

in general and fig parrots in particular. Published work from avian nutritionists would be especially valuable. Anyone who can provide such information is asked to contact her at Ul. Arniki 14, 04-903 Warszawa-Miedzeszyn, Poland, or e-mail her at office@kock.pf

UK Conference

November 7th will be an important date in the diary of pet parrot keepers in the UK. The first one-day conference on the better care of pet parrots will take place. The venue is the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, Stratford-on-Avon. The conference will be organised by BirdsFirst in Birdkeeping, a new charity dedicated to raising the standards of care for all birds in aviculture, and by Parrots Magazine. There will be speakers from the USA as well as two vets from the UK, Neil Forbes and Peter Scott. Places will be limited to 100. Further information can be obtained from Greg Glendell, BirdsFirst, Box 227, Shrewsbury, SY4 5WU, telephone 01630 685518.

Young Kakapo Doing Well

by DON MERTON

The six Kakapo chicks reported in the May issue are all doing well. Lisa's three females are weaned and in a pre-release pen on Codfish Island. They will be released via a two-way cat door when the (Austral) winter has passed. The other three are in a pen on Maud Island and are not quite weaned at the time of writing (mid July). They include the smallest whose growth rate had given much cause for concern. He now weighs 1.7kg and has been named Morehu - Maori for survivor.

News from WPT-Benelux

Ruud Vonk, Chairman of this major branch of WPT, gave a talk at the 9th International Symposium at Bietigheim, Germany, on the theme of 'Threatened Parrots'. His presentation was very successful, and he was able to



Yellow-eared Conure

describe several WPT projects. One result of this was a donation of DM600 from the organiser Dr Peter Wüst, and Ruud has allocated these funds to our Echo Parakeet project. Our thanks to Ruud, and to Dr Wüst.

ABC/WPT Conservation Grants 1999/2000

To follow up on last year's grant round American Bird Conservancy (ABC) working again in partnership with World Parrot Trust will consider parrot conservation projects both from current grantees and from new applicants. ABC has produced a list of priority species for conservation action, and proposals addressing the needs of these species are particularly encouraged.

Although primary emphasis will be given to these themes, as usual ABC will also consider proposals for other bird conservation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean undertaken by or involving local conservation groups and individuals. Most grants will be for amounts below the maximum of \$5,000. For full details contact: Luis Naranjo, American Bird Conservancy, PO Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198, USA or visit the ABC website: www.abcbirds.org.

Note: Deadline for applications is September 25th 1999.

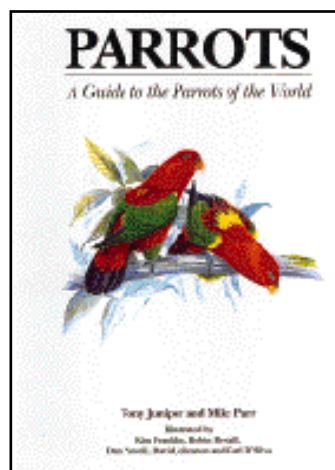
Award for 'Parrots'

'Parrots' A Guide to Parrots of the World by Tony Juniper and

Mike Parr has won the 1998 McColvin Gold Medal of the British Library Association for the 'Most Outstanding Reference Book'. The award was presented to Tony Juniper by the Bishop of London in a ceremony on Tuesday June 22nd.

Tony Juniper is Policy and Campaigns Director for Friends of the Earth (www.foe.co.uk), and Mike Parr is Director of Program Development for American Bird Conservancy (ABC). ABC has an active parrot conservation programme, and working in partnership with World Parrot Trust, is currently supporting parrot projects in ten countries in the Americas. More details can be found on ABC's website at www.abcbirds.org. The authors have also distributed copies of 'Parrots' to customs officers and conservation groups in Latin America to assist with the identification of threatened parrots in illegal trade.

'Parrots' is published in the USA by Yale University Press and in the UK by Pica Press (01580 880 561).



Major Disney Grant for ABC/WPT Projects

The Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund have announced a major grant award to two of the projects jointly supported by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and World Parrot Trust in the small grants for parrot conservation program. The funds will support on-going work on the Yellow-eared Parrot, Red-tailed Amazon, and also support a project in northwest Mexico which will help Military Macaws and Thick-billed Parrots.

More than forty of the parrot species occurring in the Americas are listed as globally threatened by IUCN. ABC's Small Grants Program has, over the years, supported dozens of projects relating to the conservation of these species, but given the critical situation now facing some of the most threatened, ABC teamed up with World Parrot Trust to launch a special program to address their conservation needs. During summer 1998 a call for proposals, accompanied by a list of priority species and suggested conservation actions was circulated. The program received a number of extremely high-quality proposals, and thanks to additional funding from the Barbara Delano Foundation, was able to support thirteen projects in ten countries. The projects include an emergency effort to protect the last remaining population of Yellow-eared Parrot in Colombia; three separate projects tackling the conservation of the threatened northern subspecies of Scarlet Macaw; three Caribbean projects to protect the endemic Amazons of Jamaica, Dominica, and Cayman Brac. A project to assess the population of Blue-winged Macaw in the Brazilian Pantanal; an environmental education project for the Yellow-headed Amazon in Belize; a project to protect the Great Green Macaw in western Ecuador; a project to protect the Blue-fronted Amazon from illegal trade in Brazil; a community development project

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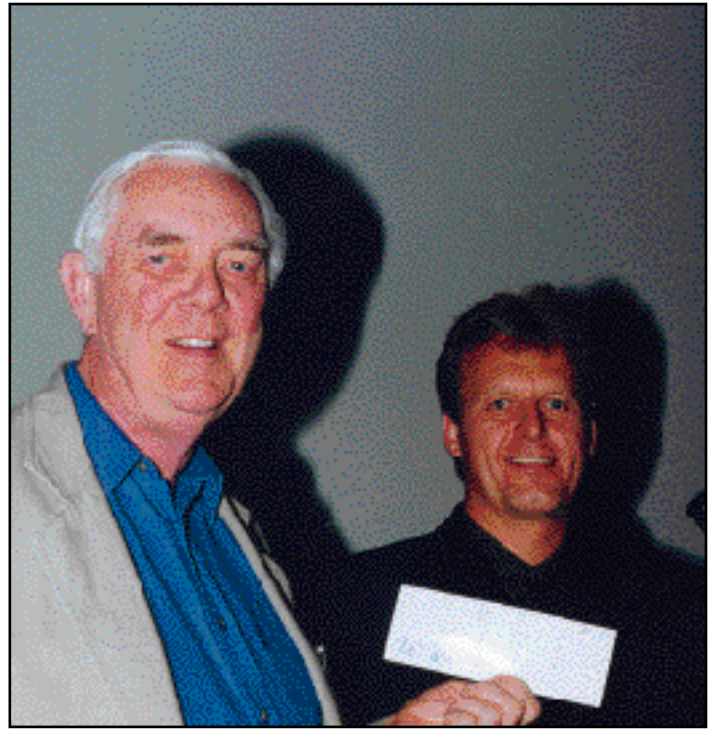
to conserve habitat for the Red-tailed Amazon at Superagui National Park, Brazil; and a generic project to investigate the habitat requirements of wide-ranging species based on the Mealy Amazon in Guatemala. ABC and World Parrot Trust will again be requesting parrot conservation proposals in 1999 to follow up on the success of the programme. Application details can be found on the ABC website www.abcbirds.org

'Birds 99 Convention', Brisbane, Australia June 1999

by MIKE REYNOLDS

This was an extremely well organised and enjoyable convention, and congratulations are due to Bruce Beattie and his

team. It has to be said, however, that Australian aviculturists are not too interested in the conservation of parrots in the wild. I had an opportunity at the gala dinner to remind the 250 delegates that anyone who keeps parrots in captivity has a clear and undoubted responsibility towards the parrots in the wild, and can meet a part of that responsibility by joining the World Parrot Trust. The next day, eleven delegates visited our WPT Australia booth and became members. Which leaves 239 people still to be convinced! One excellent outcome was Mark Hagen's donation of his A\$1200 expenses (as a speaker at the convention) to WPT Australia. This was very welcome, as it will go towards our three year commitment to provide A\$30,000 for research on the Palm Cockatoo. Many thanks Mark!



Mark Hagen presents a cheque to WPT at the 'Birds 99 Convention' in Brisbane.

More on Spix's Macaw

By Michael Reynolds

Readers who have closely read the newspaper articles on pages 6 and 7 will have seen that the fate of Spix's Macaw attracted much interest from the environment correspondents at our press conference. These shrewd and knowledgeable people picked up on the fact that there was only one bird in the wild and forty or so in captivity, and wanted to know why the captive birds were not being put back to support the last wild bird. A reasonable question. They asked who held the captive birds, and I told them that to the best of my knowledge there were 30 plus at Mr. Antonio de Dios's Birds International in Manila, Philippines and, about 12 with Dr Hammerli in Switzerland.

A brief history of this matter is that during the 1980s local trappers in NE Brazil regularly took fledglings from the last one or two Spix's nests, sold them to middlemen in Brazil or Paraguay, who sold them for very large sums to collectors within Brazil, and also to others outside Brazil. All of these movements were completely illegal under Brazilian law, and contrary to the CITES convention. In 1992 an amnesty was negotiated under which the holders of Spix's Macaw were spared prosecution in return for their co-operation in joining a recovery committee which would work to restore the species in the wild.

Since then, a female (recovered from a Brazilian collector and thought to be the original mate of the wild male) was released, but this bird disappeared after some months. Other experiments involving Illiger's Macaws have been made, but my personal view is that the extreme urgency of the situation is not being adequately recognised by the Spix's Macaw Recovery Committee. Alternatively, the problem may be that the holders of the captive birds simply refuse to co-operate in taking the actions that are clearly essential, but require them to send some of their birds back to Brazil to be carefully prepared for release.

Time is of the essence. As Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth, and also co-author of the new 'Parrots' guide, told 'The Times': "It is vital that political and moral pressure is put on the collectors. If this last one goes, then the chances of re-establishing a wild



population might become almost impossible. The last male is needed to teach captive-bred ones how to survive. It knows what predators look like, it knows where the food is, it knows where there is water in the dry season and where nesting sites are". The Times continued: "The urgency of getting

birds back to Brazil has been intensified by the remaining male's liaison with a female Illiger's Macaw. The collectors might be concerned that their birds will be poached if returned to Brazil and released into the wild, but this is unlikely, since local people are fiercely proud of their rare parrot and have pledged to defend it. Since the last male was discovered, camera crews, scientists and twitchers have descended on the area, bringing money to a hard-pressed region. Local people take an immense pride. They even have a pizza restaurant called the Blue Macaw. It is an enormous boost for a poor part of the world".

You will see that Dr. Hammerli says he has sold his birds to somebody else in Switzerland. This demonstrates with absolute clarity that he is not a person with any interest in conservation, and regards his financial interest as the only important factor.

We have written to the person responsible for environmental matters at the Brazilian Embassy in London, offering any help that the World Parrot Trust can supply. In particular we have proposed that Dr. Carl Jones could be asked to carry out an independent review of the Spix's Macaw situation. After all, if anyone can improve the prospects of this bird surviving in the wild, it has to be the man who has saved the Mauritius Kestrel, Pink Pigeon, and now the Echo Parakeet.

Will the Brazilian authorities allow us to help? We will keep our readers informed.