

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release



Urgent Appeal Launched to Aid Confiscated Parrots

Hayle, Cornwall, UK
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Cornwall-based World Parrot Trust has launched an urgent appeal to aid hundreds of African Grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) recently confiscated by wildlife authorities in two high profile raids in Cameroon. Funds raised through this appeal will be used for temporary housing, rehabilitation eventual re-release of 400+ parrots back to the wild.

Illegal shipments bound for Mexico and Middle East

Two separate groups of parrots were intercepted in Cameroon by Last Great Ape Organization's (LAGA) wildlife agents and local wildlife officials. Each group of 500-700 individuals was bound for Mexico and parts of the Middle East. Had officials not recovered these parrots their futures would have been grim. One half of all smuggled wild birds do not survive all stages of their capture, handling, transport and quarantine to reach their final destination. With African Grey parrots the mortality rate can often be higher due to the species' high strung and sensitive nature.

The African Grey Parrot has been one of the most heavily traded bird species on the international market. From 1994-2003, 359,000 individuals were exported from various parts of Africa. The Grey Parrot's popularity as a pet is unparalleled due to its longevity in captivity and its ability to mimic human and other sounds. Demand for this bird has always been high in North America and Europe, and is increasing in China. (Source: *BirdLife International*)

A temporary home and eventually...freedom

The confiscated parrots now rest in relative quiet at the Limbe Wildlife Centre (LWC), the hub of a dedicated group of rescuers nestled at the foot of Mount Cameroon. The process of capturing, smuggling, and transport has left many of the parrots stressed and vulnerable to illness. Of the 1220 birds initially received, 681 were immediately released, and more than 100 birds perished. A group of 417 birds remain at the center due to illness, emaciation and feathers damaged by glue trapping. For their rehabilitation and eventual release these parrots require food, shelter, medical attention and extra staff for their care. LWC has enlisted the help of **The World Parrot Trust (WPT)** to provide support.

US\$2,000 in emergency funding sent - more urgently needed

The World Parrot Trust has sent US\$2000.00 in emergency funding. Due to the urgency of the situation and the large number of parrots involved these funds have already been spent. More funding is required to provide ongoing care for this convalescing group of parrots, now and for up to 9 more months.

Urgent Appeal off to strong start

In the first days of the appeal, donors from around the world rallied strongly to show their support. "We've had donations from the UK, Europe, Australia, the US and a number of other countries," stated Alison Hales, Chairman of the World Parrot Trust. "We're hopeful for a continued strong response."

Interested supporters are urged to visit the Trust's website at www.parrots.org/appeal or email admin@worldparrottrust.org to learn how they can help or view updates from the project.

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About the World Parrot Trust: The World Parrot Trust works for the conservation and welfare of parrots, worldwide. Founded in 1989, the Trust has regional branches in North America, Asia, Australia, Africa and Europe; together they have aided the conservation of over 40 species of parrots in 22 countries.

Notes:

1. Parrots possess the greatest proportion of threatened species of all bird families. Nearly one third of the 365+ known parrot species are threatened in the wild. Information about parrots can be found at www.parrots.org
2. Downloadable hi-resolution images related to this appeal can be found at: http://www.parrots.org/index.php/ourwork/african_grey_appeal_photos
3. Additional information about the Wild Bird Trade can be found at the following websites:
 - BirdLife International
<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species/index.html?action=SpcHTMDetails.asp&sid=1496&m=0>
 - Birds Are For Watching
<http://www.birdsareforwatching.com/>