

Yellow-shouldered Amazon project



By PETER MONTANUS

Hundreds of people on Bonaire keep a Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis rothschildi*) as a pet. They have had these birds in cages in their homes for many years and have taught them to speak. While the birds give their owners great pleasure, the drawback is that these Loras, as the parrot is called on Bonaire, are collected from their nests in the wild as young birds. If this continues, the Lora of Bonaire faces extinction. Because Bonaireans are proud of their island and its splendid nature, they cannot allow that to happen.

For that reason the government of Bonaire, together with its population and the nature and environment conservancy organisations started an amnesty campaign.

Now the campaign is over, all Loras in captivity without a band are simple to recognize as illegal. Anyone who keeps a Lora without a band faces punishment and the loss of the Lora. With this campaign, Bonaire is protecting nature and also satisfies the national legal obligations and honours international treaties.

The campaign

The campaign started on July 1st 2002 with a get together at one of the primary schools. The councillor of environmental affairs symbolically banded the first Lora. The press were present. The Action Team; consisting of four Bonaireans were presented to the public and the children of the school sang the special Lora song. In the first week Odette Doest, a vet from Curacao who specialises in birds, volunteered to come over to assist. She did a tremendous job by training the members



of the Action Team on how to handle and band these parrots. A leaflet with an explanation of the amnesty was delivered house to house all over Bonaire. Further communication instruments were: press releases, tv-commercial, advertisements, flyers (from WPT), posters and stickers.

Four languages were used: Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish. We didn't charge money for the banding and the Action Team went from door to door all over Bonaire. In the beginning there was some resistance, but after we went to the most popular radio station to explain the campaign it vanished. We worked from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and gave feedback to the public on the amount of banded parrots by issuing press releases. We believe the campaign enlarged awareness, not only on the preservation of the Lora but also on the beautiful nature of the island as a whole.



Bonaire is an island located in the southeastern Caribbean Sea. It belongs to the Netherlands Antilles. The distance to the coastline of Venezuela is about 85 kilometres. The surface area is about 315 km², half of which is a protected area. The island is 40 km long and 5 to 12 km wide.

Next

Now the campaign has been achieved we are concentrating on enforcement of the laws and regulations which protect the Lora.

WPT researched and organised discounted band options and sent the Dutch 'Happy, Healthy Parrot' leaflet. Thanks again for your support.

