Hello,

Those who have been World Parrot Trust members for some time may have wondered why they had not heard much from me in the past year or so. Unfortunately I have been quite ill, but I am happy to have regained some health and glad to be able to write a few words. In this time, avian flu (H5N1) has become a worry to us all (as previously covered in PsittaScene). However, the temporary ban on bird imports into the European Union due to the flu, has created a real opportunity to permanently stop imports of wild-caught parrots for the pet trade. This is a long-held aim of the Trust, and has almost unimaginable benefits in terms of conservation and welfare.

I'm also excited that the Trust is again able to offer ‘Action Grants’ for parrot projects, as this is a great way to encourage interesting work on the species identified as most at need in the Parrot Action Plan.

We know that targeted funding can be a lifetime, as shown by the dedicated work (overseen by Carl Jones) on the Echo Parakeet in Mauritius. This was the first species supported with WPT funds back in 1989, and the population has since grown from just a handful to hundreds. It still faces challenges from introduced species and disease, but its future is certainly much improved.

Recently I have also been able to visit the birds here at Paradise Park (the home of the WPT in Cornwall, UK) again, and can't express how much I have enjoyed this. The avaiaries are looking good, and the birds, including many parrots but also toucans, tucacos and pheasants, are a joy to quietly observe as they go about their daily business.

I urge you to take time with the parrots you have in your lives, and consider their wild cousins. Watch them, learn about them, and do your best to give them fulfilled lives in return for the pleasure they give you.

Regards

Michael Reynolds

Honorary Chairman
The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill

Book Review

By JAMIE GILARDI

Author Mark Bittner

We each have our own personal stories about how parrots entered our lives. Every story is unique and these initial encounters often influence how we relate to parrots for many years to come. Mark Bittner’s story is extraordinary because it was a flock of wild parrots that entered his life and because they found him in the middle of a large American city.

We, the readers of The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill, are lucky for two reasons. First because this chance encounter might not have happened at all. Mark might have discovered squirrels in a park or gulls on the bay, or some other urban wildlife outside his San Francisco door. Instead, it was parrots. And second, with hundreds of thousands of possible humans to choose from in that city, the birds settled upon someone (literally and figuratively) who was willing and capable of sharing this remarkable story in a deeply personal and delightfully honest way.

Incidentally, Mark’s story is fodder for any of several different and genuinely interesting books. It could have been a story about discovering beauty and wildness in a sprawling metropolis, or about the miraculous and thrilling ‘taming’ of wild animals, or the social insights of living in this parrot society for over a decade. It could have been about how wild parrots helped Mark through a number of personal discoveries and realizations. Without retelling the story, I will say that Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill is all of these stories and more, all rolled into one engaging and eloquent narrative.

Anyone who has lived with parrots will find a lot of Mark’s experiences with the flock to be familiar - sometimes fun and comic and sometimes terribly sad. While his explorations of personal philosophy and his days living out of a VW bus might be less familiar, these adventures are also engaging because of Mark’s open, honest, and comfortable writing style.

One of the unexpected pleasures for me was how Mark’s long relationship with the flock provided a window into the social lives of these birds. As a parrot researcher, I’ve studied many parrot species in the wild and also many in captivity, but I have never had the window into their personal relationships that Mark experienced by becoming deeply integrated into this flock. Surely wild parrots living in social groups exhibit many, if not all, of the flock politics Mark walks us through with great and respectful attention. But until he did so, we could only guess.

Although not intentionally, Mark’s insights might help wild parrot researchers in designing their studies as well as in the interpretation of their results. And for those of us with parrots in captivity, this book holds a wealth of thought-provoking material for pondering basic questions about parrots’ choices about their mates, companions, diet, and other facets of their complex lives.

There are many good reasons for this book’s rapid and impressive success, as Mark’s story clearly appeals to the broadest of audiences, not just bird lovers or parrot lovers. For readers of the PsittaScene, it’s a “no-brainer” - read this book - you’ll be very glad you did!

DVD Review

By JOANNA ECKLES

Directed by Judy Irving. (83 minutes)

The DVD version of The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill is not intended as a film version of the book. It is a gem on its own accord. The real treat is being immersed in the sights and sounds of these fabulous birds and getting to know Mark Bittner “in person.” While you won’t get all of the detailed tracking of individual birds and their relationships over years that you’ll enjoy in print, you’ll get a genuine glimpse of their lives in the “wilds” of San Francisco and Mark’s life as their companion and ambassador. You’ll appreciate his gentle nature and unique philosophy, his personal education in parrot biology and his genuine rapport and attachment to the flock. We screened this film at our home for a mixed audience ranging in age from 4 to 45 and it was a hit by all accounts!

The Book and DVD are available on our online store.

Amazon country - Argentina’s “Impenetrable” Forest

By IGOR BERKUNSKY and BÉRÉNICE CHARPIN

We wake up as early as possible, around 5 or 6 am while it’s still dark. One of us prepares breakfast (tea or coffee with cookies or crackers) while the others gather all the equipment needed for the day: ropes, harnesses, measuring equipment, and water, lots of water: at least 2 litres per person. You don’t want to forget anything since the parrot nests we are studying are far away from the campsite. Yes! We all stay in tents throughout the breeding season (mid October to early March - spring and summer in Argentina).

Depending on their location, the nest-trees are linked with paths forming “circuits” or “loops”. “Circuits” can be as far as 20 km (12.5 mi) from the campsite and once you leave the trail behind, you may need to walk 1 or 2 km (0.6 - 1.2 mi) through the dense forest.

We work in pairs, each checking a dozen nests every morning. By the time we reach the first nest the sun and the temperature are usually up! The most exciting part of the day starts with checking the nest, taking as many photos as possible. Later we take many hours and we need to be efficient: data has to be collected quickly so that chicks aren’t bothered and because we have to be back to the campsite before dark. It’s impossible to perform any task during the hottest hours of the day. Temperatures may be as high as 49º C (120 º F). Not even the lizards dare to muck around.

After lunch, it’s time to process the data collected in the morning, preparing the activities for the afternoon and of course, take a rest in our hammocks!

From 4 to dark (around 8-9 pm) we go out again checking nests or doing observations on the vegetation - this will enable us to monitor changes in food availability throughout the season.

For more information on this year’s study please check our web site:

http://www.wildparrots.org

Photo: Angel Nuco Gonzalez

Blue-fronted Amazon Parrots (Amazona aestiva) are one of the most popular pet birds in the world. Their flamboyant, interactive personalities, talking ability, and striking coloration make them among the most desirable of parrot species. The Blue-fronted Amazon (Amazona aestiva) is one of the species that could make them wonderful companions. In the wild, they are found in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia. They are an Amazon species native to South America. We have been studying the reproductive ecology and population dynamics of this species in the Chaco region of Argentina since 2002. The aim of our study is to determine the main factors that affect the reproductive success of Blue-fronted Amazons in this region. This information is particularly relevant in estimating the impact that harvesting could have on wild parrot populations. The World Parrot Trust recently committed major funding for our 2006-2007 field season.

The demand for parrots as pets has resulted in a significant international trade. The sustainability and implications of this trade have been extensively analysed and discussed. Parrots face many pressures including habitat destruction and poaching for the pet trade. The effect of these factors is exacerbated by the low reproductive rate of most parrot species as a result of relatively late age of the first reproduction, small clutch size, low survival of chicks and fledglings, absence of second broods, reproduction that does not take place every year, and restricted nesting requirements. Some people think that in a few cases sustainable harvesting programs might be feasible for some parrot species. The Blue-fronted Amazon is viewed by some as one of most studied species.

In Argentina, most Blue-fronted Amazons breed in the dry forests in the Chaco region where our study takes place. This thick, thorny forest, locally known as “Impenetrable”, is dominated by hardwood trees, which offer excellent nesting cavities. The Impenetrable is also home to diverse fauna including jaguars, peccaries, anteaters, giant armadillos and over 300 species of birds.

Current management

The exportation of wild Blue-fronts has been banned in all countries except Argentina, where so many chicks and adults are being illegally captured and exported every year that their populations are potentially being threatened. From 1993 to 1991 approximately half a million Blue-fronted Amazons were authorized by the Argentinian government to be collected for the pet trade. This so-called “off take” peaked when about 75,000 Blue-fronted Amazon permits were granted in 1985 alone.

After a four-year total ban (1992 through 1995), an experimental management plan was launched in 1996. From that, a long term management plan was created which is still being followed today. Currently this plan involves the capture of chicks and adults under specific rules (such as harvesting all-but-one chick from a nest) and authorizes the extraction of more than 5,000 parrots each year.

However, this management plan lacks scientific support. No exhaustive research has been conducted about Blue-fronted Amazon biology and as a result very little is known. Thus, most of the rules and principles of the management plan are arbitrary. The current number of chicks and adults harvested each year could have an important impact on Argentina’s Blue-fronted Amazon population.

The Argentinean government’s management plan for Blue-fronted Amazons allows harvesting all-but-one chick from a nest that can only be assessed with thorough study of the species’ biology.
Photos: Igor Berkunsky

2 egg survival, hatchability and chick parameters of Blue-fronted Amazons during four consecutive breeding seasons and evaluated:

We also studied the characteristics of nests, including recouperation during the following breeding season, and if nests predation and chick removal affected cavity recouperation.

Blue-fronted Amazons are highly mobile. All but a few of those breeding in Chaco leave their breeding grounds in flocks after their chicks have fledged and the remaining adults return to the Chaco National Park. The vast majority of those breeding in Chaco leave their breeding grounds in September, Blue-front pairs begin to scope out natural nesting cavities in “Quebrachos” (mainly biology students) from around the world. Each breeding season we search intensively for nests. We find nests mainly by observing the behaviour of breeding pairs and revisiting cavities used in previous years. Each nest tree is fully measured and described - 30 to 60 nests are studied every year. So far, we have followed 140 nesting attempts in 89 different cavities.

Nests are checked on average every three days until the chicks fledge or the nest fails. Data on the number of eggs laid, egg size, number of chicks hatched and fledged are recorded in order to determine breeding success. In addition, chick growth and development are monitored using regular weights, measurements and diet analysis. The chicks are banded and checked for ectoparasites. Blood samples are taken for DNA analysis and endoparasites. Adults are also banded and censused and blood samples are taken.

We also study the vegetation which allows us to better understand their environment: what kind of forest patches they prefer, how much available food there is, when each kind of fruit is available, etc.

A director of Wind Power, Andrew Newbold, told The Australian the decision to move the six turbines...2km line was “definitely” a concession.

The shifting of the turbines and the company’s offer to spend $750,000 on Orange-bellied Parrot recovery programs contracts claims that the wind farm would have no impact on the bird.

In its new submission to the Government, the company has provided advice from wildlife expert Brett Lane to rebut Senator Campbell’s reasons for rejecting the wind farm.

Dr. Stuart Butchart, author of the report and an expert with the British-based Birdlife International, said: “These successes show that preventing extinctions is possible given political will and concerted action.

Sadie the parrot, at your service
Sadie could well be the only certified service parrot around. Sadie herself is new to the job, officially speaking. Her registration papers and ID card arrived from the Service Animal Registry of America only six weeks ago.

Even though the Americans With Disabilities Act does not require that service animals be licensed or certified, Eggers felt that registering Sadie with the Service Animal Registry of America would make it easier for him to keep her by his side.

It has. “Before I had my ID card, we could pretty much only go out on the street. Now we can go into places. We can ride the bus. We can go just about anywhere,” he says. “I pull out the card automatically and nip any confrontation in the bud.”

“Sadie’s like an American Express card,” Eggers says. “I don’t leave home without her.”

Sadie’s incredible journey
Two parents owned by 15-year-old Tamil refugee Bhovana Nishanthi Lombert meant absolutely everything to her.

So devoted is the teenager to her feathered friends that she was willing to take them and nothing else in the arduous journey by sea from war-torn Sri Lanka to a refugee camp in the south of India.

The birds remained on her shoulders throughout the voyage. Bhovana is one of about 4,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who have fled their homes in the north of Sri Lanka because of the increasing number of skirmishes between the army and Tamil Tiger rebels.

The refugees travel across the 30km (18-mile) stretch of sea that separates Sri Lanka from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, crammed into small fishing vessels.

Sometimes there is no room to sit down - let alone carry a pair of parrots - with as many as 20 people standing huddled over their meagre belongings.

On her arrival in India, Bhovana - like other refugees - underwent tough questioning by Indian security agencies.

But Bhovana’s entry procedure provided welcome relief in what sometimes can be a tense and bad-tempered bureaucratic exercise. “I love these birds as much as I love my three best friends...” she says.

Sadie, the parrot.
Sadie could well be the only certified service parrot around. Sadie herself is new to the job, officially speaking. Her registration papers and ID card arrived from the Service Animal Registry of America only six weeks ago. Nevertheless, the 2-year-old Congo African grey parrot has been enrolled in ongoing, on-the-job training with James Eggers of Maplewood, Missouri for more than a year. The work has been a lifesaver for both of them. Eggers has been diagnosed as bipolar with psychotic tendencies. He suffers from severe depression and potentially dangerous mood swings. Medication helps to control the problem. Sadie controls it without any side effects. Negative side effects, that is.

On the positive side, Sadie is as much Eggers’ best friend as she is his service bird. Because Eggers is slightly hearing impaired, Sadie serves partly as a hearing aid. When the phone rings, she automatically says “Hello.” Eggers says, “When someone is at the door, she asks, ‘What’s there?’”

But Sadie’s primary service job is to help Eggers “interact with people in a positive way.” Because of his illness, that used to be difficult for Eggers. “But all the experiences I have had with people when Sadie has been with me have been very positive,” Eggers says.

“Sadie definitely picks up on my moods. When I start to get anxious or angry, she becomes loud, and she tunes into that. She’ll say, ‘79, I love you. You’re OK, or, ‘You’ll be OK.’ She’ll tell me to relax. She’s really pretty amazing.” Eggers says.
The show will culminate in a series of large, colourful parrot illustrations by one of the greatest living parrot artists, Elizabeth Butterworth. The show runs from 26th January until 29th April 2007, and it will be a huge event in art terms and in parrot terms.

The Parrot in Art

A series of spectacular parrot paintings have been lined up for the forthcoming exhibition, The Parrot in Art: From Dürer to Elizabeth Butterworth, which opens at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham in the New Year.

The exhibition will be opened on the evening of Thursday 25 January by the world-famous artist, illustrator and parrot-lover Quentin Blake - and one of his own pictures will be featured in the exhibition.

The show runs from 26th January until 29th April 2007, and it will be a huge event in art terms and in parrot terms.

Parrots as portrayed by a huge range of artists

From the Renaissance to the present day will be on display, including paintings by Albrecht Dürer, Tiepolo, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the poet Edward Lear (a keen zoological illustrator, as you’ll know), Roberts as well as Quentin Blake.

Butterworth. The Parrot in Art

The exhibition runs from 26th January until 29th April, claiming a threat to the parrot.

It is clear that the future of this bird depends on us doing much more to protect its habitat,” Senator Campbell said. “Every year it undertakes the ornithological equivalent of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race – it’s every Australian’s responsibility to help this bird survive for future generations.”

The minister has agreed to reconsider the plan with a visit by many real-life parrots.

While commercial sales of animals will be prohibited, there will be a series of lectures on the parrot in art, as well as one day when the show will be brought vividly to life with a visit by many real-life parrots.

The Howard Government will spend $3.2 million to ensure the future of the orange-bellied parrot, the rare bird used by Environment Minister Ian Campbell to block a $220 million wind farm in Victoria.

The Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell has won a concession from the developer of the Bald Hills wind farm in Victoria, with the company agreeing to move six turbines out of the potential flight path of the orange-bellied parrot.

Senator Campbell blocked the wind farm in April, claiming a threat to the parrot.

The minister has agreed to reconsider the wind farm after legal action by the company. Opponents of the project said earlier this year the company’s decision was an admission of guilt and showed the original proposal threatened the bird.

The parrot’s migratory path is mostly within 2km of the coast. Six of the 23 turbines proposed for Bald Hills are within 2km of the Victorian coast or along the 2km boundary.

When holes made to harvest parrots are not carefully repaired, precious nest cavities become useless for future breeding.

Significant Results

One of the most common methods for harvesting parrots is to collect some, but not all, of the chicks from the nest. The main argument that supports this approach is that those chicks would not survive or would have a very low probability of survival because in most nests natural brood reduction occurs. Therefore, theoretically, partial chick removal would not greatly affect the number of chicks fledged. However, in case this assumption is not based on good quality scientific data.

Our preliminary results show some interesting facts about the “brood reduction” theory on which Argentina’s harvesting plan is based. Although, in theory, the removal of chicks does not affect the number of fledglings, we found evidence to the contrary. In practice, chicks are harvested when they are 40 to 50 days old and we now know that at that age, the probability of survival is actually very high. In fact, brood reduction as a result of starvation was relatively uncommon and it was restricted to the first week after hatching. Therefore chicks harvested based on brood reduction criteria would most likely have survived to fledge.

Another important observation came from our work, this one about cavity reoccupation. Both legal and illegal harvesting involves making a hole in the tree at the base of the cavity. Those cavities that are not properly repaired (carefully covered with mud) which faces away in a few months) are consequently not recolonized the next breeding season. On the contrary, cavities that are well covered have reoccupation rates similar to those observed for cavities without chick removal. This means there doesn’t seem to be any direct effect of partial removal of chicks on cavity reoccupation.

This research led us to perform educational activities with parrot harvesters to avoid cavity destruction in the future.

Modelling harvest impacts

This is the first long term study of the reproductive ecology of Blue-fronted Amazons in the Claro region. They are one of the preferred species for the parrot trade and Argentina’s local community based national harvest program allows exporting approximately 5,000 young parrots per year. Therefore, the data collected in this study are important to correctly model the impact that chick harvesting could have on parrot populations.

Our results indicate that the harvest of chicks does not affect cavity reoccupation (provided that the hole is repaired appropriately). However, because chicks are harvested after natural brood reduction occurs, the harvesting of chicks in a 50% reduction of fledglings produced per nest. Our results also provide good quality data on the reproductive ecology of some of the most important populations of this species. This allows comparisons with other studies conducted on the same species elsewhere and in other species of the same genus.

When completed four breeding season studies, we are beginning to fill in some of the knowledge gaps regarding Blue-fronted Amazon breeding ecology. We still have more seasons to go and many things to find out. Our hope is that with the information we will generate, a review will be made of the harvesting management plan in order to guarantee the long-term survival of our Blue-fronted Amazon population.

Our research is possible thanks to those who have believed in and supported it. We require climbing equipment (ropes, carabiners, ascenders, etc.), measuring equipment (i.e.: scales), and many other items such as leg bands, digital cameras, OPSS, laptops, etc. We always need and welcome help and can be contacted at aaresta2002@yahoo.com.ar.

Thanks to: Our core team - Roman Ruggera, Joaquín Carrera, Chantal de la Fournière, Sarah Suego and Angel Nuñez González, Scientific Argentinean institutions CIC and CONICET, University of La Plata, University of Buenos Aires, The World Parrot Trust, The Amazon Society, Parrot People Fundación and Parrots International, all of our volunteers and the local people (Park rangers and neighbours of the Reserve) that have been helping us during all these years.

Parrot call chicks by name

In a discovery that is likely to rekindle the debate about language in the animal kingdom, researchers in Germany have discovered that some parrots appear to give their offspring individual names.

Animal behavioural scientists at the University of Hamburg say that spectacled parrotlets use a distinctive call for each of their chicks, with not two chicks being given the same ‘name’ call.

The small South American parrots also apparently have name calls for their mates. The birds very definitely use a particular bird and never for any other bird,” says Dr. Rolf Wanaker, head of the Hamburg University Zoological Institute’s behavioural research laboratory.

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Turn the other cheek

Hyacinth photo ID’s are revealing

By CHARLES MUNN PhD

North of the Brazilian capital of Brasília, at the junction of four states in NE Brazil - Piauí, Tocantins, Maranhão, and Bahia - lies a 50,000-square kilometre (Costa-Rica-sized) wilderness of 1,000-foot-high red rock cliffs topped by brushy plateaus ranging from 50 acres to 100 square miles in size. Beneath the cliffs roll broad, open valleys covered with dry tropical forests; open woodlands, and golden grasslands dotted with 100-foot-tall Mauritia palms. Through the valleys run transparent streams bordered by thicker gallery forests dominated by these same majestic palms, which are favourite food and nest trees of Blue-and-Gold Macaws (Ara ararauna), and favourite roost and loafing trees of the world’s largest and most spectacular parrots - Hyacinth Macaws (Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus).

Large flocks of Hyacinths gather at a palm nut bunch to provide viewers with exceptional views of the birds’ unambiguous, definitive photo dossier of each and every Hyacinth at the site.

On top of the plateaus or mesas and throughout the waxy valleys, three other species of palms hide their trunks underground to protect their hard-won biomass from the dry season fires that are typical of this dry forest. These palms present their leaves and nut bunches at ground level. The rock-hard, golf-ball-sized nuts are the favourite (and almost only) food of the Hyacinth Macaw. After years of watching the birds at the feeding spot, Mr. Lima and Mr. Lima’s sister-in-law, Edilene Gonçalves Nobre, who is a third-year biology student at the Universidade Estadual do Piauí (UESPI), a local state university, decided to census the individual birds on Mr. Lima’s land through digital photography. Accordingly, Ms. Gonçalves spent five months (Feb through April in 2005 and 2006) gathering data about this large population of Hyacinth Macaws. The peaks of Hyacinths (and other large macaws) make them individually identifiable. They display an enormous amount of information as they are full of lines, cracks, gouges, dots, chevron patterns, and innumerable other small irregularities that change very slowly over a number of months. Ms. Gonçalves found that working within the period of 2-3 months, these visible break irregularities allowed her to create an unambiguous, definitive photo dossier of each and every Hyacinth at the site.

A young Hyacinth must gain strength and skill to open tough palm nuts.

By CHARLES MUNN PhD

North of the Brazilian capital of Brasília, at the junction of four states in NE Brazil - Piauí, Tocantins, Maranhão, and Bahia - lies a 50,000-square kilometre (Costa-Rica-sized) wilderness of 1,000-foot-high red rock cliffs topped by brushy plateaus ranging from 50 acres to 100 square miles in size. Beneath the cliffs roll broad, open valleys covered with dry tropical forests; open woodlands, and golden grasslands dotted with 100-foot-tall Mauritia palms. Through the valleys run transparent streams bordered by thicker gallery forests dominated by these same majestic palms, which are favourite food and nest trees of Blue-and-Gold Macaws (Ara ararauna), and favourite roost and loafing trees of the world’s largest and most spectacular parrots - Hyacinth Macaws (Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus).

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A young Hyacinth must gain strength and skill to open tough palm nuts.
morning at the same time. The breakfast ritual of preparing food, cleaning a cage, and loving a parrot should be something your bird can depend on everyday.

Get your parrot up and out of "bed" every morning at the same time. The breakfast ritual of preparing food, cleaning a cage, and loving a parrot should be something your bird can depend on everyday.

Get creative! Give your parrot an inexpensive and entertaining treat by filling a paper tube with surprises and simply folding over the ends of the tube to close.

A floor to ceiling enclosure built in an underused corner can be an inexpensive way to give your bird more freedom and enrichement.

During the 2005 census, Ms. Gonçalves received major photographic assistance and training in computer manipulation of the beak images from Paula Linsemeier and Brett Backhouse, two generous zoologists from the Adelaide Zoo in Australia. The photo census techniques involved using a 600 mm, f 4 Nikon lens (left over from WCS macaw photo census work in the late 80's in Mumi, Peru) with a D70 Nikon camera body to photograph at very close range the beaks of at least 187 Hyacinth Macaws.

In 2005, Ms. Gonçalves was able to photograph both beak sides of a total of 93 birds, six of which turned out to be recently-fledged birds from the 2004-2005 (September - January) nesting season. In 2006, after improving her techniques, she photographed both beak sides of 121 different Hyacinth Macaws, seven of which were recently fledged birds from the 2005-2006 nesting season. The marks, lines, and other irregularities on the beaks were always easy to match when the photos were of sufficient quality.

In 2006, another 66 unique left beak sides and 46 right beak sides were not matched left with right. In general, the predominance of perching while showing the left side may reveal a preference related to the best escape routes to safe perches in trees, which were to the left of the birds. These leftover beak sides represent a minimum of 66 other unique birds, and possibly a few more (if some of the 46 leftover right beak sides represented individuals whose left sides were never photographed...). As it is likely that most or even all of the unmatched right sides go with the 66 unmatched left sides, we assume that the population of birds in the 2006 season was a minimum of 121+66, or 187. Now that Ms. Gonçalves has refined and improved her techniques further, it should be possible to match almost all beak sides to achieve an even more definitive count in the upcoming 2007 post-nesting season (Feb through July).

In both years, the new fledglings were easy to detect by their habit of fluffing their head feathers, flapping their wings (part of typical begging by fledglings), and by their relatively smooth beak sides when compared with the adults. They also showed less angular, more rounded, slightly smaller head profiles as a result of their less muscled skulls. They will build up jaw muscles quickly over the first few weeks post fledging.

Mr. Lima's team of macaw guards (who protect not only his land, but also more than 100,000 acres of the most vulnerable, most wildlife-rich parts of the national park) know of approximately 12 nests of Hyacinth Macaws within a radius of 20 miles of Mr. Lima's property, but so far, there has been no regular photography of the birds at their nests to test whether the same birds nest every year in particular cliff cavities. In most cases, such photography would be difficult, as the distance from lens to nest cavity would be too great to permit good definition of the beak lines and cracks. In practice, Mr. Gonçalves discovered that reliable, usable results for the beak photos were obtained when the birds were in good light (not back-lit) and at a distance of 8-18 meters (25-60 feet) from the lens. Typically, most of the birds near the blind on Mr. Lima's land regularly were within this distance and could be photographed for the beak survey.

When Ms. Gonçalves compared the beaks of all the birds from the 2005 census to those of the 2006 census, she noticed that a number of them appeared quite similar but were not identical. In order to determine if the similar looking beak sides were really the same bird whose beak had changed from one year to the next, an accessible subset...
of birds needs to be monitored year round. By taking new photos every 2-4 weeks the very gradual changes in the beak patterns could be monitored throughout the year. As we do not foresee being able to carry this out in 2007, we inquired about possible ways to use skin wrinkles around the base of the lower mandible or around the eye to match birds from year to year without having to follow the slow but steady changes in their beak cracks.

Mr. Carlos Yamashita, the outstanding Brazilian field biologist, suggested a novel approach based on the yellow skin characteristic of Hyacinths. He advised us to try to photograph from even closer range and to study the dots of raised skin around the eyes of the Hyacinth within two or three millimetres of the eye itself. Ms. Gonçalves starting testing this idea in 2006, and she believes that Mr. Yamashita may be correct, in that the dots around the eyes seem to be irregularly distributed around the clock face, as it were, and also showed certain unchanging angles. In 2007, we hope to use these dots to try to build up a "eye ring dot dossier" and match the eye ring dots to the beaks. Then in 2008 by taking new photos every 2-4 weeks the very gradual changes in the beak patterns of birds needs to be monitored year round.

We will check to see if the dots allow us to compare the images. Using these straightforward techniques systematically, we might soon be able to monitor a population of individually identifiable Hyacinths year round at these feeding spots, and maybe even some birds at selected, more accessible nests. Furthermore, in the high season for these feeding flocks (February through July), we might be able to detect rare cases of death by seeing a particular bird show up over and over again without its mate. When the mate does not appear again during the season, we would assume that it has died, for it seems unlikely that a bird, even if suddenly divorced, would stop coming to the feeding location.

Another particularly useful application of this beak photo technique would be to try to figure out if the same Hyacinth nesting in the same low, eminently photographtable, traditional tree cavities in the Brazilian Pantanal year after year, because, surprisingly, no reliable data exist to date to address even this most basic question.

Interesting, the 2006 figure of only seven fledglings out of a minimum of 187 is a very, very low recruitment rate. We don't believe we have missed other fledglings among the 187 birds in the 2006 season, but we would like to redouble our efforts in 2007 to make sure that there is no possibility of undercounting fledglings. Because the images were analysed a bit differently in 2005, we are not yet sure of the recruitment rate for that season or how it compares to 2006. Fortunately, in the future, the photo analysis should be able to proceed with much greater efficiency now that these techniques have been further refined.

We believe that this direct count of fledglings in a large population of wild Hyacinths is a first and we hope to extend this work to allow us to understand population dynamics in this population and also among other individually recognizable macaws around the Americas.

At the Foster Parrots sanctuary where most of the parrots are free flighted, we witness birds trying to put themselves into cages and birds that have been taunted become coveted territory or intriguing domains to explore. As many times as we've witnessed happy human pushing themselves into cages, we've witnessed frustrated, hostile birds settle down and become strangely less aggressive when they've been freed from consistent confinement or, more importantly, when they've been given the freedom of choice.

Atticus is a Yellow-naped Amazon (Amazona auropalliata), approximately 15 years old, who has been a Foster Parrots resident for 5 years. A decidedly solitary bird, Atticus spent a long time in a large floor to ceiling cage. He wasn't an aggressive fellow by any means and really didn't seem to care what liked his cage. His door was always open. However, when we took in a pair of wild and potentially dangerous Amazons that did require confinement, it became necessary to evict Atticus. He spent the next several weeks trying to figure out how to get back into the cage. We offered him a very attractive, mid-sized, dome-topped cage, a premium sample he had not seen the largest window, but he didn't want that cage. Finally we dragged a monster frame into the cage for Atticus. Eight feet high and nearly 5 feet deep and wide, it sits squarely in the middle of the floor. His door is always open and he comes and goes at will, his sight and sound contentedly triumphant in his giant cage.

On the other hand, consider Jolo, a Moluccan Cockatoo (Cacatua moluccensis). Having been confiscated from drug lords, warehoused for several years, then passed through a couple of homes before landing at the Foster Parrots sanctuary, Jolo had become cage-bound. We placed his large cage in a prominent area where two Umbrella Cockatoos and another Moluccan lived freely, and where staff and volunteers passed by frequently or stopped to chat and play with birds. We never closed Jolo's door. People would stop and talk to him and reach in to pet him. He was able to observe the relationships between people and other birds from his safe place without feeling either isolated or threatened. He was provided with ample hanging toys to play with, on chin or nose, and he always open and gets up and sits around his room, quite contentedly triumphant in his giant cage.

At Foster Parrots most birds live freely on "hanging frames" - natural wooden branches that are joined together in interesting configurations and suspended from the ceiling. Food and water cups and a wide array of toys are attached. Sometimes these frames are suspended directly above a bird's cage, providing a whole new dimension to the living arrangement and an opportunity for the birds to climb and gain height. Sometimes the frames are hung to act as "cages without bars". While we generally discourage wing-clipping, some people do find it necessary. Birds with clipped wings are unable to leave their frames, but enjoy a more natural arrangement of living up high on branches.

Interestingly, many of our flighted parrots become possessive of their frames and hand to like to stay on them.

Social behaviour and routine

It is the highly social nature of parrots that makes them attractive as companions. They are capable of transferring essential bonding behaviour to people, which, in a captive situation, is an arrangement preferable to social isolation. And although we love our parrots and hope to do everything in our power to make them happy, we are not. We are humans, our primary bonds are with other humans and our lives are full of responsibilities and diversions that constantly tear us away from our parrots.

Parrots are superior in their ability to understand our inadequacies as companions. Still, we have found that by establishing a dependable routine for our birds, we minimize the stress and confusion of a haphazard world. The result, very often, is a parrot that feels less compelled to assert control over us through excessive vocalization, and a parrot more at ease with its world.
Not doing enough for your parrot? Get creative!

By KAREN WINDSOR, Foster Parrots

Our position on parrots as pets has been well established nationally. While we will continue to advocate for parrots as wild animals, the fact is that millions of parrots live in people’s homes and many millions more will be born into captivity in the years to come. A large percentage of captive birds live discontented lives in uninspired environments that often result in incompatibility issues between parrots and their keepers. If we are going to keep birds, it is important that we put effort into keeping them well, and learn to provide sustainable and creative care that will result in harmonious relationships and parrots that are as well adjusted and as happy as possible in their captive situation.

Because I work in rescue and field dozens of calls each week from people wanting to surrender their birds, I am continually amazed that these wild animals are sold, owned, and often neglected or disbursed over time.

1. Guilt on behalf of the humans forced to confine these highly social and intelligent flighted creatures, and
2. Aggression on the part of confined and frustrated parrots.

If a person’s intention to buy or adopt a parrot were based on the quality of the environment they were realistically able to or willing to provide, there would be far fewer guilty people walking around in need of unloading irate parrots. And if parrot guardians were to channel their guilt productively and creatively, they might make the improvements necessary to help keep their birds.

Territoriality and the creative cage environment

Even if one buys the biggest macaw-sized cage on the market it is still an inadequate environment for an animal born to inhabit the skies. But can birds like their cages? Of course they can. Territorial by nature, birds take possession of their cages. Where some cages are homes, havens and safety zones, others are prisons. Sometimes an open door is all it takes to make the difference. We need to be creative in order to provide environments that are stimulating, engaging and natural in their appeal to the wild animals we live with.

In order to protect them (and sometimes others) from harm, most captive parrots are confined in one way or another and for varying periods of time. Consequently, cage or enclosure interiors are of paramount importance. A variety of perches must be provided for climbing, roosting, and foot conditioning. Natural branches with both rough and smooth bark are ideal for interior landscaping. Cloth, sisal and hemp ropes can be enjoyed as perches, swings and simulated vines.

There should be plenty of wooden toys for chewing, but these need not be store-bought. While the owners of retail toys are nice, the price tags can often be hefty for an item that will potentially be replaced to splinters in a matter of days or even hours. Blocks of untreated pine can be drilled and strung on ropes in order to provide affordable chew toys.

One of the most intriguing diversions one can provide for their parrot is a cardboard box. Better yet - a box inside a box inside a box. This offers a bird the opportunity to engage in the innately compelling activity of excavating a nestling hole. If you are fortunate enough to construct a hollow log, try providing a cardboard box for your parrot to explore.

If you’re not lucky enough to find a hollow log, try providing a cardboard box for your parrot to explore.

The BVA had renewed their interest in the bird trade in response to a H5N1 avian influenza at a UK quarantine facility where imported wild birds were being held. As raising awareness of the welfare problems that I was seeing all too frequently in pet parrots in companion avian veterinary practice. The Forum was also an opportunity to attempt to persuade the BVA to back a permanent ban on the import of wild-caught birds into the European Union.

The BVAs declaration calls which for a permanent ban on the import of wild-caught birds in to the EU on the grounds of:
1. Infectious disease risk (e.g. avian flu)
2. Species survival (the trade endangers species because the birds are taken from the wild faster than they can reproduce), and
3. Animal welfare

Nature the given the event, greatest

The BVA’s position will not, by itself, spell the end for the EU trade in wild-caught birds, but it is a powerful voice to feed in to imminent decision-making meetings that will determine the trade’s future.

British vets back ban

By SEAN WENSLEY BVSc MSc MRCVS, UK Vet, Surgeon

In May 2006 the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF) invited me to give a talk entitled “Welfare Concerns in Parrots” at the Foundation’s annual Discussion Forum in London. The Foundation’s mission statement is to “improve the welfare of all animals through veterinary science, education and debate” and the Forum is attended by various animal welfare organisations. This was a prime opportunity to draw attention to the unacceptable welfare conditions endured by parrots in the international wild bird trade, and to raise awareness of the welfare problems that I was seeing all too frequently in pet parrots in companion avian veterinary practice. The Forum was also an opportunity to attempt to persuade the BVA to back a permanent ban on the import of wild-caught birds into the European Union.

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The BVA has made the right decision. I was not, of course, solely responsible for this fantastic result, but I was extremely grateful to the BVA AWF for having given me the opportunity to raise awareness of this issue at such a critical time. I was also extremely grateful to Dr Jamie Gilardi, Director of the World Parrot Trust, for assistance whilst I was researching for my presentation.

The temporary ban has now been extended until the end of December 2006. The BVA’s position will not, by itself, spell the end for the EU trade in wild-caught birds, but it is a powerful voice to feed in to imminent decision-making meetings that will determine the trade’s future. It is important that the BVA position is communicated to decision-makers, and I have been pleased to continue to liaise with Dr Gilardi and the World Parrot Trust to consider effective ways in which this might be achieved.

The BVA has made the right decision. Let’s hope, for the birds sake, that the EU will do the same.
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Car talk and cameras too

Long-time member Lucy Hartford and her husband Chris recently donated their car to WPT. We quickly sold the car on eBay to benefit the Trust. Lucy and Chris are just the most recent visionary supporters to link used cars and parrot conservation. Scott Johnson wasn’t even a Trust member when he contacted us a few years back with a zippy little red sports car to donate. Of course, WPT Director Jamie Girdler had to do some essential test driving upon delivery but he did promptly list (and sell) this car on eBay too.

Give when you sell!

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Phone junkie?

Do you have 3 old cellular phones on the shelf and a new one on the way? Do you always need the latest model with the coolest new features? Great! Send us your old cell phones (even if they’re broken). Not only do these addictive little devices contain potentially hazardous waste, they also have pieces and parts that can be recycled. In great entrepreneurial fashion, there is a company (Ecophones) that has found a way to square a profit from old phones and pass it along to charities, while properly disposing of hazardous materials therein. In the USA, send your used cell phones and batteries to Glenn Reynolds (see page 19).

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Charity 101

In preparing for upcoming meetings in Brussels about the future of the bird trade we were pleasantly surprised when asked, “Why did all those beautiful bird cards stop coming?” This was music to our ears since, quite honestly, we had a little trepidation in making our bold request of you to write (PsittaScene Vol 18 No 2 p2). A deluge of letters thanking the EU Commissioner for his decision to temporarily end bird imports, made due to Flu, seemed like a good idea. But could it backfire on us? Well, apparently it did not. You made a big impression and we thank you. And, since there is still much discussion on the issue there’s still time to participate. Please, if you haven’t already sent Commissioner Kyprianou a card, take a moment to express your appreciation for the millions of birds that have already been spared in the year since that fateful decision was made. Your card will be a reminder that citizens the world over are paying attention and are calling for the trade in wild birds to come to a permanent end.

Special offer - Groups of 3 - 7 receive $50 each discount.

Mr Markos Kypranou
Commissioner for Health & Consumer Protection
European Commission
B-1049 BRUSSELS
Belgium

Eco-tour - Feb 15-21 2007

Rancho Los Ebanos, Tamaulipas, Mexico, WPT member Marie Diganina of Vista de Pajaros Eco-tours sent this announcement: We begin in Harlingen, TX at the famous refuges of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and proceed to Los Ebanos, a fantastic ranch on the Gulf Coast of Tamaulipas, Mexico, where parrot watching is awesome! Well thrill to see 3 sympatric Amazona species, oaxari, autumnalis, viridigenalis.

· Clean, comfortable cabanas, tasty local cuisine, plenty of time for relaxing
· Excellent value at $1,199 including incredible, guided bird viewing, room/board but not airfare (return to Harlingen, Texas) tips, or restaurants on the road.
· Limited to a maximum of 7.
· Reserve by December 1.
· SPECIAL OFFER: Groups of 3 - 7 receive $50 each discount.

Make a difference by your travel choices! Your dollars and enthusiasm encourage preservation of critical habitat! See them “en el monte,” in the wild! Join us for an unforgettable trip.

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In order to protect them (and sometimes others) from harm, most captive parrots are confined in one way or another for varying periods of time. Consequently, cage or enclosure interiors are of paramount importance. A variety of perches must be provided for climbing, roosting, and foot conditioning. Natural branches with both rough and smooth bark are ideal for interior landscaping. Cloth, sisal and hemp ropes can be enjoyed as perches, swings or simulated vines.

There should be plenty of wooden toys for chewing, but these need not be store bought. While the desire of retail toys is nice, the price tags can often be hefty for an item that will potentially be reduced to splinters in a matter of days - or even hours. Blocks of untreated pine can be drilled and strung on ropes in order to provide affordable chew toys.

One of the most intriguing diversions one can provide for their parrot is a cardboard box. Better yet - a box inside a box inside a box. This offers a bird the opportunity to engage in the innately compelling activity of excavating a nesting hole. If you are fortunate enough to capture a large parrot to log, this is in the ultimate parrot accommodation item. Knotted balls of shoe-lace strings provide parrots with toys that are curiously like feather sheaths. Rolls of paper calculator tape are happily shredded and unravelled. Quaker parrots (Myiopsitta monachus) are industrious nest builders! Provide them with handfuls of twigs that can be woven through bars and grates. Cockatoos love puzzles. Let them dismantle toys made of nuts, bolts and screws. Contrary to the impression traditionally offered by the pet trade, parrots are not "easy-to-care-for" companions. They are arguably among the most difficult. Living with a parrot requires observational skills, a lively imagination and an overall extended investment of mental energy if you are to provide activities and distractions that will keep that parrot engaged.

By SEAN WENSLEY BVSc MSc MRCVS, UK Vet, Surgeon

In May 2006 the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA-AWF) invited me to give a talk entitled “Welfare Concerns in Parrots” at the Foundation’s annual Discussion Forum in London. The Foundation’s mission statement is to “improve the welfare of all animals through veterinary science, education and debate” and its Forum provides opportunities for discussion from various animal welfare organisations. This was a prime opportunity to draw attention to the unacceptable welfare conditions endured by parrots in the international wild bird trade, and to raise awareness of the welfare problems that I was seeing all too frequently in pet parrots in companion avian veterinary practice. The Forum was also an opportunity to attempt to persuade the BVA to back a permanent ban on the import of wild-caught birds into the European Union.

The BVA had renewed their interest in the bird welfare issue in response to a PSNI avian influenza at a UK quarantine facility where imported wild birds were being held. A raising awareness of the welfare problems that I was seeing in parrots was timely, as research conducted in the years following the US ban on wild bird imports (the 1992 Wild Bird Conservation Act) gave evidence to suggest that the opposite was true, as illegal trade dropped. As legal and illegal trade - i.e. as legal trade falls, so illegal trade rises - when there is no evidence to support this. On the contrary, research conducted in the years following enactment of the EU Wild Birds Directive gave evidence to suggest that the opposite was true, as illegal trade dropped significantly following its implementation. I was keen that this should be made clear in my presentation at the Forum, and also that delegates should be left in no doubt of the suffering and mortality experienced by birds in trade.

I was concerned that both the BVA and the Dimmock Report had suggested that there is an inverse relationship between legal and illegal trade - i.e. as legal trade falls, so illegal trade rises. In fact there is no evidence to support this. On the contrary, research conducted in the years following enactment of the EU Wild Birds Directive gave evidence to suggest that the opposite was true, as illegal trade dropped significantly following its implementation. I was keen that this should be made clear in my presentation at the Forum, and also that delegates should be left in no doubt of the suffering and mortality experienced by birds in trade.

My presentation at the Forum was 7 days before the decisions were made as to whether the temporary ban should be extended, dropped or made permanent. I thanked the AWF for giving me the opportunity to raise awareness of this issue at such a critical time. I was also extremely grateful to Dr Jamie Gilardi, Director of the World Parrot Trust, for assistance whilst I was researching for my presentation.

I was invited to contribute to another Council paper on the issue of wild bird imports and the subject was once again considered at a BVA Council meeting in July 2006. I was delighted to read a report on that meeting in the Veterinary Record, 10 days later, which stated: “The Council strongly supported a permanent ban on the importation of wild-caught birds.”

Within weeks the BVA published a position paper which was accompanied by a press release (see PsittacScene Vol 18 No 3), outlining their views on the importation of captive live birds and calling for a permanent ban on wild-caught birds. I was not, of course, solely responsible for this fantastic result, but I was extremely grateful to the BVA-AWF for having given me the opportunity to raise awareness of this issue at such a critical time. I was also extremely grateful to Dr Jamie Gilardi, Director of the World Parrot Trust, for assistance whilst I was researching for my presentation.

The temporary ban has now been extended until the end of December 2006. The BVA’s position will not, by itself, spell the end for the EU trade in wild-caught birds, but it is a powerful voice to feed in imminent decision-making meetings that will determine the trade’s future.

I hope, for the birds’ sake, that the EU will do the same.

”The BVA’s position will not, by itself, spell the end for the EU trade in wild-caught birds, but it is a powerful voice to feed in imminent decision-making meetings that will determine the trade’s future.”
of birds needs to be monitored year round. By taking new photos every 2–4 weeks the very gradual changes in the beak patterns could be monitored throughout the year. As we do not foresee being able to carry this out in 2007, we inquired about possible ways to use skin wrinkles around the base of the lower mandible or around the eye to match birds from year to year without having to follow the slow but steady changes in their beak cracks.

Mr. Carlos Yamashita, the outstanding Brazilian field biologist, suggested a novel approach based on the yellow skin characteristic of Hyacinths. He advised us to try to photograph from even closer range and to study the dots of raised skin around the eyes of the Hyacinths within two or three millimetres of the eye itself. Ms. Gonçalves starting testing this idea in 2006, and she believes that Mr. Yamashita may be correct, in that the dots around the eyes seem to be irregularly distributed around the clock face, as it were, and also showed certain unchanging angles. In 2007, we hope to use these dots to try to build up an “eye ring dot dossier” and match the eye ring dots to the beaks. Then in 2008 we could be monitored throughout the year. As we do not foresee being able to carry this out in 2007, we inquired about possible ways to use skin wrinkles around the base of the lower mandible or around the eye to match birds from year to year without having to follow the slow but steady changes in their beak cracks.

Another particularly useful application of this beak photo technique would be to try to figure out if the same Hyacinths nest in the same low, eminently photographable, traditional tree cavities in the Brazilian Pantanal year after year, because, surprisingly, no reliable data exist to date to address even this most basic question.

Interesting, the 2006 figure of only seven fledglings out of a minimum of 187 is a very, very low recruitment rate. We don’t believe we have missed other fledglings among the 187 birds in the 2006 season, but we would like to reduce our efforts in 2007 to make sure that there is no possibility of undercounting fledglings. Because the images were analysed a bit differently in 2005, we are not yet sure of the recruitment rate for that season or how it compares to 2006. Fortunately, in the future, the photo analysis should be able to proceed with much greater efficiency now that these techniques have been further refined.

We believe that this direct count of fledglings in a large population of wild Hyacinths is a first and we hope to extend this work to allow us to understand population dynamics in this population and also among other individually recognizable macaws around the Americas.

At the Foster Parrots sanctuary where most of the parrots are free flighted, we witnessed birds trying to put themselves into cages and we believe that those that have been gated become coveted territory or intriguing domains to explore. As many times as we’ve watched hapless humans put themselves into cages, we’ve witnessed frustrated, hostile birds settle down and become significantly less aggressive when they’ve been freed from consistent confinement or, more importantly, when they’ve been given the freedom of choice.

Atticus is a yellow-naped Amazon (Amazona auropalliata), approximately 15 years old, who has been a Foster Parrots resident for 5 years. A decidedly solitary bird, Atticus spent a time in a large floor to ceiling cage. He wasn’t an aggressive fellow by any means and really didn’t seem to like his cage. His door was always open. However, when we took in a pair of wild and potentially dangerous Amazonas that did require confinement, it became necessary to evict Atticus. He spent the next several weeks trying to figure out how to get back into the cage. We offered him a very attractive, mid-sized, dome-topped cage plus a premium sample habitat at the largest window, but he didn’t want that cage. Finally we dragged a monsterity of stuff out for Atticus. Eight feet high and nearly 5 feet deep and wide, it sits squarely in the middle of the floor. His door is always open and he comes and goes at will. He has the power to open a single palm nut.

Social behaviour and routine
It is the highly social nature of parrots that makes them attractive as companions. They are capable of transferring essential bonding behaviour to people, which, in a captive situation, is an arrangement preferable to social isolation. And although we love our parrots and hope to do everything in our power to make them happy, we are not birds. We are humans, our primary bonds are with other humans and our lives are full of responsibilities and diversions that constantly tear us away from our parrots.

Parrots are superior in their ability to adapt to our inadequacies as companions. Still, we have found that by establishing a dependable routine for our birds, we minimize the stress and confusion of a haphazard world. The result, very often, is a parrot that feels less compelled to assert control over us through excessive vocalization, and a parrot more at ease with its world.
Get your parrot up and out of “bed” every night. Keeping in mind that parrots require 10 to 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night, we recommend that a parrot’s sleep area be located away from the area of general family activity, in a room that can be made quiet, dark and peaceful. Your parrot’s natural inclination is to tuck himself away to “roost” each evening, so a “sleeping cage” quickly establishes itself as an expected and desirable finish to a parrot’s day.

Knowing precisely what to expect from us and knowing the behaviour that is expected of them gives a parrot just as much a feeling of control over its life as it is able to decide whether it wants to be inside the cage or out. Old aviculture used to dictate asserting dominance and control over a parrot through wing clipping, consistent caging and keeping them perched at a height far above one’s head. But parrots are not dogs and they do not submit to subjugation. Their wild and instinctual nature must be acknowledged, accommodated and respected. Make a cage a compelling and engaging environment by providing boxes, chew toys, and rope vines. Then open the cage door. Let your bird out every night. Let him fly. Install hanging frames made of natural branches way above your head and let him be up high. Feeling guilty because you’re at work all day and your bird is home alone? Birds belong in flocks. Have more than one bird. Two or more birds are not twice as much work as one bird. They’re half as much work.

We force our parrots to live in our world, and then we don’t understand why they scream, beg, become aggressive, become phobic, feather pluck, self-mutilate... Sometimes it is necessary to force ourselves to live in their world before we can understand how to address the issues of parrot guardianship creatively and help ease their experience with us.

Knowing that, overall, people tend to fail as companions to parrots, we do not advocate parrots as pets. However, we are highly motivated to help people understand the needs of their birds and to improve the quality of care that they are able to deliver. We want people to keep their birds. Here at the sanctuary we are short on space.

During the 2005 census, Ms. Gonçalves received major photographic assistance and training in computer manipulation of the beak images from Paula Linsemeyer and Brett Backhouse, two generous zoologists from the Adelaide Zoo in Australia. The photo census techniques involved using a 600 mm, f 4 Nikon lens (left over from WCS macaw photo census work in the late 80’s in Murna, Peru) with a D70 Nikon camera body to photograph at very close range the beaks of at least 187 Hyacinth Macaws.

In 2005, Ms. Gonçalves was able to photograph both beak sides of a total of 93 birds, six of which turned out to be recently-fledged birds from the 2004-2005 (September - January) nesting season. In 2006, after improving her techniques, she photographed both beak sides of 121 different Hyacinth Macaws, seven of which were recently fledged birds from the 2005-2006 nesting season. The marks, lines, and other irregularities on the beaks were always easy to match when the photos were of sufficient quality.

In 2006, another 66 unique left beak sides and 46 right beak sides were not matched left with right. In general, the predominance of perching while showing the left side may reveal a preference related to the best escape routes to safe perches in trees, which were to the left of the birds. These leftover beak sides represent a minimum of 66 other unique birds, and possibly a few more (if some of the 46 leftover right beak sides represented individuals whose left sides were never photographed...). As it likely that most or even all of the unmatched right sides go with the 66 unmatched left sides, we assume that the population of birds in the 2006 season was a minimum of 121+66, or 187. Now that Ms. Gonçalves has refined and improved her techniques further, it should be possible to match almost all beak sides to achieve an even more definitive count in the upcoming 2007 post-nesting season (Feb through July).

In both years, the new fledglings were easy to detect by their habit of fluffing their head feathers, flipping their wings (part of typical begging by fledglings), and by their relatively smooth beak sides when compared with the adults. They also showed less angular, more rounded, slightly smaller head profiles as a result of their less muscled skulls. They will build up jaw muscles quickly over the first few weeks post fledging.

Mr. Lima’s team of macaw guards (who protect not only his land, but also more than 100,000 acres of the most vulnerable, most wildlife-rich parts of the national park) know of approximately 12 nests of Hyacinth Macaws within a radius of 20 miles of Mr. Lima’s property, but so far, there has been no regular photography of the birds at their nests to test whether the same birds nest every year in particular cliff cavities. In most cases, such photography would be difficult, as the distance from nest to nest would be too great to permit good definition of the beak lines and cracks. In practice, Mr. Gonçalves discovered that reliable, usable results for the beak photos were obtained when the birds were in good light (not back-lit) and at a distance of 8-18 meters (25-50 feet) from the lens. Typically, most of the birds near the blind on Mr. Lima’s land regularly were within this distance and could be photographed for the beak survey. When Ms. Gonçalves compared the beaks of all the birds from the 2005 census to those of the 2006 census, she noticed that a number of them appeared quite similar but were not identical. In order to determine if the similar looking beak sides were really the same bird whose beak had changed from one year to the next, an accessible subset...
A young Hyacinth must gain strength and protect its eyes from the strong winds. Researchers have identified individual birds within the flock using unique, unambiguous, definitive photo dossiers of each and every bird.

North of the Brazilian capital of Brasília, at the junction of four states in NE Brazil - Piauí, Tocantins, Maranhão, and Bahia - lies a 50,000-square kilometre (Costa-Rica-sized) wildlife area in 1,000-foot-high red-rock cliffs topped by brushy plateaus ranging from 50 acres to 100 square miles in size. The cliffs roll broad, open valleys covered with dry tropical forests; open woodlands, and golden grasslands dotted with 100-foot-tall Mauritia palms. Through the valleys run transparent streams bordered by thicker gallery forests dominated by these same majestic palms, which are favourite food and nest trees of Blue-and-Gold Macaws (Ara ararauna), and favourite roost and loafing trees of the world's largest and most spectacular parrots - Hyacinth Macaws (Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus).

Hyacinth photo ID’s are revealing

By CHARLES MUNN PhD

Large flocks of Hyacinths gather at a palm nut buffet provided to give overhead eucorists an exceptional view. Close-up photographs taken from the blind allow researchers to identify individual birds within the flock.
When holes made to harvest parrots are not carefully repaired, precocious nest cavities become useless for future breeding.

**Significant Results**

One of the most common methods for harvesting parrots is to collect some, but not all, of the chicks from the nest. The main argument that supports this approach is that those chicks would not survive or would have a very low probability of survival because in most nests natural brood reduction occurs. Therefore, theoretically, partial chick removal would not greatly affect the number of chicks fledged. However, in cases this assumption is not based on good quality scientific data.

Our preliminary results show some interesting facts about the "brood reduction" theory on which Argentina’s harvesting plan is based. Although, in theory, the removal of chicks does not greatly affect the number of fledglings, we found evidence to the contrary. In practice, chicks are harvested when they are 40 to 50 days old and we now know that at that age, the probability of survival is actually really high. In fact, brood reduction as a result of starvation was relatively uncommon and it was restricted to the first week after hatching. Therefore chicks harvested based on this assumption is not supported by evidence and we believe that the uncertainty of the harvesting management plan in order to guarantee the long-term survival of our Blue-fronted Amazon population.

**Modelling harvest impacts**

This is the first long term study of the reproductive ecology of Blue-fronted Amazon populations in Argentina. We are one of the preferred species for the parrot trade and Argentina’s local community based national harvest program allows exporting approximately 5000 young parrots per year. Therefore, the data collected in this study are important to correctly model the impact that chick harvesting could have on parrot populations. Our results indicate that the harvest of chicks does not affect cavity reoccupation (provided that the hole is repaired appropriately). However, because chicks are harvested after natural brood reduction occurs, the harvesting of chicks results in a 50% reduction of fledglings produced per nest. Our results also provide good quality data on the reproductive ecology of some of the most important populations of this species. This allows comparisons with other studies conducted on the same species elsewhere and in other species of the same genus.

Having completed four breeding season studies, we are beginning to fill in some of the knowledge gaps regarding Blue-forefront Amazon breeding ecology. We still have more seasons to go and many things to find out. Our hope is that with the information we will generate, a review will be made of the harvesting management plan in order to guarantee the long-term survival of our Blue-fronted Amazon population.

Our research is possible thanks to those who have believed in and supported it. We require climbing equipment (ropes, carabiners, ascenders, etc.), measuring equipment (i.e.; scales), and many other items such as leg bands, digital cameras, GPSs, laptops, etc. We always need new dedicated people interested in supporting this project at aeqstoa2002@yahoo.com.ar.

Thanks to: Our core team - Roman Ruggera, Joaquin Carrera, Chantal de la Fourniere, Sarah Fagge and Angel Nogues, Scientific Argentinean institutions CIC and CONICET, University of La Plata, University of Buenos Aires, The World Parrot Trust, The Amazonas Society, Parrot People Fundacion and Parrots International, all of our volunteers and the local people (Park rangers and neighbors of the Reserve) that have been helping us during all these years.

Parrots call chicks by name

In a discovery that is likely to rekindle the debate about language in the animal kingdom, researchers in Germany have discovered that some parrots appear to give their offspring individual names.

Liberal Democrat Rural Affairs Spokesperson, Baroness Miller said: “Animal lovers should be pleased with the Government's announcement, only animal abusers will ... welfare groups have campaigned for this for a long time. However, it took a judicial ruling to bring the Government around.”

Welfare, said: “I believe that the revised measures on pet fairs, together with our proposals to raise the standards of pet vending generally and the introduction of the welfare offence for companion animals, provide the best protection yet for animals at pet fairs.”

Parrots as portrayed by a huge range of artists from the Renaissance to the present day will be on display, including paintings by Albrecht Diirer, Tiziano, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the poet Edward Lear (a keen zoological illustrator, as you’ll know), Robert Wainwright as well as Quentin Blake. The show will culminate in a series of large colourful parrot illustrations by one of the greatest living parrot artist, Elizabeth Butterworth.

The parrot’s migratory path is mostly within the wind farm after legal action by the company. Opponents of the project said yesterday the company’s decision was an admission of guilt and showed the original proposal threatened the bird.

The minister has agreed to reconsider the project in April, claiming a threat to the parrot.

The Howard Government will spend $3.2 million to ensure the future of the orange-bellied parrot, the rare bird used by Environment Minister Ian Campbell to block a $220 million wind farm in Victoria.

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Chicks are weighed and measurements are taken of the tarsus, wing, and head regularly until fledging. Feather development is also carefully tracked. This data helps researchers understand how the wild chicks evolve and grow over time.

Amazon ecology

We collected data on different reproductive parameters of Blue-fronted Amazons during four consecutive breeding seasons and evaluated:

1. nest survival and main causes of nest failure, and
2. egg survival, hatchability and chick survival in successful nests.

We also studied the characteristics of nests, cavities, including recolonization during the following breeding season, and nest predation and chick removal affected cavity recolonization.

Blue-fronted Amazons are highly mobile. All but a few of those breeding in Chaco leave their breeding grounds in flocks after their chicks have fledged and the majority of them go north, where fruit is still available. The company Catovair, the local funder of the project, provided advice from wildlife expert Brett Lane to rebut Senator Campbell’s arguments. The company has provided advice from wildlife expert Brett Lane to rebut Senator Campbell’s arguments.

The team consists of a permanent core group of field technicians and volunteers (mainly biology students) from around the world. Each breeding season we search intensively for nests. We find nests mainly by observing the behaviour of breeding pairs and revisiting cavities used in previous years. Each nest tree is fully measured and described - 30 to 60 nests are studied every year. So far, we have followed 140 nesting attempts in 89 different cavities.

Nests are checked on average every three days until the chicks fly and the nest fails. Data on the number of eggs laid, egg size, number of chicks hatched and fledged are recorded in order to determine breeding success. In addition, chick growth and development are monitored using regular weights, measurements and diet analysis. The chicks are banded and checked for ectoparasites. Blood samples are taken for DNA analysis and endoparasites. Adults are also banded and censused and blood samples are taken.

We also study the vegetation which allows us to better understand their environment: what kind of forest patches they prefer, how much available food there is, when each kind of fruit is available, how many available cavities adults are also banded and censused and blood samples are taken.

A director of Wind Power, Andrew Newbold, told The Australian the decision to move the six turbines...Amend law was “definitely” a concession. The shifting of the turbines and the company's offer to spend $750,000 on Orange-bellied Parrot recovery programs contradicts claims that the wind farm would have no impact on the bird.

In its new submission to the government, the company has provided advice from wildlife expert Brett Lane to rebut Senator Campbell’s reasons for rejecting the wind farm.

Mr Lane said he was unaware of any record of the parrot within 5km of the proposed wind farm site, and there was no suitable habitat for the bird at the site.

He said the Biosis report used by Senator Campbell to veto the project overestimated the risk of parrots hitting the wind turbines.

Source: EWIN HAYWARD, Sept 06

Bird species recovery haled

The first global audit of threatened species has revealed that 16 species of bird that were on the brink of extinction in the mid-1990s have been saved by determined conservation efforts.

The majority of the bird species, ranging from the Norfolk Island Parrot to the Mauritius parakeet, had populations of less than 100 in 1994. Most were tipped for imminent extinction. Yet conservationists said the findings showed that, with international cooperation and scientific funding, they can halt and even reverse a worldwide decline in bird types. But they also warned that governments around the world are still doing too little to save millions of birds from being lost forever.

Dr Stuart Butchart, author of the report and an expert with the British-based BirdLife International, said: "These successes show that preventing extinctions is possible and can be achieved with political will and concerted action."

"We need to scale up our efforts considerably to prevent wholesale biodiversity loss and many more extinctions in the coming decades."

In his study, published in the journal Oryx, Dr Butchart looked at 27 species of birds that were classified as Critically Endangered - the highest level of extinction threat - in 1994. Most were tipped for imminent extinction. Yet conservationists said the findings showed that, with international cooperation and scientific funding, they can halt and even reverse a worldwide decline in bird types. But they also warned that governments around the world are still doing too little to save millions of birds from being lost forever.

Source: MAXINE FRITH, Aug 06

http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/ortic ler2222222.ece

Echo Parakeet competition

The company Catovair, the local funder of the Echo Parakeet (Psittacula eques) program launched a national drawing and naming competition among the Mauritian school children. The Echo Parakeet chicks were named for the Echo Parakeet competition.

The Echo Parakeet program is also funded by Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, North of England Zoological Society, World Parrot Trust and National Parks & Conservation Services (Mauritius).

Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin, July 06

Refugee’s incredible journey

Two parents owned by 15-year-old Tamil refugee Bhovana Nishanthini Lombert mean absolutely everything to her.

So devoted is the teenager to her feathered friends that she was willing to take them and nothing else in the arduous journey by sea from war-torn Sri Lanka to a refugee camp in the south of India.

The birds remained on her shoulders throughout the voyage.

Bhovana is one of about 4,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who have fled their homes in the north of Sri Lanka because of the increasing number of skirmishes between the army and Tamil Tiger rebels.

The refugees travel across the 30km (18-mile) stretch of sea that separates Sri Lanka from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, crammed into small fishing vessels.

Sometimes there is no room to sit down - let alone carry a pair of parrots - with as many as 20 or more standing huddled over their mutual belongings.

On her arrival in India, Bhovana - like other refugees - underwent tough questioning by Indian security agencies.

But Bhovana’s entry procedure provided welcome relief in what sometimes can be a tense and bad-tempered bureaucratic exercise.

“I love these birds as much as I love my three best friends as she is his service bird. Because of his illness, that used to be difficult for Eggers. But all the experiences I have had with people when Sadie has been with me have been very positive,” Eggers says.

“Sadie definitely picks up on my moods. When I start having anxiety attacks, I start becoming louder, and she tunes into that. She’ll say, ‘I love you, you’re OK’, or, you’re gonna be OK. She’ll tell me to relax. She’s really pretty amazing,” Eggers says.

Sadie the parrot, at your service

Sadie could well be the only certified service parrot around. Sadie herself is new to the job, officially speaking. Her registration papers and ID card arrived from the Service Animal Registry of America only six weeks ago.

Nevertheless, the 2-year-old Congo African grey parrot has been enrolled in ongoing, on-the-shoolder, on-the-job training with James Eggers of Maplewood, Missouri for more than a year. The work has been a lifesaver for both of them.

Eggers has been diagnosed as bipolar with psychotic tendencies. He suffers from severe depression and potentially dangerous mood swings. Medication helps to control the problem. Sadie controls it without any side effects. Negative side effects, that is.

On the positive side, Sadie is as much Eggers’ best friend as she is his service bird. Because Eggers is slightly hearing impaired, Sadie serves partly as a hearing aid. When the phone rings, she automatically says “Hello.”

Eggers says, “When someone is at the door, she asks, ‘Who’s there?’”

But Sadie’s primary service job is to help Eggers “interact with people in a positive way.” Because of his illness, that used to be difficult for Eggers.

“Sadie definitely picks up on my moods. When I start having anxiety attacks, I start becoming louder, and she tunes into that. She’ll say, ‘I love you, you’re OK,’ or, you’re gonna be OK. She’ll tell me to relax. She’s really pretty amazing,” Eggers says.

Even though the Americans With Disabilities Act does not require that service animals be licensed or certified, Eggers felt that registering Sadie with the Service Animal Registry of America would make it easier for him to keep her by his side.

It has. “Before I had her ID card, we could pretty much only go out on the street. Now we can go into places. We can ride the bus. We can go just about anywhere,” he says.

“I pull out the card automatically and nap any confrontation in the bud.”

“Sadie’s like an American Express card,” Eggers says. “I don’t leave home without her.”

Source: SARAH NEWMAN, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 06/10/06
The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill

Book Review

By JAMIE GILARDI

Author Mark Bitterman

We each have our own personal stories about how parrots entered our lives. Every story is unique and these initial encounters often influence how we relate to parrots for many years to come. Mark Bitterman's story is extraordinary because it was a flock of wild parrots that entered his life and because they found him in the middle of a large American city.

The readers of The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill are lucky for two reasons. First because this chance encounter might not have happened at all. Mark might have discovered squirrels in a park or gulls on the bay, or some other urban wildlife outside his San Francisco door. Instead, it was parrots. And second, with hundreds of thousands of possible humans to choose from in that city, the birds settled upon someone (literally and figuratively) who was willing and capable of sharing this remarkable story in a deeply personal and delightfully honest way.

Incidentally, Mark's story is fodder for any one of several different and genuinely interesting books. It could have been a story about discovering beauty and wildness in a sprawling metropolis, or about the miraculous and thrilling 'taming' of wild animals, or the social insights of living in this parrot society for over a decade. It could have been about how wild parrots helped Mark through a number of personal discoveries and realizations. Without retelling the story, I will say that Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill is all of these stories and more, all rolled into one engaging and eloquent narrative.

Anyone who has lived with parrots will find a lot of Mark's experiences with the flock to be familiar - sometimes fun and comical and more, all rolled into one engaging and eloquent narrative.

The Book and DVD are available on our online store.

The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill

Blue-fronted Amazon Parrots (Amazona aestiva) are one of the most popular pet birds in the world. Their flamboyant, interactive personalities, talking ability, and striking coloration are some of the qualities that can make them wonderful companions. In the wild, they are found in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia. South America. We have been studying the reproductive ecology and population dynamics of this species in the Chaco region of Argentina since 2002. The aim of our study is to determine the main factors that affect the reproductive success of Blue-fronted Amazons in this region.

This information is particularly relevant in estimating the impact that harvesting could have on wild parrot populations. The World Parrot Trust recently committed major funding for our 2006-2007 field season. The demand for parrots as pets has resulted in an significant international trade. The sustainability and implications of this trade have been extensively analysed and discussed. Parrots face many pressures including habitat destruction and poaching for the pet trade. The effect of these factors is exacerbated by the low reproductive rate of most parrot species as a result of relatively late age of the first reproduction, small clutch size, low survival of chicks and fledglings, absence of second broods, reproduction that does not take place every year, and restrictive nesting requirements. Some people think that in a few cases sustainable harvesting programs might be feasible for some parrot species. The Blue-fronted Amazon is viewed by some as one of the most important species in the world.

In Argentina, most Blue-fronted Amazons breed in the dry forests in the Chaco region where our study takes place. This thick, thorny forest, locally known as “Impenetrable”, is dominated by hardwood trees, which offer excellent nesting cavities. The Impenetrable is also home to diverse fauna including jaguars, peccaries, anteaters, giant armadillos and over 300 species of birds.

Current management

The exportation of wild Blue-fronts has been banned in all countries except Argentina, where so many chicks and adults are being legally captured and exported every year that their populations are potentially being threatened. From 1993 to 1991 approximately half a million Blue-fronted Amazons were authorized by the Argentinean government to be collected for the pet trade. This so-called "off take" peaked when about 75,000 Blue-fronted Amazon permits were granted in 1985 alone.

However, this management plan lacks scientific support. No exhaustive research has been conducted about Blue-fronted Amazon biology and as a result very little is known. Thus, most of the rules and principles of the management plan are arbitrary. The current number of chicks and adults harvested each year could have an important impact on Argentina's Blue-fronted Amazon population.

Amazon country - Argentina's “Impenetrable” Forest

By IGOR BERKUNSKY and BÉRÉNICE CHARPIN

We wake up as early as possible, around 5 or 6 am while it's still dark. One of us prepares breakfast (tea or coffee with cookies or crackers) while the others gather all the equipment needed for the day: ropes, harnesses, measuring equipment, and water, lots of water: at least 2 litres per person. You don't want to forget anything since the parrot nests we are studying are far away from the campsite! We all stay in tents throughout the breeding season (mid October to early March - spring and summer in Argentina).

Depending on their location, the nest-trees are linked with paths forming “circuits” or “loops”. “Loops” can be as far as 20 km (12.5 mi) from the campsite and once you leave the road behind, you may need to walk 1 or 2 km (0.6 - 1.2 mi) through the dense forest.

We work in pairs, each checking a dozen nests every morning. By the time we reach the first nest the sun and the temperature are usually up! The most common part of the day is spent checking the nests, taking many hours and we need to be efficient: data has to be collected quickly so that chicks aren’t bothered and because we have to be back to the campsite before it’s impossible to perform any task during the hottest part of the day. Temperatures may be as high as 49º C (120 º F). Not even the lizards dare to muck around.

After lunch, it’s time to process the data collected in the morning, preparing the activities for the afternoon and of course, take a rest in our hammocks!

From 4 to dark (around 8-9 pm) we go out again checking nests or doing observations on the vegetation - this will enable us to monitor changes in food availability throughout the season.

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By JOANNA ECKLES

DVD Review

Directed by Judy Irving. (83 minutes)

The DVD version of The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill is not intended as a film version of the book. It is a gem in its own accord. The real treat is being immersed in the sights and sounds of these fabulous birds and getting to know Mark Bitterman in person. While you won’t get all of the detailed tracking of individual birds and their relationships over years that you’ll enjoy in print, you’ll get a genuine glimpse of their lives in the “wilds” of San Francisco and Mark’s life as their companion and ambassador. You’ll appreciate his gentle nature and unique philosophy, his personal education in parrot biology and his genuine rapport and attachment to the flock.

We screened this film at our home for a mixed audience ranging in age from 4 to 45 and it was a hit by all accounts! We, the readers of The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill, are lucky for two reasons. First because this chance encounter might not have happened at all. Mark might have discovered squirrels in a park or gulls on the bay, or some other urban wildlife outside his San Francisco door. Instead, it was parrots. And second, with hundreds of thousands of possible humans to choose from in that city, the birds settled upon someone (literally and figuratively) who was willing and capable of sharing this remarkable story in a deeply personal and delightfully honest way.

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Anyone who has lived with parrots will find a lot of Mark’s experiences with the flock to be familiar - sometimes fun and comical and sometimes terribly sad. While his explorations of personal philosophy and his days living out of a VW bus might be less familiar, these adventures are also engaging because of Mark’s open, honest, and comfortable writing style.

One of the unexpected pleasures for me was how Mark’s long relationship with the flock provided a window into the social lives of these birds. As a parrot researcher, I’ve studied many parrot species in the wild and also many in captivity, but I have never had the window into their personal relationships that Mark experienced by becoming deeply integrated into this flock. Surely wild parrots living in social groups exhibit many, if not all, of the flock dynamics Mark walks us through with great and respectful intention. But until he did so, we could only guess. Although not intentionally, Mark’s insights might help wild parrot researchers in designing their studies as well as in the interpretation of their results. And for those of us with parrots in captivity, this book holds a wealth of thought-provoking material for pondering basic questions about parrots’ choices about their mates, companions, diet, and all other facets of their complex lives.

There are many good reasons for this book’s rapid and impressive success, as Mark’s story clearly appeals to the broadest of audiences, not just bird lovers or parrot lovers. For readers of the PsittaScene, it’s a “no-brainer” - read this book – you’ll be very glad you did!

The Book and DVD are available on our online store.
Hello,

Those who have been World Parrot Trust members for some time may have wondered why they had not heard much from me in the past year or so. Unfortunately I have been quite ill, but am happy to have regained some health and glad to be able to write a few words.

In this time, avian flu (H5N1) has become a worry to us all (as previously covered in PsittacScene). However, the temporary ban on bird imports into the European Union due to the flu, has created a real opportunity to permanently stop imports of wild-caught parrots for the pet trade. This is a long-held aim of the Trust, and has almost unimaginable benefits in terms of conservation and welfare.

I am also excited that the Trust is again able to offer ‘Action Grants’ for parrot projects, as this is a great way to encourage interesting work on the species identified as most at need in the Parrot Action Plan.

We know that targeted funding can be a lifeline, as shown by the dedicated work (overseen by Carl Jones) on the Echo Parakeet in Mauritius. This was the first species supported with WPT funds back in 1989, and the population has since grown from just a handful to certainly much improved.

Recently I have been able to visit the birds here at Paradise Park (the home of the WPT Honorary Chairman) and can’t express how much I have enjoyed this. The avian’s are looking good, and the birds, including many parrots but also toucans, tucuris and pheasants, are a joy to quietly observe as they go about their daily business.

I urge you to take time with the parrots you have in your lives, and consider their wild cousins. Watch them, learn about them, and do your best to give them fulfilled lives in return for the pleasure they give you.

Regards

Michael Reynolds
Honorary Chairman