

# Flappers

A monthly publication of the Flapping Feathers Parrot Club

Volume 1 Issue 1

February - March 2010





# The Flapping Feathers Parrot Club



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# Editor's Message

Welcome to the first issue of Flappers, the new Flapping Feathers Parrot Club newsletter. The hardest part for me about forming the new club was to think of a name for it. I had a few good suggestions, but I liked Flapping Feathers. I checked all the sources I could think of and did a lot of web searches, and was not able to find any other club using this name. Once I had a name for the club, the newsletter name, Flappers, came pretty quickly.

It feels great to finally be able to do a newsletter that I can make as large as I want and to be able to put in articles of unlimited size. This issue is larger than future ones will be, but it covers 2 months.

This first newsletter came out extremely late. It was supposed to be the February issue, and it's already March, so I decided to make it a combination February / March issue. I know, the cover is kind of contradictory because it says it's a monthly publication and then it says it's the February / March issue, but this is a one time thing (hopefully). Future issues will probably be coming out the first week of each month. I wanted this first one to be the February issue because Linda sent me some great Valentine's Day cover pictures, and I would have felt foolish using them on the cover of the March newsletter.

The newsletter has a "movie" on the cover. It's not what most people think of as a movie, but Adobe, the company that makes the software I use, calls it a movie, so I do also. The newsletter also has some unique navigation techniques that make reading the newsletter a lot easier. If you do not see anything moving on the cover of the newsletter, or you want to learn about the navigation techniques, or you want to print the newsletter, then please read the instructions at [Instructions for Reading the Newsletter](#).

I tried to eliminate most of those annoyingly long navigation links from Flappers, which should make the newsletter more pleasant to read and save space. So instead of seeing something like "go to [http://www.flappingfeathers.com/Instructions\\_for\\_Viewing\\_Newsletter.pdf](http://www.flappingfeathers.com/Instructions_for_Viewing_Newsletter.pdf)" you will see "go to [Instructions for Reading the Newsletter](#)". I put these links in [blue](#) and underlined them, which follows normal web conventions, to make it easy to know what are links and what the links take you to.

Flappers is designed to be read on a PC. If you try to print it on an ink jet printer, because of the backgrounds and the pictures, it will probably cost you somewhere around \$4—\$6 in ink if you print in high quality mode. Within a few days after the online version of the newsletter is sent out, I will produce one for printing without the backgrounds. It won't look as nice, but will save you a lot of ink and money. If you want this more printable copy, let me know and I'll email it to you.

The AFA in Brief article is very long this month because it has information and links to the pending pet legislation in each state. You may want to check the information for your state or states you are interested in.

For information about the new Flapping Feathers Parrot Club, see the imaginary Executive Board meeting minutes on page 4. The meeting never actually took place, but all the information about the club in the minutes is accurate.

I heard on the news a few days ago that a Superman comic #1 was just auctioned off for 1 million dollars. I doubt if the #1 issue of Flappers will ever be worth that much, but save this first issue anyway; you may be able to get a few dollars for it 40 or 50 years from now.

Shelly Orloff

Founder and Newsletter Editor

Flapping Feathers Parrot Club

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# Flapping Feathers Parrot Club Board Meeting Minutes

## February 7, 2010

The Flapping Feathers Parrot Club's first Board meeting took place at Shelly Orloff's house on Sunday, February 7th, 2010.

In attendance: Shelly Orloff and Sheena, the African Grey.

- Shelly called the meeting to order at 1:40 pm.
- Shelly proposed that the new club should be named the Flapping Feathers Parrot Club and the newsletter will be named Flappers. The motion passed unanimously.
- The new club will be more like a social club with a newsletter, so it won't have or need any officers or By Laws. Shelly's title will be Founder and Newsletter Editor.
- Shelly proposed that the new club will meet monthly in a diner or restaurant, at least initially in Paramus or the Paramus area. The Suburban Diner on Route 17 North was suggested as a good place to meet initially because most members know where it is. A poll will be taken from the members to find out what night would be best for the majority to meet. Each member will pay their own bill, so if somebody just has a cup of coffee they won't have to pay \$20 for it.
- 3 or 4 times a year, the meeting will be held on a weekend for lunch instead of during the week for dinner, so members who either have to work nights or who cannot drive at night can attend. There were no objections.
- The first meeting will not be scheduled by the time the first newsletter goes out. Members will be notified by email when and where the meeting will be.
- Sheena asked for an apple, so the meeting was adjourned for about 10 minutes while Shelly gave her an apple and some other fruit. She did not eat the apple or the other fruit. Shelly was mad that she interrupted the meeting for nothing.
- Because we will be meeting in a diner or restaurant, we will not be having regular speakers, and of course nobody will be able to bring their birds. We will probably be having a round table discussion at each meeting, and we may ask club members to speak about something they are knowledgeable about.
- A web site will be set up for the new club. The address will be [www.flappingfeathers.org](http://www.flappingfeathers.org). [Editors note: the site is currently in place, but there is nothing on the site except for a short note saying that the club is being formed, and one picture.]
- Shelly said that membership cards will be printed and given out to members at the meetings. The members' names will be printed on the cards, and there will probably be space for a signature. Membership cards may need to be shown to local advertisers who offer discounts to club members.
- Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shelly Orloff  
Founder and Newsletter Editor  
Flapping Feathers Parrot Club



# Born to Be Wild

By Nikki Buxton

Photos By Nikki Buxton & Jerry Larder

[www.parrots.org](http://www.parrots.org)

November 1, 2009

Reprinted with permission from World Parrot Trust

The cacophony of 24 Amazons performing their wake-up routine beneath our window sends us careering into the new day; ready or not. We are bullied from our bed and forced to enjoy coffee on the veranda whilst two cavorting parakeets and a stately Blue-head (*Amazona farinosa*) circle the house, and a grounded Red-lored (*Amazona autumnalis*) nibbles gently on my ear.

THUS BEGINS THE DAY: feeding, cleaning, observing, writing, checking, feeding again... I was promised a dream retirement in our little corner of Belizean paradise – growing vegetables and growing old. Instead, we have become exactly what everyone who gets the parrot bug swears they will never be, and yet always are: besotted, consumed and totally enslaved.

April 2004. Jerry and I had been in Belize only a few short months when we were offered baby parrots. The shock of peering into a bucket at two bald little Red-lored chicks was a defining moment for me: the idea that anyone would take a bird from its mother had never entered my head. Of course we bought them – anything to get

them out of that bucket. They cost us \$50Bz – around £6 or \$12US each: two days wages for the poachers.

WE HAD NEVER CAGED ANYTHING in our lives and we weren't about to start now. Bonnie and Clyde, and our subsequent addition of Fat-Belly Jones, the Aztec Parakeet (*Aratinga nana*) rapidly took over our lives, our home and anything chewable. The days of their introduction to the Great Outdoors were ones we will never forget. We learned valuable skills such as climbing trees and ladders, barrelling through the jungle yelling and cawing like lunatics and running whilst looking skyward (not easy - try it). The birds soon got the hang of flight and safe landings and settled into an easy routine of playing outdoors and returning home to roost on the shower rail. Bonnie and Clyde began to fly further afield, staying out for three or four nights at a time, until eventually around mid-December, they just stopped coming back. We had mixed feelings: we missed them desperately, but hopefully we had accomplished what we set out to do and they were wild birds again. Jones



Red-lored Amazon 'Clyde' enjoying one of his first rainbaths as a wild bird. Acquired out of pity as a chick, he and his sibling were raised and eventually released. They became the accidental beginning of Belize Bird Rescue.

stayed with us for three years. She never lost her love of Red-loreds and periodically would leap up, squawking like crazy and take off after one or another of our recent releases: a wonderful way of keeping track of them. One very sad day in 2007 she failed to return home. We like to think in her short life as a free bird she was more fulfilled than if she had been protected from natural dangers by a cage.

A few months after Bonnie & Clyde's departure, a villager gave us her unwanted pets. We had no idea at the time that as captive 2-year old birds they were classed in the scientific world as "unfeasible for release". In our minds, they

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were in their natural environment, they were probably hatched in a nearby tree, they were never more than caged wild animals, and we had no reason to think they would not revert to wild status given adequate time and conditions. Within a few hectic months, we had another 5 birds back in the wild.

Over the years our reputation as mad bird people spread and we managed to beg borrow and steal many more parrots. Since purchasing those first two birds, we realised we were part of the problem, and resolved never again to pay for parrots. It's a hard road to take, especially when a few dollars would secure a bird's freedom. But trading in wildlife creates demand and it is illegal, even if enforcement is sporadic and largely impractical.

ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE SUCCESS STORIES is that of Stevie, a 2 year old Red-lored driven crazy by his chicken cage-mates. Stevie was named after Stevie Wonder, as he would sway from side to side on his perch performing figure-8's with his head. Stevie the Parrot clucking his latest rendition from a nearby tree became a source of great amusement to our workers. Eight months later he was on his way as a wild bird, returning like clockwork after every nesting season for another 4 years. On one amazing visit he was accompanied by his rather nervous family: it was then we realised we were doing something worthwhile.

WE LOST OUR FIRST BIRD IN 2008 and we were devastated. I misjudged the flight ability of a White-fronted Amazon (*A. albifrons*) and she was killed by a raptor. We will always feel sickened by what happened to Connie, but it made us think carefully about what we were doing. The rehab and release method we used worked, we just needed the right facilities. From this accidental beginning came Belize Bird Rescue with a large flight aviary, 2 intermediate aviaries and 7 indoor cages so we can get to know our little guys before we throw them out into the trees. We will doubtless continue to grow as more birds arrive at our door.

Although our primary goal is the liberation of maltreated captive birds, we have to accept that Belizeans will always want parrots as pets and generally speaking have no idea how to care for them properly. A typical response to "How long should Polly live?" would be anything from 100 days to 5 years. Here, parrots are a disposable commodity; they literally do grow on trees. Trapping and keeping wild parrots is illegal, but as with most cultural practices, the law is generally disregarded.

THE AVERAGE WILD-CAUGHT CHICK faces a pitiful existence, permanently caged and fed though the bars on a sporadic diet of tortilla and white corn. We have seen cages where the door has been closed for so long, it will no longer open properly. Literally adding injury to insult, almost all Belizeans clip their bird's wings



Chac' and 'Chell' were owned by a family who let them fly free until they were captured, clipped and caged by a neighbour.

as they believe it makes their parrot tame. The only ones we get that have full plumage are from the rusted-shut cages, having re-grown inside their prison.

Wing-clipping is our biggest headache and heartache. We have never seen it done properly and are desperate to make owners understand the consequences of over-clipping. Working with a clipped bird is tricky: breast and beak injuries are a real danger, but with enough time and care even birds clipped as chicks will become accomplished flyers. Belizeans also tend to be scared of their birds and don't want to get bitten, so parrots are rarely handled. Polly's only job is to look and sound pretty. Sadly though, these birds know exactly what they are. All day they hear wild parrots flying overhead, every mating season

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they have the strongest natural urge to breed and, almost without exception, they are contained in cramped, squalid conditions, isolated and neglected until they die prematurely of malnutrition, sickness, or just plain misery.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, Belize is by no means a lost cause. On the contrary, it is a rare and beautiful place – a small country with a stable government and an environmental policy that places 44% of its territory in protected areas. Half of the 300,000 strong population are still in school, which represents a golden opportunity for environmental education, but we need to move fast if we want to positively influence the next generation. In traditional “interfering gringo” fashion, we nibble away at the attitudes and misconceptions Belizeans have toward their birds, both as pets and as a natural resource essential to the country’s thriving tourism industry. If, through education, we can improve the quality of life of captive parrots, then we may extend their lifespan and thereby reduce the turnover of

wildcaught “replacements”.

ALL OF THE 9 RESIDENT SPECIES of Psittascines are victims of the local pet trade and we have witnessed their price climb annually as availability dwindles, which can only encourage more poaching. A Red-lored chick now fetches around \$100 Bz, a Mealy Amazon (*A. farinosa*) upwards of \$400 and the endangered Yellow-heads (*A. oratrix*) were so scarce this year, we heard there were none for sale in the north of the country at all.

In our utopian dream-world, rigorous implementation of existing legislation would stamp out the pet trade overnight, but that takes money and resources that the government simply doesn’t have. This year, in a monumental stride forward, Belize’s Wildlife Department doubled its workforce by appointing a second Wildlife Officer. The two of them have now launched a campaign against captive wildlife and will increasingly bring confiscated birds to us for rehabilitation.

TO DATE WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY released 27 parrots and have 28 more at various stages of the 12 to 24



Three Red-lored Amazons experience their first real trees in the aviary.

month rehabilitation process. Five years after those first releases we are still learning - the willful intelligence of the Amazons certainly keeps us on our toes. Where release is concerned, we have our critics, especially amongst pet owners. But we have gratifyingly more evidence of success than of failure: encouragement indeed as time runs out for the parrots of Belize, where a bird in the wild will always be worth a hundred in a cage.

See additional photos on page 28

Source: PsittaScene, a publication of the World Parrot Trust [www.psittascene.org](http://www.psittascene.org). @2010 All rights reserved.

## About BELIZE BIRD RESCUE

Belize Bird Rescue is a non-profit organization operating on a private reserve within the Cayo District of Belize. Since its accidental beginnings in April 2004, the organisation has been owned, operated and financed by UK-expat Belizean Residents, Jerry Larder & Nikki Buxton.

They began “rescuing” birds in April 2004 with the arrival of two Red-lored Amazon chicks and as of mid-2009 have cared for 72 birds and made 40 successful releases, of which 27 are parrots.

Parrots are a particular concern for Belize Bird Rescue, as the local pet trade and ever-increasing human encroachment on nesting sites reduces population numbers of several of Belize's parrot

species to potentially unsustainable levels: for example, Belize is one of the last strongholds of the endangered Yellowheaded Amazon (*Amazona oratrix*): the bird of choice as a family pet and still regarded by farmers as a major crop pest.

For more information or to donate visit:

[www.belizebirdrescue.com](http://www.belizebirdrescue.com)



# Rare Bird's Breeding Ground Found in Afghanistan

By Michael Casey, AP Environmental Writer

[www.physorg.com](http://www.physorg.com)

January 18, 2010

Reprinted with permission from the Associated Press and [PhysOrg.com](http://PhysOrg.com)

**(AP) -- The first known breeding area of one of the world's rarest birds has been found in the remote and rugged Pamir Mountains in war-torn Afghanistan, a New York-based conservation group said Monday.**

A researcher with the Wildlife Conservation Society stumbled upon the small, olive-brown large-billed reed warbler in 2008 and taped its distinctive song - a recording experts now say is probably the first ever. He and colleagues later caught and released 20 of the birds, the largest number ever recorded, the group says.

At the time, however, Robert Timmins, who conducting a survey of aviary communities along the Wakhan and Pamir rivers, thought he was observing a more common warbler species.

But after a visit to a Natural History Museum in Tring in England to examine bird skins, Timmins realized he had something else on his hands.

Lars Svensson, a Swedish expert on the family of reed warblers and familiar with their songs, was the first to



This undated photo released by the Wildlife Conservation Society shows a large-billed reed warbler. The breeding area of the large-billed reed warbler, one of the world's rarest birds, has been discovered in the remote and rugged Pamir Mountains in war-torn Afghanistan, a New York-based conservation group announced Monday Jan. 18, 2010. (AP Photo/Wildlife Conservation Society)

suggest that Timmins' tape was likely the first recording of the large-billed reed warbler.

"Practically nothing is known about this species, so this discovery of the breeding area represents a flood of new information on the large-billed reed warbler," said Colin Poole, executive director of group's Asia Program. "This new knowledge of the bird also indicates that the Wakhan

Corridor still holds biological secrets and is critically important for future conservation efforts in Afghanistan."

Researchers returned to the site of Timmins' first survey in 2009, armed with mist nets used to catch birds for examination. The research team broadcast the recording of the song, which brought in large-billed reed warblers from all

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directions, allowing the team to catch 20 of them for examination and to collect feathers for DNA.

Lab work comparing museum specimens with measurements, field images, and DNA confirmed the find: the first-known breeding population of large-billed reed warblers.

"This is great news from a little-known species from a remote part of the world and suggests that there may be more discoveries to be made here," said Mike Evans, an expert on [birds](#) in the region for BirdLife. He did not take part in the discovery.

Researchers are hoping the

discovery sheds light on the bird, which U.K.-based Birdlife International in 2007 called one of the world's rarest. The first specimen was discovered in India in 1867, with more than a century elapsing before a single bird was found in Thailand in 2006.

But the announcement of the discovery of a home to the large-billed reed warbler came the same day Taliban militants launched an assault on the Afghan capital, underscoring the challenges of doing conservation work in the country.

The bird was discovered in the Pamir Mountains, a sparsely populated region near China that has been relatively peaceful. It is, however, difficult to access - part of the reason the

breeding site is only now being discovered.

WCS is the only conservation group doing scientific studies in Afghanistan. It has been involved in helping set up the first national park, Band-e-Amir, in central Afghanistan as well as working with the government to create the first-ever list of protected species.

A preliminary paper on the finding appears in the most recent edition of *BirdingASIA*, the magazine of the Oriental Bird Club.

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## Upcoming Area (and some other) Events

- Mar. 19-21 Reading, PA - [Reading Pet Expo](#) - Greater Reading Expo Center, 2525 North 12th Street, Reading, PA - Fri 4 pm - 9 pm, Sat 10 am - 8 pm, Sun 10 am - 6 pm - 631-423-0620 - dgaretan@optonline.net
- Mar. 20 Middletown, CT - [Connecticut Parrot Society Featherfest](#) - Elks Club, 44 Maynard Street, Middletown, CT - 10 am - 3 pm - 860-621-5790 - ConnecticutParrotSociety@msn.com
- Mar. 20 Doswell, VA - [Exotic Bird Mart and Show and Mid Atlantic Cockatiel Breeders and Exhibitors Show and Love Bird Show](#) - Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA - 9 am - 4 pm 727-862-1542 - JAM91j@yahoo.com
- Mar. 24-27 Dallas, TX - [ASA Avicultural Conference](#) - Dallas World Aquarium, 1801 North Griffin Street, Dallas, TX - 909- 599-7577
- Mar. 27-28 Fredericksburg, VA - [Bird Clubs of Virginia Annual Convention](#) - Fredericksburg Hospitality House and Conference Center, 2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA - 804-264-8851 - cvmga@aol.com
- Apr. 10 Palmer, MA - [WMass Bird Expo](#) - St. Thomas Parish Center, 1076 Thorndike St., Palmer, MA - 9 am - 3 pm - 413-283-4107 - littlebeaksandwings@yahoo.com
- May 13-16 San Diego, CA - [Parrots International Symposium 2010](#) - US Grant Hotel, 326 Broadway, San Diego, CA - info@parrotsinternational.org
- May 16 Erie, PA - [Erie Cage Bird Club Bird Fair](#) - St. Patrick's Cauley Center, 214 E. 4th St., Erie, PA - 10 am - 4 pm - 814-833-6922 - 1mumc@pennswoods.net



# 10 Years of Saving the Yellow-eared Parrot

by Gilly Lloyd

With thanks to Paul Salaman of Fundación ProAves and David Waugh of Fundación Loro Parque for their input

Reprinted with permission from [Parrots International](http://www.parrotsinternational.org) [www.parrotsinternational.org](http://www.parrotsinternational.org)

***A tribute to the efforts of Fundación ProAves and the Fundación Loro Parque to protect the species and ensure its survival.***

One of South America's most endangered parrot species is the beautiful Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*). As its name suggests, this colourful parrot has large yellow ear-patches, contrasting dramatically with the rest of its primarily green plumage.

The Yellow-eared Parrot used to occur throughout the Andean mountains of Ecuador and Colombia - in the case of Colombia, in all three mountain chains. It was found in the wet montane forests of the upper subtropical and lower temperate zones, at altitudes ranging from 1,200 to 3,400 m above sea level. Once abundant in these regions, it is now classified by the World Conservation Union (IUCN)/BirdLife International as 'Critically Endangered'.

The exact whereabouts of the species is unknown for much of the year, making protective measures difficult. Unlike other large Neotropical psittacid species, there are no

known individuals presently in captivity, so a captive breeding or reintroduction programme is not an option.

Travelling in flocks, the species depends heavily on Colombia's national tree, the Wax Palm (*Ceroxylon quindiuense*), for its food and for nesting, and undertakes nomadic flights in search of fruit. Colombian Christians have, however, traditionally used the fronds of the palm for Palm Sunday processions, resulting in extensive felling of these trees. Natural replacement has been affected by livestock grazing on young seedlings, and the extensive clearance of this habitat - together with hunting and trapping of the parrot - has resulted in the serious decline in the numbers of Yellow-eared Parrots.

In 1998, Fundación ProAves, with the support of the Fundación Loro Parque, initiated the *Ognorhynchus* Project, its main objective being to ensure the survival of the Yellow-eared Parrot and to protect its habitat in the Colombian Andes. Danish ornithologist, Dr Neils Krabbe, undertook a research and conservation project for the last known flock in Ecua-



A Yellow-eared Parrot

dor, which had been discovered by Paul Salaman in the mid-1990s. Despite his best efforts, however, they had disappeared - probably, it is thought, due to a combination of post-breeding dispersal and the scarcity of fruiting wax palms. The following year, however, researchers in Colombia re-discovered the species, finding a population of 81 birds in the Central Andes.

Over the 10 years since the *Ognorhynchus* Project was initiated, more than 180 people and 47 organizations worldwide have been involved in fulfilling the ambitions of ProAves and Loro Parque, dedicated to the purpose of ensuring that the populations of the Yellow-eared Parrot which have been found, are healthy and stable. The project has received the overwhelming

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support and cooperation of local communities in the study area, who are keen to assist in the protection of the species.

This combination of biological research, direct protection, habitat restoration and work with the local communities which ProAves has undertaken, has now paid off. A dramatic increase in the population of the Yellow-eared Parrot has been recorded, and in 2009, ProAves was able to celebrate the first decade of the Ognorhynchus Project with confirmation of a population well in excess of 1,000 birds, in the Central Andean departments of Tolima and Antioquia, with Caldas in between. With this expansion of the population, the field biologists have increasingly recorded birds at greater distances, up to 100 km, from their original localities.

More good news has also been delivered by Loro Parque Fundación in the past few weeks - a new population of Yellow-eared Parrots has been found in the department of Meta, by researchers from the Colombian Distrital University. They conclude that between 100-120 individuals are distributed over about 500 hectares - the first to be seen on the eastern slopes of the Eastern Andes, and the only ones known in the Orinoco watershed. Furthermore, it is a breeding colony, grouping into flocks of up to 60 parrots, although they are in a zone which is not considered appropriate for the species,

being on the edge of the flatlands, and in a warmer climate - in contrast to conditions in Tolima and Antioquia.

Interestingly, although the species has always been associated with the Wax Palm, this new colony lives in a much less lofty, medium-height palm, the Andean Royal Palm (*Dictyocaryum lamarckianum*), which grows below 2,000m above sea level, within a forest of Cubarral - a municipality in Meta - and the second wettest place in Colombia. In their studies, the researchers have been supported by the Corporation for the Sustainable Development of the Special Management Area of La Macarena.

Evaluating the situation, the ProAves field team have suggested that these birds form a relict Eastern Cordillera population that has managed to survive by adapting. Because there are so few Wax Palms surviving in the highlands, the Yellow-eared Parrots are coming down to relatively low elevations (1200-1500m) to nest in the Andean Royal Palms on the edge of the Llanos. The zone is very steep and relatively heavily forested, although it is gradually being cleared and is therefore at moderate risk. The parrots fly each day to higher elevations that are, however, less accessible.

ProAves has a good relationship with the landowners in this region, and with the support of Loro Parque Fundación, will continue to monitor the population, and plan



A nesting pair in the Reserva Loro Orejiamarillo

other conservation actions at the site.

“We are now confident that future generations will know and cherish this dream and this species,” says Paul Salamanca. “ProAves owes its birth and growth to the Yellow-eared Parrot and the support of Fundación Loro Parque.

“The Ognorhynchus Project is a conservation model that has also been replicated to other endangered species, and to the establishment of protected areas throughout Colombia. Thanks to the support of Fundación Loro Parque, we can continue these activities and be one of the principal organizations working towards environmental conservation in the region.”

[ProAves](#)

[Loro Parque Fundación](#)

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## [Loro Parque](#)

### **Milestones achieved by Fundación ProAves during 2009**

#### **Endangered Parrot Corridor established - 16,700 acres saved**

During 2009, ProAves, with the support of American Bird Conservancy, the IUCN in the Netherlands and World Land Trust US, has acquired and protected a vast area of montane cloud forest in the Central Cordillera, from the eastern slope in Tolima to the western slope in Quindio. The corridor stretches 12 miles and encompasses key foraging and breeding areas for the Critically Endangered Fuertes's Parrot and Yellow-eared Parrot.

The Conservation Corridor for Threatened Parrots of the Andean Cordillera Central is located between the municipalities of Roncesvalles, Tolima and Genova, Quindio. It is composed of the Loro Coroniazul (657 hectares), El Mirador (2.035 hectares) and Loros Andinos (4.072 hectares), Reserves - a total of more than 6,700 hectares of Andean forest, high Andean and protected wilderness corridor.

With the establishment of this corridor, five endangered species of parrots can be saved, including three which are endemic to Colombia - the Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus Icterotis*) (CR), the Indigo-Winged Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca fuertesii*) (CR) and the Rufous-

fronted Parakeet (*Bolborhynchus ferrugineifrons*) (VU). The other two endangered species which can be conserved are the Golden-plumed Parakeet (*Leptosittaca branickii*) (VU), and the Rusty-faced Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca amazonina*) (VU).

[American Bird Conservancy](#)

[Nationaal Committee of the Netherlands](#)

[World Land Trust - US](#)

#### **March 2009 - "Reconcile with Nature"**

Together with more than 500 people, Fundación ProAves and its partners launched the 8th "Reconcile with Nature" campaign in the municipality of San Francisco, Cundinamarca, Colombia, to generate awareness of the need to protect the Critically Endangered Yellow-eared Parrot and its natural habitat, the Quindío Wax Palm, which takes centuries to mature.

Since the year 2000, when ProAves highlighted the plight of the Yellow-eared Parrot and Colombia's national tree, the campaign has been growing in strength, thanks to ProAves' many partners, particularly the Catholic Church, Conservación Internacional-Colombia and the Ministry of the Environment.

The Campaign was launched by the municipality of San Francisco because it has helped support the conservation of the Critically Endangered Sasaima Wax Palm (*Ceroxylom sasamae*).



An artificial nestbox in the Reserve

#### **April 2009 - Palm Sunday**

At sites across the Andes of Colombia, the Palm Sunday celebration held on April 5, was Wax Palm free! This is conclusive evidence of the overall success of the 8th campaign to protect the Wax Palm and Yellow-eared Parrot.

Environmental authorities, including the police, reported no use of Wax Palm during the procession at important sites where both the palm and the parrots occur. These wonderful results are largely the product of efforts by ProAves staff over the past 10 years, and the constant support of Fundación Loro Parque.

#### **July 2009 - Parrot Festival**

Thanks to the efforts of environmental teachers all over Colombia, each year in July,

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ProAves organizes the **Parrot Festival**, during which it aims to share knowledge, defense and protection to all endangered species of parrots in Colombia. Among those endangered species are the Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*), and the Indigo-winged Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca fuertesi*), found in the Andean forest of Tolima, Antioquia and Quindío.

The main objective of the Festival is to adapt into the community an identity based on the pride generated by the presence of these unique and endangered birds in their land, spreading this activity throughout the country, and allowing local and regional integration in the strengthening of the natural and cultural heritage.

**Tolima:** From 17 to 20 July 2009, the IV Yellow-eared Parrot and the Wax Palm Tree Festival was celebrated in Roncesvalles, Tolima. It was led by ProAves, with the support of the Municipal Mayorality of Roncesvalles.

The procession featured Wax Palm trees, parrots, princesses, witches, old men, chicks, characters from Roncesvalles, folk dances and the municipal orchestra. Teachers, students, parents and the entire community worked hard to make this event a great success. Youngsters and children had a wonderful time, dancing and parading to the beat of the music, sharing their energy and happiness with the entire

public.

At an educational level, some of the activities included a Yellow-eared Parrot watching expedition, cultural presentations, games, drawing and short story contests, and 90% of the educational institutions of the region participated. The Yellow-eared Parrot Project worked to create an identifiable and responsible link between the communities and the preservation of the Wax Palm tree and the Yellow-eared Parrot, as well as the recognition of the importance of this project in other areas of the national territory.

#### Roncesvalles - Tolima

**Antioquia:** A festival was held from 28 to 30 July in Antioquia - its main objective being to celebrate 10 years of the "Yellow-eared Parrot Project", and to share its achievements with the community.

Over three days, educational, cultural and dynamic activities were carried out, with the participation of the community. One of the main activities was the Launching Parade, in which more than 500 people walked through the main streets of the city to the Main Park, where the opening of the festival was celebrated.

This event enjoyed the special collaboration of the students and the teachers of the 16 Friends of the Birds schools, the Ecological Group Friends of the Birds, young researchers and the Social Service group. Children and their teachers from each school participated



The entrance to the Reserve.

in the activity, wearing masks and disguises of the Yellow-eared Parrot. They carried banners celebrating its conservation, and messages of congratulations to ProAves for 10 years of hard work.

#### El Jardín - Antioquia

#### **November 2009 - Yellow-eared Parrot added to municipality shield of Jardín**

Over the last 10 years, ProAves has achieved great successes in conservation, research and environmental education, thanks to collaborative efforts with local communities. The organisation's efforts are increasingly reflected in the changing attitudes within rural communities, as the importance of protecting birds and wildlife are being recognized - especially the Yellow-eared Parrot and its habitat, the Quindío Wax Palm tree. Local people have a stronger connection to their biodiversity and are proud of it.

One recent great achievement was the creation of the Yellow-eared Parrot as the official bird of the Municipality of Jardín,

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# Hand Rearing the Palm Cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*) at the Bronx Zoo

By Frank Indiviglio

Written for Flapping Feathers

[fjindiviglio@aol.com](mailto:fjindiviglio@aol.com)

516-382-2432

*Hello, Frank Indiviglio here. Thanks very much for your interest.*

*I'm recently retired from a career of over 20 years with the Bronx Zoo, and have participated in field research efforts with a variety of birds in several countries. I currently write and manage [ThatBirdBlog](#), which is sponsored by [ThatFishPlace/ThatPetPlace](#). I address the conservation, natural history and care of parrots and other birds, and answer readers' questions pertaining thereto. New articles are posted 2-3 times weekly.*

*The balance of my time is spent writing books, consulting for zoos and museums and (when luck favors me!) in field research. My biography is posted at [That Pet Place Welcomes Zoologist Frank Indiviglio](#).*



It is not easy for a single species to stand out among a group of birds as spectacular as the cockatoos, but the striking Palm Cockatoo does so quite handily. At nearly 30 inches in length and with a 30-inch wingspan, this giant among cockatoos approaches the Hyacinth Macaw (*Andorhynchus hyacinthus*), the largest of the world's

Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*), also known as the Goliath Cockatoo.

350+ Psittacines, in size.

Today I would like to tell you about my involvement with the first large group of Palm Cockatoos to be brought into the USA. But first, if I may, a bit more about what distinguishes this bird from the

approximately 20 other species belonging to the family *Cacatuidae* (Order *Psittaciformes*).

## Range and Habitat

Palm Cockatoos, also known as

*(Continued on page 15)*



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Black Palm Cockatoos or Goliath Aratoos, are the only tropical rainforest-adapted members of their family - the rest being more at home in dry, often sparsely vegetated habitats.

They are native to Northern Australia's Cape York Peninsula, New Guinea, Aru Island, and smaller neighboring islands. Three subspecies have been identified, with New Guinea's *P. a. goliath* being the largest.

### **Tool Use and Communication**

Although this bird is unique among cockatoos in many ways, perhaps its most distinguishing feature is tool use -- a phenomenon quite rare among birds in general. Most likely as an adaptation to a thickly-forested habitat where sound travels poorly, Palm Cockatoos beat sticks and large nuts against hollow trees when communicating with others of their kind. This behavior, known as "drumming", is repeated anywhere from 2 to over 100 times, and creates quite a racket.

In fact, "Palms" seem prone to odd modes of self-expression -- when frightened, rather than hissing in typical cockatoo fashion, they stamp their feet!

### **Unique Physical Characteristics**

The Palm Cockatoo's jet black feathers are set off by powdery gray down and highlighted by brilliant red cheek patches. Adding to the air of imposing size, the head is topped by a crest of long feathers and the



At [Jurong Bird Park](#), Singapore.

beak is massive. Palm Cockatoos are unusual in possessing bare patches on the cheeks. The skin on these patches varies in color from dull red to bright crimson, depending on the bird's mood, stress level, health and other factors of which we are as yet unaware. The face patch can also be covered with feathers during communication displays.

The maxillary, or upper beak, is twice the size of that of its largest relative (the genus name, *Probosciger*, refers to the beak). Extraordinarily powerful, this impressive structure assists the bird in

securing its diet of large nuts (in captivity, even Brazil nuts pose no problem), seeds, fruits and leaf buds. The lower beak meets the upper only at the tip, leaving the mouth always slightly open.

### **Reproduction and Social Behavior**

In reproductive biology as well, the Palm Cockatoo breaks with its close relatives. The male's breeding display is the group's most complex -- flying high above the ground towards his mate, he raises his spectacular crest, deepens his cheek patch

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color, and calls loudly. They are the only cockatoos to build stick nests within their nest cavities – perhaps as a precaution against flooding - and their young are unique in hatching without down and in having such a long (to 160 days) nestling period. Even after all that time, Palm Cockatoos fly poorly upon fledging, and are fed by their parents for an additional 6 weeks.

Unlike other cockatoos, which often forage in large flocks, Palm Cockatoos feed singly, in pairs, or in groups of up to 7 in number. Pairs return to their territories in the evening, but roost separately.

### History in Captivity

Strictly protected by the governments of New Guinea and Australia, and listed on Appendix I of CITES, Palm Cockatoos were relatively unknown in American aviculture until quite recently. In fact, zoos here did not pay much attention to *Psittacines* in general – intelligent and gregarious, they need lots of room, stimulation and appropriate social groups, and thus are difficult to provide for. After observing flocks of Military Macaws (*Asa militaris*) and other species in the wild, I have come to regard *Psittacines*, in terms of their captive needs, as the “primates of the bird world”.

### Origins of the US Population

In 1983 the US Fish and Wildlife Service confiscated a large group of Palm Cockatoos and placed them with various

zoos and qualified private individuals. I was working in the Bronx Zoo’s Department of Ornithology at the time, and assisted in the hand rearing of two chicks. Given the rarity of this species in captivity, I was excited by the opportunity to contribute to our understanding of its captive husbandry. The group eventually did quite well, and gave rise to a good percentage of the individuals in this country today.

### Hand Rearing

The two chicks were at first fed around the clock, and thus required attention at all hours of the night. This quickly gave rise to their names - “OT” and “MOT”.... “Overtime” and “More Overtime”! Their helplessness (and the fattened pay checks they engendered) endeared the birds to their keepers. With barely any down feathers, they were first kept at quite warm temperatures (92 F or so) in an incubator. Feather growth increased from age 3 weeks, when the temperature was reduced to 85 F, and was complete when the birds were approximately 3 months old. The colors of their face-patches changed quite frequently even during their first weeks of life, although I cannot say what the changes meant. In common with most healthy nestlings, their feeding reaction was quite strong, and was accompanied by much head bobbing.

In those days, formulas for hand-rearing cockatoos were not standardized, and the various zoos involved in the project experimented quite a bit. A dilute mix of *Pedialite*, monkey chow, baby cereal and fruit, offered via syringe, was common to most diets, and

worked well for the birds under my care (although not without some digestive upset).

### Success!

The chicks began pecking at solid food at 2 ½ - 3 months of age...I later learned that the timing of this milestone varies greatly among Palm Cockatoo chicks. Supplemental formula was provided until the birds were approximately 4 months old. They were later transferred to the zoo’s World of Birds building, where their exhibit remains a major attraction to this day.

I am happy to say that we learned quite a bit that has been of use to other bird keepers, hobbyists and their charges, and helped establish this magnificent species soundly in North American zoos and private collections.

### Further Reading

Bird fanciers and “regular” people alike find cockatoos hard to resist, but they are not ideal for all situations. Please check out my article [The Magnificent Cockatoos: Pros and Cons for Potential Owners](#)

You can see a video of a palm cockatoo at the Bronx Zoo (perhaps *OT* or *MOT*) at: [YouTube: Palm Cockatoo](#)

More information about the group of confiscated birds I referred to, and concerning parrot conservation in general, is available at: [Parrots and Profits](#)

*Thanks...until next time,  
Frank Indiviglio*



## “Are You Using a Guide Bird?”

I have always maintained that the smartest aviculturists and pet owners are the ones who *learn from* their parrots. Keen observation, reading of body language and note-taking are just three ways to increase one's understanding of the birds one keeps. But in truth, learning from our birds requires an attitude adjustment that not all birdkeepers are willing to make. So many owners become caught up in the “step-up, dominant-flock leader, command-oriented way of treating their psittacines” that it is quite impossible to stand back and actually let the pets or breeder birds teach us something new.

That is unfortunate, for even the humblest, least worldly of birds has something to offer humans about methods of proper parrot keeping.

I have a rather fundamental theory about how to approach management of one's flock from the birdies' point of view. Choose or find yourself a “guide bird,” pay strict attention to how he or she behaves and reacts, and then make yourself a student of this one parrot, allowing it to help you train and mold all your other psittacines into something extraordinarily fresh...

I have always utilized *guide birds*. In fact, I tend to have one I watch carefully for each species of psittacine I focus



Our smartest and kindest mature parrots are used to train fledglings.

upon. In our yellow fronted amazon colony, for instance, it is a 40-plus-year-old founder hen that came into the country from South America in the early 1970s. She is in fact, the prime guide bird for every hookbill I maintain.

‘Tutu’ is calm, infinitely savvy, measured in her tolerance of humans though cannot be handled, postures properly towards other amazons yet can be trusted not to bite or attack and knows proper behavior towards fledglings not of her nest when placed in a flight cage with them. She used to be a valuable foster mother for the late Dale R. Thompson, when not raising her own chicks. Now with her second mate, she

has taught him mature amazon conduct (with the exception of his intense dislike of April!).

So what does Tutu teach me? A little bit of everything. She is the flock's guide to proper wild yellow front vocalizations—no disruptive humanspeak or mimicking of other species here. Her eating habits become the guide to do's and don'ts for my entire group of birds. When she avoided all cooked kidney beans in a mix of many beans we made regularly, I did some research and stopped giving potentially toxic kidney beans to any of my parrots. Her preferences for certain greens during nesting time prompted us to include

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these in all our psittacine diets each summer. Years ago when she was an active breeder, I used to set up all my yellow fronts on her schedule for reproducing. This hen has never begun to lay in the wrong season of the year just because weather becomes oddly wet or balmy. Rainy day behavior, hawk warnings, instinctive bath noises, and other such subtleties in our amazon knowledge all start with Tutu. She is my most valuable parrot.

So in our case, the oldest, smartest, originally wild parrot we keep is number one on our guide bird list. But many of the habits of yellow fronted parrots are not totally applicable to sun conures, amboina kings, noble macaws or other species. Hence, I usually choose a prime guide bird for each species I keep, sort of like a second most savvy parrot which is used to help train and "naturalize" any new arrivals, fledglings, or dysfunctional former pets that have little actual species-specific wisdom. This is certainly a good idea where birds that have been hand raised a long time ago and spent years in a human household by themselves are

hoped to be integrated into a flock of their own kind.

Not only does Kiwani Jr., our sun conure oldest and wisest, show us many of the normal behavior mannerisms of suns, but he can also show other suns the way to fly in the woods, feed on fresh tree buds, copulate and feed a hen, and myriads of activities that a naturally raised sun would be able to pass on to offspring and other conures.

When we adopted a four year old male *fuscicollis* cape parrot from the Gabriel Foundation some five years ago, little did we anticipate that "Stevie" would turn out to be the most well-adjusted and savvy cape in our growing flock. Stevie treats his hen better than any of the other males; respects human keepers without begging to them or becoming jealous when we offer attentions to Ika, his mate; and goes about the daily business of eating, nesting, defending territory and taking care of young with a sure handedness frequently lacking in handfed males of this *Poicephalus* genus. He may be an anomaly since so many adoption parrots can have deep rooted emotional and behavioral problems, but

we feel blessed to be able to set him above as a guide bird for how we hope all our capes will eventually act.

So what *is* the criterion we use to set a standard for a guide bird? April and I look for the most natural parrot, of course - the one who is not overly imprinted upon humans, utters proper species noisemaking, will not abuse his or her mate, innocent fledglings or human keepers. Flight must be strong, though in Stevie's case this is taking a while, eating habits varied and nutritional, family instincts as solid as can be expected for mostly handfed psittacines.

Then we go about stretching the life's experiences for such a bird and try to take them onto the next level knowledge and instinct-wise. All the while, learning from that parrot as much as we can to aid the keeping of our entire flock. After all, half the fun of parrot-keeping is in the novel things we discover. Got a guide bird in your household yet? You might be missing something important!

With aloha, EB

(Continued from page 13)

Department of Antioquia, and having it included on the town's shield, to acknowledge its importance in the community.

ProAves owns a 320 acre reserve for the parrot above the

colonial town of Jardín, which forms the focus point of its protection efforts. Limited accommodation is available in the reserve, although ProAves recommends staying at excellent colonial hotel in Jardín to sample local "Paisa" (Antioqueña) culture and delightful cuisine.

Parrots International is proud to have donated funds in 2008 and 2009 toward the purchase of this reserve.

[ProAves Columbia](#)

[EcoTurs](#)

See additional photos on page 27.





# AFA in Brief

## February 2010

### Editor - Carol Lee

#### **36th Annual AFA Convention, "The Magic of Birds"**

August 4-7, 2010 in St. Petersburg, Florida  
Hilton St. Petersburg – Bayfront, 333 First Street South,  
St. Petersburg, Florida. (727)894-5000.

Registration for the 2010 AFA Annual Convention: Contact Jamie Whittaker (bjwbird1@earthlink.net) our Convention Coordinator or you can register online at: [www.afabirds.org](http://www.afabirds.org).

**Convention Sponsorship Opportunities: Vendor & Advertising Opportunities** are available online. Go to: [Exhibitor and Vendor Prospectus](#). An investment of as little as \$50 will get you, your business, or your organization noticed by the attendees and show your support at our annual convention.

The 2010 **AFA Convention raffle committee** is accepting donations for the silent auction, daily raffles, and three-day raffles. Anyone wanting to donate merchandise for these important fund raising events please contact Nora Schmidt ([nora@sdi.net](mailto:nora@sdi.net)) or Pat Chinnici ([lorolover@yahoo.com](mailto:lorolover@yahoo.com)).

#### **36th Annual Convention - 2010 CALL FOR PAPERS**

We invite you to submit a proposal to present a paper at our annual AFA convention. Proposals should be submitted in the form of an abstract, accompanied by a brief biographical sketch identifying the author's experience with the topic to be presented and other relevant information. Please consider submitting multiple abstracts as you may have the opportunity to give more than one presentation.

- Abstracts will be accepted through February 15, 2010.
- AFA will provide a complimentary conven-

tion registration package and one banquet ticket to each confirmed speaker.

For complete details, see 2010 Call for Papers at [www.afabirds.org](http://www.afabirds.org). Or contact Nancy Speed (662-673-8100).

**2010 Calendars Available!** A collection of beautiful color photos of baby birds photographed by Juan Cornejo.

The AFA 2010 Calendar is proving to be a very popular item in the AFA Store. Get yours now so you can enjoy these beautiful images all year! Visit the AFA Store now to view thumbnail versions of the images in this year's calendar. Discounts available for quantity purchases, contact the AFA Business Office for orders of ten or more calendars. These calendars also make great gifts!

**Missed the 2009 AFA convention?** DVD Videos of Selected Presentations from the 2009 AFA Convention are on sale now through the AFA Business Office. Need to beef up that Bird Club Library with educational materials? Just want to review a topic presented at the 2009 AFA Convention? Selected videos of presentations from our 2009 Convention are now available on DVD from the AFA Business Office. The price is \$15.00 each or two for \$25.00 plus postage. Get the whole set today. To order go to: [www.afabirds.org](http://www.afabirds.org). Proceeds help the AFA Conservation and Research fund.

#### **Two Exciting Conferences in the Canary Islands**

The Loro Parque Foundation International Parrot Conferences are held every four years. Attendees from around the world will experience seasoned speakers on such subjects as breeding, keeping, and conservation of parrots. Convention attendees have a three day access to

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the world's largest parrot exhibit, Loro Parque. Dates for the upcoming conference are September 20-22, 2010. For more information contact Janice Boyd ([jboyd46@charter.net](mailto:jboyd46@charter.net)).

### **Have You Been to the AFA Store Lately?**

CITES Pin number 25, the Blue-eyed Cockatoo, is now available. Order yours today and keep your sets complete. All CITES pins can be purchased online at [www.afabirds.org](http://www.afabirds.org) and follow the links to the store.

### **Fundamentals of Aviculture II**

The second online AFA education course, Fundamentals of Aviculture II (FOA II) is in the works. A tentative release date is scheduled for April or May of 2010. This second level course will be chock full of good information on genetics, incubation, hand rearing, non-parrot avian species discussions, concepts of conservation, and much more. Students planning to enroll in FOA II will have to have taken FOA I as a prerequisite course. See the AFA website for more information on FOA I.

### **February 5-6, 2010**

#### **AFA Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting will be held by Teleconference.**

**List of Proposed Animal Legislative issues by State.** Please take a look at your State and send letters or make phone calls appropriately. This list was prepared by Genny Wall, the AFA Legislative Vice President.

#### **FEDERAL**

HR 669 - Which would ban most "nonnative" (exotic) animals nationwide (including our birds), is still active. We are watching this bill.

Link to the bill: [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov)  
Put HR 669 in the search box for the bill number.

**ALSO NOTE - FEDERAL - HR 875** ("the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2009") is pending. Would regulate ALL American farming, even small scale urban farms. However, we still import much of our food from other countries, where regulation is often non-existent.

Link to the bill: [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov)

Put HR 875 in the search box for the bill number.

### **State Listings, Proposed Legislative issues regarding Animal Keeping**

**ARIZONA:** OPPOSE Possessing Dangerous wildlife prohibited (HB 2375). This state bill will ban the possession of all dangerous wildlife listed, including all carnivores, NHP, crocodilians, hedgehogs, etc.

Status: Prefiled.

Link to bill: [Arizona State Legislature-Bill Number HB2375](#)

**FLORIDA:** OPPOSE Relating to Reptiles/Prohibitions

(S 318/S572). Prohibits any person from keeping, possessing, importing, selling, bartering trading, or breeding Burmese pythons, Reticulated pythons, African rock pythons, Amethystines, Nile monitors, or any other reptile designated as a reptile of concern by the FWC. Grandfathers reptiles for which the owner holds a permit issued before July 1, 2010.

Status: Referred to Environmental Preservation and Conservation; General Government Appropriations on 12/9/09

Link to bill: [Florida Senate Bill S 0318](#)

**FLORIDA:** FWC proposed captive wildlife rule changes.

Status: On FWC meeting agenda for February, 2010.

Link to bill: [Florida Commission Meeting Agenda](#)

**ILLINOIS:** OPPOSE Dangerous animals - primates (HB 4801). This state bill would ban the ownership of all NHP. People who own one before January 1, 2011 would be required to register the NHP with their local animal control authority.

Status: First reading on January 12, 2010 and referred to the Rules Committee.

Link to bill: [Illinois Bill HB 4801](#)

(Continued on page 21)



**INDIANA:** OPPOSE Exotic Animals (SB 280). This state bill makes it a Class C misdemeanor for releasing exotic and wild animals into the wild without a permit. It will also require people "in the business of selling exotic reptiles" defined as people who sell 6 or more exotic reptiles a year to obtain a permit. Those not in the business of selling exotic reptiles need to notify the department before selling one. This would mean owners of pet exotic reptiles will need to notify the department before they can sell their reptile to a new home.

Status: This bill will be referred to the Committee on Corrections, Criminal, and Civil Matters on January 11, 2010.

Link to bill: [Indiana Senate Bill 0280](#)

**MISSOURI:** OPPOSE Large Carnivore Act (HB 1288).

Establishes the large Carnivore Act which regulates the ownership, possession, transportation, and breeding of large carnivores. This bill will require owners of all non native cats and hybrids and bears to obtain a permit. This bill requires owners to get microchips, posts signs stating "A potentially dangerous large carnivore is kept on this property." Only the owner, handler, or designated vet may come into contact with the large carnivore.

Status: This bill had a second reading on January 7, 2010 and is not currently on a calendar.

Link to bill: [Missouri Bill HB 1288](#)

**NEW JERSEY:** Bill to remove monk parakeet (Quaker) from list of potentially dangerous species (A 454).

For those in New Jersey who want to SUPPORT this bill, read it at the link below, and communicate your wishes to your legislators by letter, phone, email and/or fax.

Status: Introduced and referred to the Assembly Agriculture and National Resources Committee on January 10, 2010.

Link to bill: [New Jersey Bills](#)

**NORTH CAROLINA:**

Burke County: OPPOSE Proposed ban on

exotics. Will ban all exotics with a grandfather clause. Current ones must be spayed/neutered or will be confiscated and destroyed.

Status: Next meeting will be January 19, 2010.

Source: [North Carolina Bill](#)

**OKLAHOMA:** OPPOSE Game and fish; defining terms; prohibiting certain transactions and actions involving certain animals; providing penalty (SB 1798). An act banning possession of the large cat species, bears and nonhuman primates.

Status: To be introduced February 1, 2010.

Link to bill: [Oklahoma Bill SB 1798](#)

**OKLAHOMA:** Dangerous Animals Act (HB 2713). Shell bill

Status: To be introduced February 1, 2010.

Link to bill: [Oklahoma Bill HB 2713](#)

**RHODE ISLAND:** OPPOSE Importation of wild animals (S 2027).

Bans possession of alligators, crocodiles, pythons, and boa constrictors.

Status: Introduced and referred to the State Constitutional and Regulatory Issues committee.

Link to bill: [Rhode Island Bill S 2027](#)

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Regulation of venomous reptiles, constricting snakes, and crocodylians, including specifications for housing and transportation enclosures; written bite, safety, and escape protocols; law enforcement procedures; requirements to determine if a reptile is regulated under this chapter and for making final dispositions of these reptiles; activities not subject to regulation under this chapter; criminal penalties for violations; and to provide that certain conduct constitutes reckless disregard for the safety of others and subjects violators to punitive damages in civil actions (HB4218).

This law includes all venomous snakes and lizards, and constricting snakes which include reticulated pythons, Burmese pythons, African rock pythons, Amethystine pythons, green



anacondas, and hybrids of these snakes, and all crocodilians. This bill requires such owners to keep the animals in escape proof and bite proof containers with proper labeling, including what to do in case someone is bitten, safety protocols, and escape recovery plans.

Status: This bill had its first reading on January 12, 2010.

Link to bill: [South Carolina Bill HB 4218](#)

**TENNESSEE:** Requires owners of dangerous, vicious, and wild animals to secure minimal liability insurance (HB 2497). This bill will require owners of wild animals to have a minimum of \$15,000 of liability insurance.

Status: Introduced on January 12, 2010.

Link to bill: [Tennessee Bill HB 2497](#)

**VERMONT:** Allowing the importation of elephants (H468). This bill would allow the importation of elephants for a period not exceeding 30 days.

Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources.

Link to bill: [Vermont Bill H468](#)

**VIRGINIA:** OPPOSE Ownership of primates; penalty (SB 570). This bill would amend the chapter on hybrid dogs to include nonhuman primates and ban all ownership of them after July 1, 2010. Current owners must register them with the local animal control by January 1, 2011.

Status: Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources on January 13, 2010.

Link to bill: [Virginia Bill SB 570](#)

## WASHINGTON STATE

King County - New regulations re poultry and parrots

### OPPOSE

With only 3 days formal notice (giving the public notice over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend), on January 21, 2010 the Kings

County Health Board (Seattle) plans to enact a law that will regulate all birds. In particular, it will require that all parrot owners post a health warning that parrots carry psittacosis (even if yours doesn't) and that they put humans at risk. Also classifies all poultry as pets, and requires all poultry sellers to label their birds as a public health hazard because they can carry salmonella.

Feed stores and farms that sell poultry will be subject to the same housing standards for their poultry as retail pet stores (virtually impossible, with the result that many will stop selling poultry).

Adds many new permit requirements.

This bill is setting up the public perception that all birds carry diseases. This bill is the continuation of what appears to be a pogrom against bird keeping, and will affect all bird owners negatively.

This bill will require every pet shop to acquire the Name, Address, and Phone Number of EVERY Pet buyer. Every buyer of a Parrot, hamster, iguana, etc... will be known. Not just that, but every pet shop will be required to have this information on the sources they buy from too. Under a Freedom of Information Act request- ANYONE can request this information, know what kind of pet you bought, know where you live, and even be able to call you. If you think "animal rights" extremists won't use this info for mailings or making threatening calls then you have not been paying attention to their activities.

PIJAC has issued an alert on this one - the link is: [King County Proposals](#)

You can contact the Kings County Board of Health through:

Donna Oberg  
Board of Health Administrator  
401 5th Ave, Suite 1300 Seattle, WA 98104

Written testimony may also be forwarded to the Board of Health Administrator [Donna.Oberg@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Donna.Oberg@kingcounty.gov).

Further instructions on testimony can be found on the [King County website](#).



(Continued from page 22)

**WASHINGTON:** OPPOSE Wolf-hybrid classified as a potentially dangerous wild animal (SB 5383). This state bill will ban wolf hybrids by adding them to the list of potentially dangerous wild animals. Current owners will be grandfathered.

Status: This bill was reintroduced with its 2009 status and made eligible to be placed on its 3rd reading on January 11, 2010.

Link to bill: [Washington Bill SB 5383](#)

**WISCONSIN:**

Monroe County: OPPOSE Keeping of certain restricted animals. Proposed ban on exotics.

Status: Had a public hearing on December 21, 2009.

Plans to pass a new ordinance by spring 2010.

Source: [Neither Wolf Nor Dog](#)

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Whether you are renewing your club affiliation or your club is affiliating for the first time, all clubs must complete the application available online at the AFA website or from the AFA

Business Office at (512) 585-9800. Affiliation forms, along with applicable fees, are due now. Affiliations must be received by April 30th to receive all benefits and for assigned delegates to vote in the upcoming AFA Officer elections. Visit the Club Resources page of the AFA website to download your form now.

Visit the link below if your club is affiliated. Find articles and information you can use in your club newsletters. Get your access sign in name and password from the [afaoffice@earthlink.net](mailto:afaoffice@earthlink.net).

[AFA Club Resources](#)

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## Police Train Vultures to Find Human Remains

By David Crossland, Foreign Correspondent

[www.thenational.ae](http://www.thenational.ae)

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BERLIN // German police are testing the use of vultures to seek out human corpses in a unique project aimed at dramatically speeding up criminal investigations.

A bird expert at a wildlife park in northern Germany is training Sherlock, a five-year old

turkey vulture, to locate fabric containing the scent of dead people.

The scheme was commissioned by the Lower Saxony police force after a senior officer, Rainer Herrmann, watched a BBC wildlife documentary about the extraordinary sense

of smell of turkey vultures, which are indigenous to the Americas. The programme showed the birds finding hidden meat with ease.

“This project is unprecedented and the phones have been ringing off the hook with

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investigators all around Germany expressing an interest,” Sherlock’s trainer, German Alonso, said. “But we’ve had to put the brakes on and tell people we’re not that far yet.”

Trained sniffer dogs such as bloodhounds are highly effective in tracking and remembering scents, but they need to take frequent breaks and can only scour 100 square metres per day, or even less if the terrain is difficult.

“Vultures can fly over many square kilometres. They could make police work much more efficient,” said Mr Herrmann, an expert on forensic science and technology at the Lower Saxony criminal police force. It would take the birds just a few hours to cover areas that would take dogs days.

The birds are capable of detecting scents from the air, even through forest canopies. Under the plan, tracking devices would be attached to the vultures so that they could be traced by police.

One potential disadvantage is that the vultures are likely to start picking at corpses they find, Mr Alonso admitted. “That will happen and you can’t stop it but they won’t remove the entire corpse, they can’t eat that much. And if they take a nibble, what the hell, the victim will be beyond help anyway. Besides, the transmitters will enable police to get to the scene quickly.”

So far, Sherlock is on his own

and has been practising in a confined area of around 40 square metres in the Walsrode Bird Park, about 80 kilometres north of the city of Hanover.

At present, he does not search from the air, and instead hops across the ground. Every time he locates the hidden cloth, he gets a reward.

It would take at least three vultures to conduct an airborne hunt for victims because the birds are naturally timid and need companions to venture into the skies.

Mr Alonso, said: “Sherlock will need fellow scavengers to look for corpses, he won’t do so alone. You need a group because vultures are cowardly and very afraid as lone animals.

“They need the motivation of their partners. One is always slightly braver than the others, and he then tends to play the leader. He takes off, the others follow and they circle until one of them smells something and descends. The others spot that and join him.”

One problem is that it is unclear whether vultures can distinguish between animal cadavers and human corpses. The bird park is using fabric provided by the mortuary of a medical university to train Sherlock to locate humans.

“But if they see a dead boar or deer they’ll descend on that too, which means there will be many false alarms during searches when the birds are operational,” Mr Alonso said.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle is



Sherlock, a five-year-old Turkey Vulture being trained to locate human corpses under a project commissioned by the German police. Courtesy Walsrode Bird Park.

the shortage of available vultures in Europe, especially ones as tame and easy to handle as Sherlock, which came to Walsrode from Prague Zoo.

Mr Alonso said Walsrode will be acquiring several new vultures this year to expand the project, but it will take several years for the birds to begin their grisly task in earnest.

“With all his training Sherlock could be their leader, even though he’s a bit of a coward,” he said.

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## Additional Pictures from the “10 Years of Saving the Yellow-eared Parrot” Article



The yellow ear patches contrast strikingly against the bird's green plumage.



Two Yellow-eared nestlings (chicks) temporarily removed from their nest by researchers.



Nestlings (chicks) in and artificial nest box in the wild.



Yellow-eared Parrots at the nest hole in the Conservation Corridor in Andean Cordillera Central.



# Additional Pictures from the “Born to be Wild” Article



White-fronted Amazons ‘Mick’ and ‘Titch’ when they first got to know each other (love at first sight) and finally on release – an amazing day! Many birds pair up during rehabilitation. One waited on soft release for days for a friend.



‘Spike’ suffered 2 years in a cage underneath two other birds. A severe neglect case, he overgroomed the plumes on every feather. Still, despite being clipped as a chick and never having flown, he became a very accomplished flier.



Red-lored Amazon ‘Clyde’ enjoying one of his first rainbaths as a wild bird.



‘Perky’ an Aztec Parakeet.