



Mr Nigel Weekes, Director of St. Vincent Forestry Department with captive St. Vincent Amazon parrots in Barbados. Photo: Roger Sweeney. Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary

## St. Vincent Forestry Director visits captive parrots in Barbados

A senior official from the Forestry department of St. Vincent & the Grenadines was in Barbados recently to visit a group of endangered St. Vincent birds living in Barbados as part of a conservation and research project.

Mr. Nigel Weekes, Director of the St. Vincent forestry department, was in Barbados at the invitation of the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary to visit a captive group of St. Vincent Amazon Parrots that have been living in Barbados since the early 1970's. The group of birds had originally been brought to Barbados as part of the former Oughteson Zoo collection. Since the closure of the Zoo in 1998, the birds have now been cared for as part of a conservation outreach programme managed by the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary.

During his three-day working visit to Barbados, Mr. Weekes worked together with officials of the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary to draft a proposal whereby the Sanctuary will participate in a new five-year conservation programme to be initiated by the St. Vincent forestry department. The new programme, which includes elements of captive management and research, study of the behavioural ecology of the parrot in the wild and a local education campaign designed to encourage the resident communities to help protect the parrot by promoting a stronger sense of national pride in the endemic wildlife of St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

Roger Sweeney, Associate Director of the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary, stated "the St. Vincent Amazon Parrot is one of the largest,

most intelligent and charismatic birds in the Caribbean. It is a perfect conservation flag ship species to promote the preservation of biodiversity in forest regions that it inhabits in the wild." Sweeney also stated "Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary welcomes the invitation to assist the forestry department of St. Vincent & the Grenadines in a field conservation programme for this species and has made a formal five-year commitment to participate in the new conservation programme."

The invitation for the visit of Mr. Weekes was made by the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary to enable the St. Vincent forestry department to be briefed upon their recent history and care of these birds. The parrot is the national bird of St. Vincent & the Grenadines and is considered to be a priority for behavioural ecology research.

## Eggs needed for Research in the UK

Fertile eggs with living embryos are needed to enable research into viral diseases in parrots to continue. Scientists at the Central Veterinary Laboratory in Surrey,

