international attention to the plight of these parrots.



We need your help

Your support and caring are crucial to our efforts to save African Greys. We have already made an impact in the rescue and rehabilitation of 1200 confiscated Greys in Cameroon. Please help us to continue this important work - find out what you can do to help!

www.parrots.org/savethegreys

...to learn more
please visit
www.parrots.org /
[savethegreys](http://savethegreys.org) or
contact us directly
at our UK or US
office