

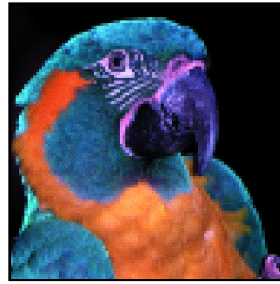
The trade in all parrots, with the exception of two species, is controlled by CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species). This convention is the key to preventing international trade in endangered wild parrots and other species. TRAFFIC is working worldwide to improve CITES legislation, assist and train customs officers and other officials involved in the regulation of trade, and carry out monitoring, research and investigations into wildlife trade and illegal trade activities. TRAFFIC is also supporting the development of enforcement methods such as DNA testing for countering fraudulent captive breeding claims.

TRAFFIC is a programme of WWF and IUCN (the World Conservation Union), established to monitor trade in plant and animals.

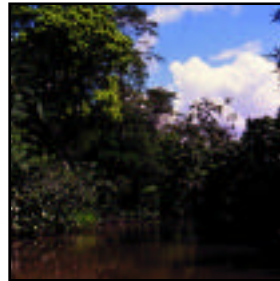


World Parrot Trust was founded in 1989 to promote the survival of all parrot species and welfare of individual birds. So far it has initiated and supported conservation and welfare projects in 20 countries for 37 species of parrot.

WWF conserves wildlife and the natural environment for present and future generations.



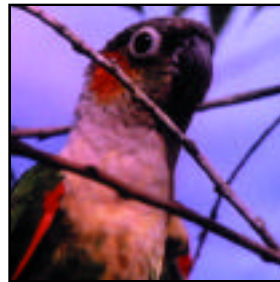
Blue-throated macaw, Bolivia
photo: C. Allen/TRAFFICInternational



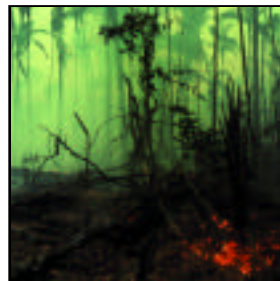
Amazon rainforest, Brazil
photo: M. Edwards/Still Pictures/WWF-UK



Blue and yellow macaw, Venezuela
photo: D. Lawson/WWF-UK



White-breasted parakeet, Ecuador
photo: M. Slocombe/Parrots in Peril



Habitat loss, Brazil
photo: M. Rautkari/WWF-UK



Australian king parrot, Australia
photo: M. Rautkari/WWF-UK

Solutions

Threats from habitat loss and trade need to be addressed. The following actions should be promoted:

The establishment and practical realisation of an ecologically representative network of protected areas covering at least 10 per cent of each of the world's forest types by the end of the year 2000. At present eight per cent of the world's forests are designated protected areas.

The independent certification of at least 25 million hectares of well-managed forests by June 2001 focussing on key timber producing countries. So far more than 16 million hectares have been certified.

Governments (especially the 145 signatories to CITES) must provide adequate resources to implement CITES. Management and scientific authorities, customs and police, are key players in the fight against illegal wildlife trade, and under-funding these agencies limits their role in the control of trade and the fight against wildlife crime.

CITES must be enforced if it is to be effective. This requires adequate laws in all member countries, including penalties that are sufficient deterrents against illegal activities. To counter fraudulent captive breeding claims, TRAFFIC recommends that law enforcement agencies undertake detailed checks (including DNA sampling) of commercial shipments and domestic transactions of captive-bred parrots.

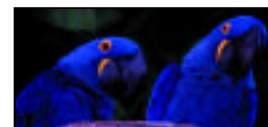


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C. Allen/TRAFFIC

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information

Threatened parrots – a global picture

COVER PHOTOS: C. Allen/TRAFFIC, M. Rautkari/WWF-UK, S. Broad/TRAFFIC. Small pictures supplied by WWF-UK. Registered charity number 204707. Printed on recycled paper. July 1999/1118

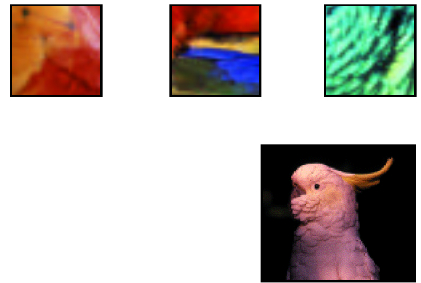
Threatened parrots – a global picture

Parrots are a diverse family of birds comprising more than 350 species. Most are forest dwellers, found mainly in the tropics and subtropics, although some frequent temperate vegetation on mountain ranges, and others occur in temperate latitudes.

Parrots are diverse in distribution, size, behaviour and name. Large macaws can measure one metre from head to tail, whereas pygmy parrots from New Guinea are a mere 9cm. Some parrots are flightless such as the Kakapo from New Zealand, others have adapted to life on coasts, some inhabit grasslands, whilst most are forest dwellers. Amazons, budgerigars, cockatoos, conures, lorikeets, lorys, macaws and parakeets are all different names for parrots.

Due to hunting and habitat destruction in the last 400 years at least 27 species have become extinct, mostly on islands – for example, the Cuban macaw, the Seychelles parakeet and the Mascarene parrot on Mauritius. Continental parrots have also disappeared: the Carolina parrot, once widespread in the United States, has vanished and the Glaucous macaw from south-eastern Latin America has probably become extinct in the last 50 years.

Parrots face a conservation crisis. The IUCN Global Action Plan for Parrots identifies 89 threatened species, including 12 that are critically endangered. This means that of all the widely distributed bird families in the world, the parrot family has the highest percentage of threatened species at 25 per cent. A further 40 species are said to be near threatened. Threatened parrots of the Asia / Pacific region number 39 species. These are distributed across more than 10 countries and territories, with the highest numbers of threatened species occurring in Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. Forty-seven threatened parrot species occur in Latin America and the Caribbean region, with Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Ecuador supporting the highest numbers of threatened species. A further three threatened species occur in the African and Madagascar region. Parrots have declined and continue to do so because of large-scale destruction and degradation of their habitat and the trade in live birds.



K. Schaller/WWF-US



DIGITAL VISION

Parrots and forests

The vast majority of the world's parrots occur in forest habitats including lowland tropical forests in Amazonian Brazil, monsoon forests in Indonesia, cloud forests in the high Andes of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, and temperate eucalyptus forests in Australia. These birds rely on forest products including fruit, seeds and nectar as their main food source and they require suitable tree hollows for breeding. Many parrots are important pollinators and seed dispersers.

Over 80 per cent of threatened parrot species depend on forests for their survival. Without immediate action to reverse the trend in forest destruction and degradation, these species face extinction. Many of the near threatened species, and those not yet listed as threatened, will also decline if forest loss continues.



M. Paudyal/WWF-UK

WWF is committed to stopping and reversing the loss and degradation of the world's forests. Through its Forests for Life campaign, WWF is implementing more than 300 forest conservation programmes around the world. Many are helping to secure the future of the parrot. In the Latin America / Caribbean region WWF is helping by implementing over 40 forest conservation projects.

The hyacinth macaw is one of the world's largest and most striking parrots. With a population of around 3,000, it is vulnerable to extinction and is threatened by illegal trade and destruction of its habitat. It requires large tree holes for nesting and a regular supply of hard palm fruits for food. One important area for the hyacinth macaw is the Pantanal wetland region of Brazil, but much of the forest area there is being cleared for agriculture and the entire region is seriously threatened by the planned expansion of a huge multinational waterway project.

WWF has designated the Pantanal wetland as a Global 200 region – one of over 200 key eco-regions that are important for their rich diversity of species and biological distinctiveness. Working with conservation partners and governments, WWF is investigating alternatives to the waterways project. We also aim to improve living conditions for local people, to promote the use of natural resources on a sustainable basis and to maintain the ecological integrity of Pantanal ecosystems for biodiversity, including the hyacinth macaw.

More good news for the hyacinth macaw is the recent pledge by the Brazilian government to triple the area of protected forest in the Amazon to 25 million hectares, in line with the WWF Forests for Life campaign.

Parrots of the Asia/Pacific region include lorikeets, racket tails and cockatoos. Many are severely threatened by habitat loss and trade. Recent forest fires have devastated huge areas of habitat and, for many species, these problems are compounded by their small geographical ranges. Many parrots are island species and have nowhere to go if their habitats are destroyed.



M. Paudyal/WWF-UK

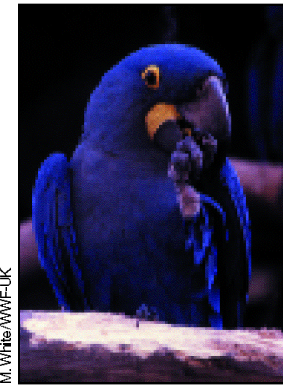
Indonesia supports the highest number of threatened parrot species in the Asia/Pacific region and its 14 threatened species include four that are endangered. Through its New Action Network programme in Irian Jaya, WWF is working to protect large tracts of forest threatened by mining and forestry activities. We aim to secure the future for the island's three threatened forest-dependent parrots: the blackwinged lory, salvadori's fig parrot and pesquet's parrot.

WWF-Indonesia is assessing forest fire damage and is lobbying industry to increase companies' accountability for the causes and effects of forest fires. This work has implications for the whole of the Asia/Pacific region, and for parrot habitats across the world.

Parrots and trade

At least 18 species of parrot are believed to be endangered or critically endangered by trade, or trade in combination with other factors such as habitat loss. A further 40 species are considered vulnerable.

Among the most sought-after parrots by collectors are the "blue" macaws, prized for their brilliant blue colouring, large size, intelligence and rarity. The hyacinth macaw is found mainly in Brazil, but also in Bolivia and Paraguay. The illegal trapping of this macaw, for a lucrative black market, has caused the wild population to decline to fewer than 3,000.



M. White/WWF-UK

In 1996 a well-known bird expert – believed to be personally responsible for the demise of up to 10 per cent of the entire world population of hyacinth macaws in the wild – was convicted and sentenced for smuggling hundreds of rare birds. The critically endangered Lear's macaw is one of the rarest of the blue macaws. A mere 100 birds might remain in the wild, and several illegally captured examples have been seized by authorities in recent years, notably in the UK and Singapore.



C. Allen/TRAFFIC

The blue-throated macaw is much sought after by collectors. As a result, its numbers are fewer than 1,000 in its native Bolivia. The rarest of them all, the Spix's macaw of Brazil, was down to three known birds in the 1980s, all of which were believed to have eventually been caught for the illegal trade. Only a single bird, discovered in 1990, remains in the wild. Most other macaws are popular in trade, and because of demand, only 1,000 red-fronted macaws may be left in the wild.

Amazons are another popular group of parrots in trade. There are fewer than 4,500 red-tailed amazons left. The yellow-headed amazon has declined by 90 per cent in the last 20 years, and fewer than 7,000 now remain. National trade in the red-spectacled amazon has left fewer than 8,500 birds in the wild. The green-cheeked amazon is believed to number fewer than 6,500 birds, largely because of trade. Other species that have suffered include the red-browed amazon of Brazil and the Puerto Rican amazon. The latter is endemic to Puerto Rico and may number just 50 in the wild.

Cockatoos are also popular cage birds, and many are still common. However, the Philippine cockatoo, formerly widespread in the Philippines, has been severely reduced in numbers due to extensive catching. Indeed, the young of every known accessible nest are taken for the pet trade. The yellow-crested cockatoo was once common throughout much of its range, but there is evidence of substantial population decline due to trapping. Several endemic subspecies are endangered as a result of poorly controlled trade: red-tailed black cockatoos from Australia command very high prices on the black market.



C. Mackey/TRAFFIC

The demand for other parrots is also high, and species can become critically threatened very quickly. The population of the red-and-blue lory of Indonesia was recently estimated at fewer than 2,000. In 1992 and early 1993 TRAFFIC found up to 700 birds illegally entering the international market. Exposing this sudden threat led to quick international action, and the trade was stopped.

