

AWIPARROTS

worldwide

A monthly
magazine
for parrot
breeders
and friends



Marcel Kohout
introduces his breeding facility in BALI

ANIL GARG on Red-fan Parrots
and their fascinating behaviour

Fats in parrot nutrition
Breeding of Grey-headed Lovebirds



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A MONTHLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR PARROT BREEDERS AND FRIENDS

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AWIPARROTS worldwide

Editorial *June*



*San Blas Islands Panama
– creation of an article about coconuts
for parrots, which was published
in a magazine AWIPARROTS 2-2022*

Dear friends!

Is it important to interconnect the whole parrot breeding world? Can the articles we publish in Awiparrots help improve the welfare of parrots in human care? Will anyone still read written texts these days, and let alone in a digital form? I was asking myself these questions, and many more, when the idea of a monthly magazine for parrot keepers was born.

Now, with hindsight, it is clear that you have welcomed the interconnection of contacts. While this can be done well through social networking sites, breeders do not share as many details about parrot breeding there as they do here in the monthly periodical. Of course, many breeders don't know about us yet, so please share on your public profiles and recommend us to friends who are interested in learning more about functional breeder management practices.

At least one veterinary-themed article is published in each issue. As our magazine addresses breeders, not veterinarians, these articles are written in a very clear and understandable manner. There are many potential health problems associated with parrots. Often it is not so easy to spot that something is wrong with a feathered inhabitant of an aviary. When a parrot shows signs of illness, it is usually too late. Therefore it is extremely important to take care of prevention in breeding. Whether it is larger or smaller breeding, they should be regularly monitored by a specialist avian veterinarian. In this way, unwanted diseases can be prevented, or a potential problem can be identified early on, when it is still possible to save the life of the parrot.

Wishing you pleasant days!

Alena Winner
AWIPARROTS publisher



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FOR PARROT BREEDERS AND FRIENDS

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ANAK BURUNG TROPIKANA

Marcel Kohout on his bird farm in BALI

By Alena Winner & Marcel Kohout

We've known each other for quite a long time – twenty one years! I still remember very well visiting Marcel Kohout in Litomyšl (Czech Republic) in 2001 and writing the first article for the then-new magazine PAPOUSCI (meaning "parrots" in the Czech language). At that time Marcel was already a successful breeder of lorries, specializing in their breeding. Over the years he continuously improved his breeding management. As the breeding was rapidly intensifying under his guidance and new species were being acquired, it was necessary to look around for a larger plot of land. It didn't take long and quite soon after our first meeting the Kohouts moved to a village near Litomyšl, where they built a professional-level facility for lorries. Marcel took his breeding activities even a little further – towards Indonesia, to the island of Bali, where he currently manages two farms focused on breeding exotic birds, Anak Burung Tropikana and Exotic Bird Farm. We are going to talk about the first mentioned...

To be honest, I have been very inspired and entertained by the interviews and discussions we have had so far. There are several reasons for that. You know what you talk about, you constantly develop your business, and you don't look like your achievements have "gone to your head". Thank you for accepting the invitation again this year and I believe that talking about your project will be interesting for our readers. A parrot farm in Bali... How did you decide to take this step in your life - buying the Anak Burung Tropikana farm in Indonesia?

My greetings to the readers and thank you very much for the words of praise. The cooperation with you has always been at a high level and the feedback on the articles has been positive. I will be happy to continue working with the PAPOUSCI magazine and now also with the AWIPARROTS digital magazine.

Actually, buying a farm in Bali was not at all my original thought and it was all a bit of a coincidence.



Marcel Kohout started breeding exotic birds at the age of twelve, among the first inhabitants of his aviaries being Zebra Finches, Bengalese Finches and Budgerigars. Over time, he worked his way up to 150 breeding pairs of Budgerigars. Next came lovebirds, followed by large parrot species. He considers his greatest success regular rearing of Black-winged Lories (*Eos cyanogenia*) and (Black) Rajah Lories (*Chalcopsitta atra insignis*). He specializes in lories and understands their breeding in detail.



ANAK BURUNG
TROPIKANA

IRIS LORIKEET
PSITTEUTELES IRIS IRIS

BALI
BIRD FARM



MORE ON ANAK BURUNG TROPIKANA

- ▶ All parrots are kept in aviaries of appropriate size.
- ▶ The aviaries are of the hanging type, the bottom being one metre above the ground to ensure complete air circulation.
- ▶ The parrots are marked with closed rings and registered with the Government of Indonesia.
- ▶ Only parrots reared on the farm are sold.
- ▶ Reared parrots can be shipped worldwide.
- ▶ As far as CITES species are concerned, the bred birds have all the documentation.
- ▶ The parrots receive regular veterinary care and are inspected by the local Karantene office.

I and a few other breeder friends wanted to buy parrots from Anak Burung Tropikana to diversify the species bred in Europe and bring in new blood. Everything was going well, we had completed the necessary paperwork and wanted to fly in for the parrots. However, this was not possible because we learnt that no airline was transporting parrots at that time. We wanted to cancel the order and, of course, to return the large financial deposit. Unfortunately, the previous owner refused, saying that he had a well-known importer in the EU who would arrange everything. The parrots eventually arrived by cargo plane to Prague, where they were not allowed by the State Veterinary Administration into the EU. After ten days of various scrambles, the parrots were returned to Bali. It was very unpleasant indeed.

We demanded a refund, but again we were unsuccessful. The farm owner finally offered his property to me promising to give me a discount if I bought it from him. So I made arrangements with a colleague and within a fairly short time I became part owner of the ABT farm.



Marcel Kohout with his team

A farm on the other side of the world is certainly a true challenge... Can you tell me more about its history?

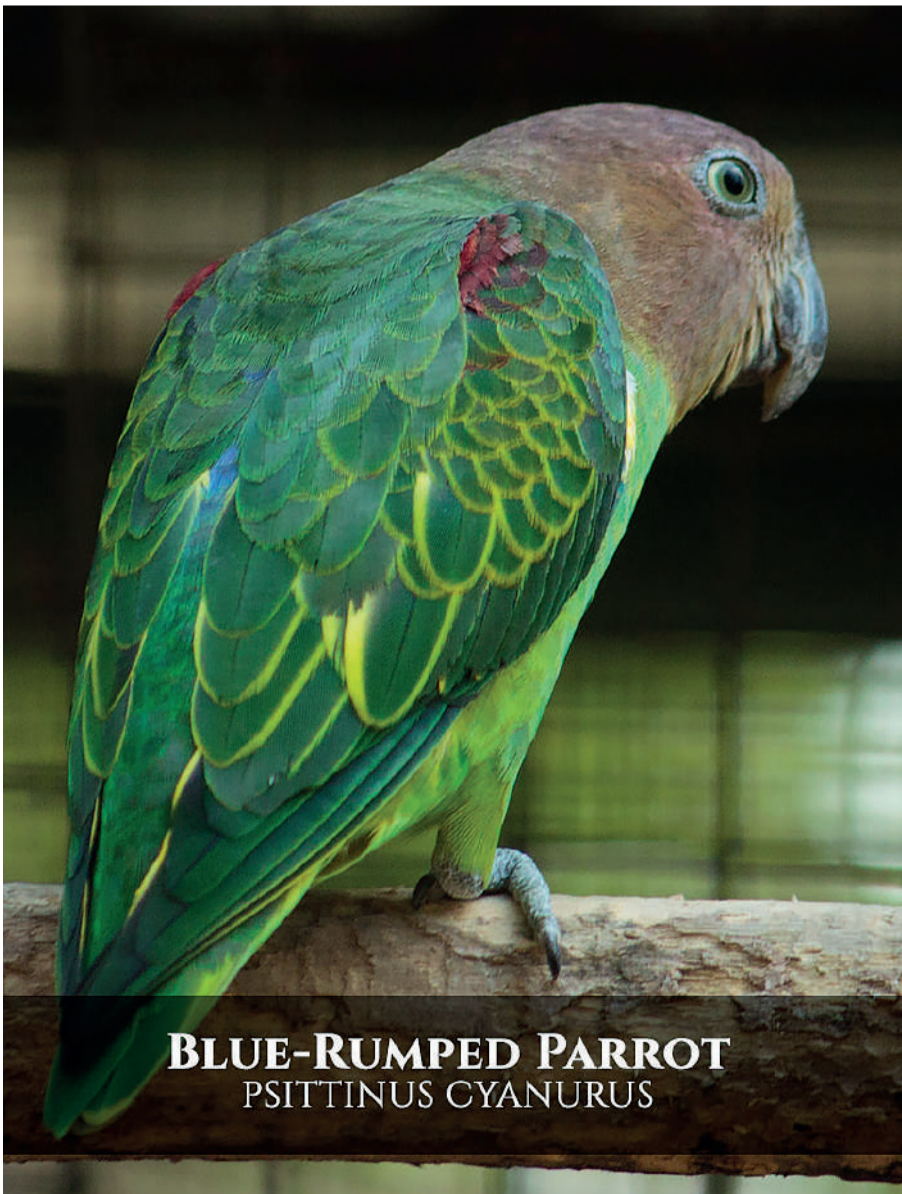
In hindsight, I'm very glad that I have come across such a challenge in my life. The farm was established in 1996 when it got all the permits for breeding and export. It was founded by an American who later sold it to breeders from Australia. And we are the next owners. The farm was built in the garden of a villa and gradually grew to the size it is today. Located just outside Ubud, in the town of Mas, it can be easily found via Google maps.

When you mentioned today's proportions, what are they specifically?

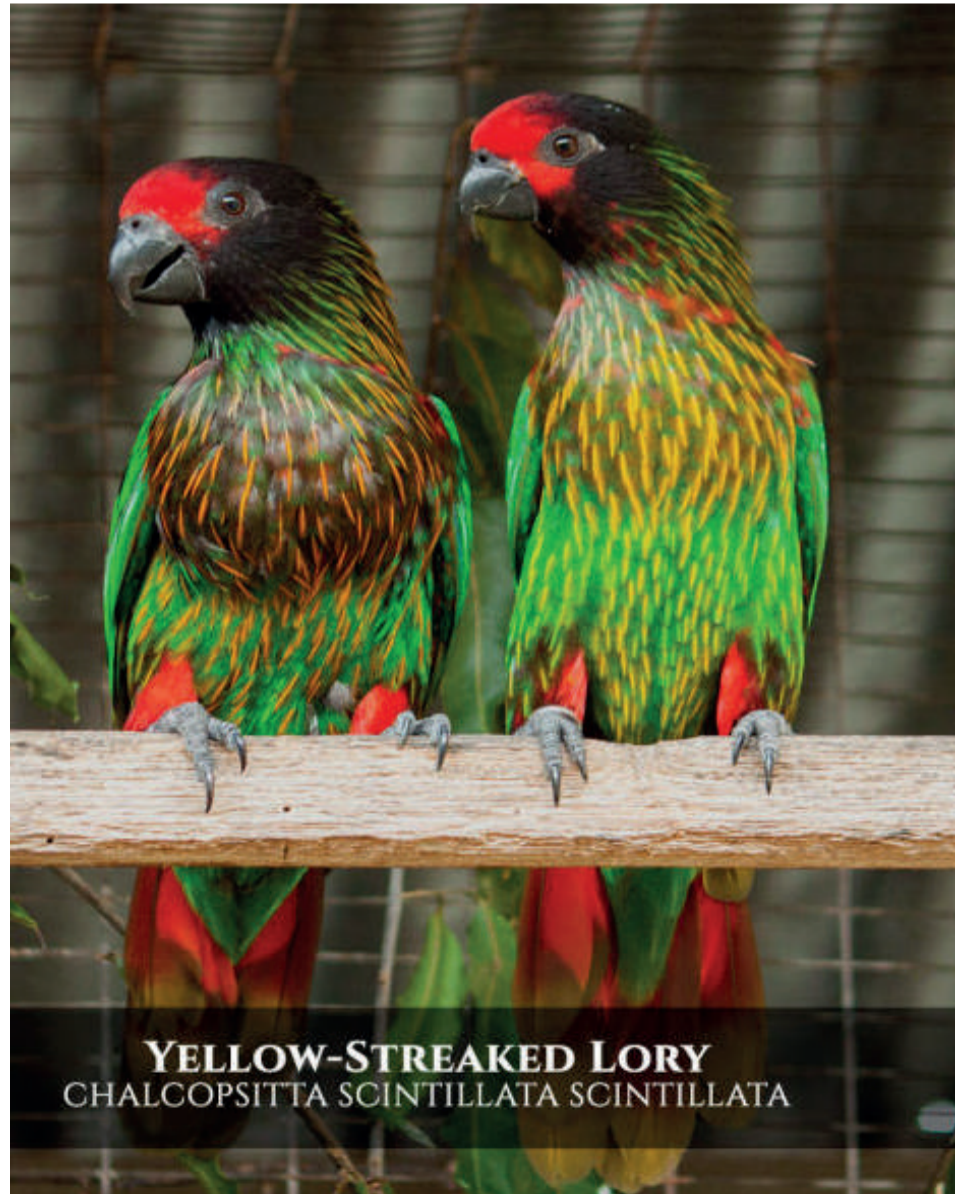
The farm covers a total area of one hectare and has 750 aviaries, which are looked after by ten employees.

Perhaps it would take a long time to individually name all the species you keep. If they were curious, is the species list available?

Yes, we have a list. I should mention that Indonesia has a very strict bureaucracy, and the authorities keep track of every single pair. All the rearing is transparent and recorded by the authorities. We have posted the species list on our website and the readers can visit www.anakburungtropikana.com where the parrot species are listed including their photos.



BLUE-RUMPED PARROT
PSITTINUS CYANURUS



YELLOW-STREAKED LORY
CHALCOPSITTA SCINTILLATA SCINTILLATA



Can you tell us what genus of parrots or particular species you specialize in?

Not really, as we don't specialize in anything. We breed all species the best we can, trying to have success with different species of Lories, Fig Parrots as well as Cockatoos and parrots of the genus *Tanygnathus*.

How do you manage the farm when you are in the Czech Republic?

That's a good question especially now during the corona & war crisis. We make video calls with the managers who are on the farm. We have a farm manager, then a whole farm manager and a sales

specialist who can communicate in several languages including Czech. Managing from Europe is no longer so difficult, but it used to be impossible. Our ABT team consists of fourteen people and six people are at EBF.

Have you made any radical changes on the farm?

When I started, I completely modified the feeding method for all parrot species, and there was also a change in personnel. The technique of checking the nestboxes and the way of hand-feeding the chicks is also different. Furthermore, I changed the perches for all the parrots, the bedding in the nestboxes, etc. Well practically everything... gradually.

Can you be more specific?

Originally the parrots had plastic perches, which were replaced with natural ones, and the birds had only dry sawdust in their nestboxes, which we substituted with shavings directly from a sawmill.

When you say everything, do you even mean the way of feeding?

Yes, completely, as my predecessor was only driven by price. We try to provide all the birds on the farm with a completely balanced diet, with the necessary vitamins and minerals tailored to the specific species. The feeding method used to be totally inadequate. The granivorous birds were only given dry sunflower and they did get soaked food, yet it contained sunflower, millet, corn, mung beans and peanuts. The Hornbills received just papaya and the lorries were simply served blended fruit. We changed everything

to the appropriate food and the results came almost immediately.

How is veterinary care provided?

We have our own in-house vet, plus we are looked after by a whole department of the local conservation unit called Karantene. They come once in a while to take blood samples unannounced for PBFD and salmonellosis testing.

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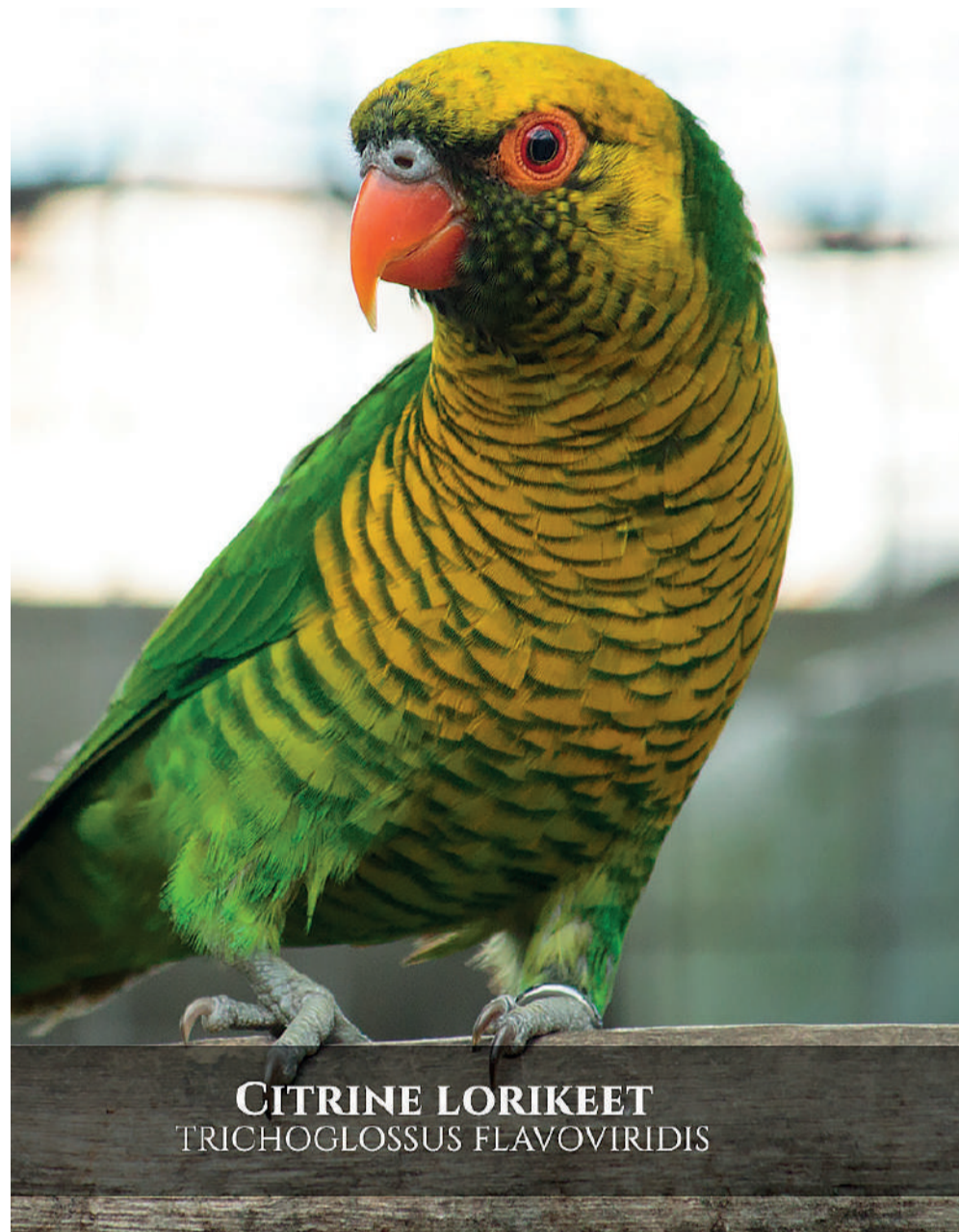




YELLOW-THROATED HANGING PARROT
LORICULUS PUSILLUS



SALAWATI DESMAREST FIG PARROT
PSITTACULIROSTRIS DESMARESTII OCCIDENTALIS



CITRINE LORIKEET
TRICHOGLOSSUS FLAVOVIRIDIS

Is the farm open to the public as well?

No, it's not, but if some breeders want to come and see it, there's no problem, we won't send anyone home. However, you need to arrange it in advance on the phone number provided on the website or via my WhatsApp.

Are you also involved in a conservation project for endangered parrot species?

We are currently building a conservation centre on Yamdena Island in the Tanimbar Islands for the Goffin's Cockatoo (*Cacatua goffiniana*), which has been rapidly declining in this area. We are also planning with local conservationists to build something similar on the island of Lombok. Here, we are going to focus on saving the Mitchell's Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus forsteni mitchellii*), which is a nearly extinct species. I will look for breeding parrots in Europe and bring them to Lombok.

Let's go back to the farm. If breeders from around the world are interested in parrots from your farm, can they contact you directly? The other question is that opinions on imports from different climates are quite varied. However, many species have been imported and have acclimatised without problems. What do you think is the biggest mistake breeders make in these cases?

They can contact me directly. Parrots acclimatise well in Europe. The biggest mistake is if a breeder brings parrots from a tropical area and keeps them in low winter temperatures. This will make them lose them sooner or later. More and more breeders from Europe are now visiting us and asking about the composition of the food, humidity, and temperatures in the native environment. But that's only recently. No one used to be very concerned about it... So I definitely recommend keeping them in higher temperatures and providing food containing vitamins and minerals. Simply, it is necessary to get as close as possible to the natural diet of the species..

Thank you for the interview and best of luck and success in all your future breeding and other projects! 🐦



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CELEBES HANGING PARROT
LORICULUS STIGMATUS



**Breathtaking scenery
of the island of Bali**

Successful breeding of Red-fan Parrots

By Anil Garg, India

Photos by courtesy of Anil Garg



There are two subspecies of the Red-fan Parrot:

(*Deroptyus accipitrinus accipitrinus*) which occurs north of the Amazon River and (*Deroptyus accipitrinus fuscifrons*) found south of the Amazon River.

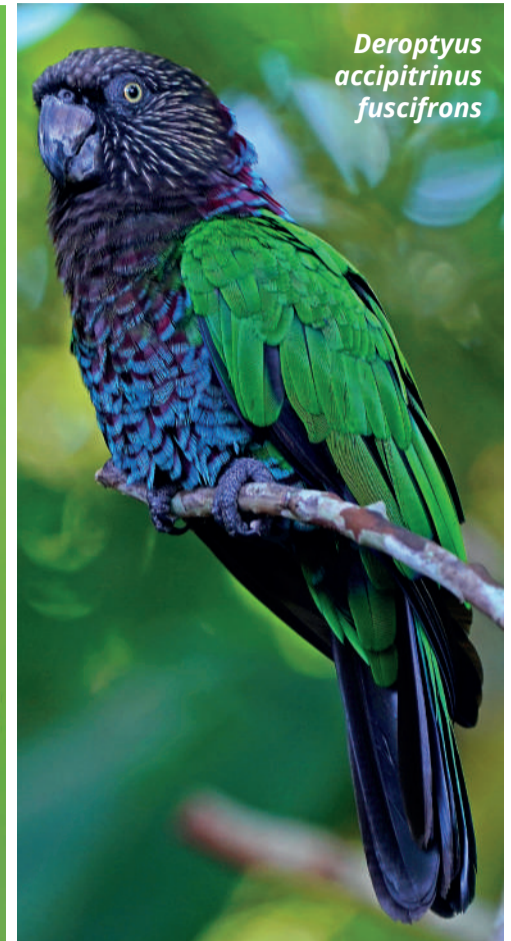
The main difference between them is that **accipitrinus** subspecies has a whitish head colouration, as opposed to **fuscifrons**, which has a brown head colouration.

Red-fan Parrots measure around 35 centimetres and weigh 275 grams. They live to be about forty years old. In the wild, they inhabit mostly moist rainforests. Sex cannot be determined by plumage colouration, which requires endoscopic examination or sex determination by DNA analysis of blood.

My breeding of Red-fan Parrots experiences

I have been breeding Red-fan Parrots (*Deroptyus accipitrinus accipitrinus*) in India for many years in aviaries measuring $4.8 \times 1.8 \times 2.4$ m (length, height, width). Each aviary is half covered and in the uncovered part the parrots can enjoy natural rain and sun. There is a barrier between the aviaries so that the pairs do not disturb each other, which I consider a very important detail in their breeding. We keep the main breeding pair of Red-fan Parrots in the aviary section for Amazon parrots.

The aviaries are planted with green plants, which the parrots don't destroy. Of course, they do nibble a leaf here and there, but not to such an extent that they would destroy the plants. The bottom of the aviary is covered with soil, so it is possible to grow sunflowers, millet and other parrot delicacies in the aviary. The enclosure is regularly watered once a day and twice in summer.



The nestboxes are placed inside the aviary. The size of the base is 30 centimetres and the height of the nestbox ranges between 60 and 75 centimetres. There are wood shavings inside the nestbox, serving as nesting bedding. Each pair of our Red-fan Parrots has two nestboxes available so that they can choose the one that suits them better. If they occupy one, I remove the other immediately. The nestboxes are fitted with steel reinforcements and have inspection doors. I have observed that the Red-fan Parrots stay in the nestbox even during the non-breeding season. They have several perches of various diameters in the aviary, and I also regularly provide them with fresh branches with leaves to gnaw on.



Diet of Red-fan Parrots

For most of the year I feed a dry grain mix consisting of canary grass seeds, millet and small amounts of sunflower and safflower.

I add 15-25% of a commercially sold grain mix for large parrots to this feeding. They are very fond of fresh fruit and vegetables. I serve them mangoes, papaya, grapes, apples, oranges, pomegranates, bananas, fresh corn, peas, beans, cucumber, carrots, peppers, etc. Before the nesting season and during the breeding season, I feed soaked and sprouted seeds to the parrots.

Actually, I provide these continuously in three ways:

- ❶ soaked seeds only
- ❷ seeds with one-day-old sprouts
- ❸ seeds with two-day-old sprouts

My Red-fan Parrots always have a cuttlebone available. Otherwise, I don't give them any animal protein or fat.

Putting pairs together

I believe that it is always better if the parrots form pairs themselves. I always practice the method of getting several individuals of the same species and leaving the same sex in the same aviary for 2-3 months. Then I place all the parrots in one large spacious aviary where they can choose their mate. If I don't have enough individuals for natural selection, I leave the pair I have chosen in two cages side by side for 2-3 months to let the parrots get used to each other.

Breeding

The Red-fan Parrots in my breeding start nesting in March every year, when I can already enjoy the sight of the first clutch. Then I let the parrots nest twice more in the same year. The first two clutches are removed for hand-rearing and the third is left with the parents. The weather here in India is very dry in March, which can cause the embryo to die in the egg. For this reason, we moisten the nestbox with water from a sprinkler every day.

On an average, the female lays 3-4 eggs and sits on them for 26 days. If the weight of the eggs drops significantly during artificial incubation, this may be a sign of embryo death. That's why I weigh the eggs every day. The weight loss must not be less than 15% per day.

I use 9.5 mm diameter rings for ringing the chicks. In the first twelve hours after hatching, I only give them Pedialyte rehydration solution every two hours.

Hand-rearing

Feeding Day 1 – Day 7

The chicks are fed every two hours. During the first week I keep giving them Pedialyte solution 3-4 times a day to ensure that the chicks do not dehydrate. In the past, mixing the hand-rearing blend and the Pedialyte rehydration solution has caused the young ones to grow poorly, therefore we feed both separately.

Feeding Day 7 – Day 21

The young ones are fed every two to three hours these days. The first feeding is given at 6 am and the last feeding is given at 11pm. However, if I have a weaker chick, I add one more feeding at two o'clock in the morning. During this time, we still feed the Pedialyte solution about 3-4 times a day.

Feeding Day 21 and older

The chicks are fed practically as needed, depending on how fast they digest the food. I still feed the solution, but only occasionally, and before weaning I omit it completely. During weaning I mix papaya and oranges for the parrots every day.

Red-fan Parrot chicks tend to be very active, just like their parents. They often play outside and have safe wooden toys and branches available to keep them occupied. I wish all Red-fan Parrot keepers much success and enjoyment with this wonderful species. 🦜



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Strengthening our parrots

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By Rafael Zamora Padrón, Scientific Director of the Loro Parque Fundación
Photos M. José & M. Weinzettl/LPF

When the parrot pairs are laying their second or third clutch, the birds born at the beginning of the year are already forming groups and growing as juveniles. At this time there are several very important aspects in the development of each one of them. The capacity to consume new foods stands out. Within their learning process is the evolution of the agility with which they open the seeds and the way in which they choose which part of each type of fruit to eat. For this, they need a variety of foods available every day. Because what they eat is as important as how they consume it.



These skills in parrots are achieved at different stages and curiously there are times when the presence of other specimens is an essential part of improving abilities in nutrition.

In Loro Parque Fundación we know this fundamental aspect for the good growth of any type of parrot. And perhaps the reader does not know it, but a young parrot that grows alone and isolated, after being separated from its parents, does not grow as healthy as those who do it grow in the company of other congeners.

Parrots are social birds. They like to be in company. And at feeding time, this group develops motor, social and nutritional skills. To understand this, we only have to put several young parrots in individual aviaries and observe how they consume the food we give them every

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo
(Lophochroa leadbeateri)

day. We will see how they select the food and only consume a small part of the supply in front of them. However, if we put those same birds in a common aviary, the way they eat changes substantially. They seem to have more appetite and leave little leftovers. This means that due to the competition generated by instinct, they feed much better than if they lived in isolation.

There are more aspects related to these behaviors. And for this we must look at parrots in the wild. When a solitary specimen flies to a tree with fruits, its consumption is nervous and fast. Much is wasted from what it bites. It raises its head and all its senses are alert to what is going on around it. Any predator could appear and no one could warn it. Or simply other species competing for food could come to consume the fruit it has discovered and therefore it has no time to consume it in a leisurely manner. At any moment it will have to leave the tree and in the best of cases take some of the fruit in its foot or beak to finish eating it in a quieter place.

The other example is when a flock of parrots arrives at the same tree. The group feels safe. Some can warn the rest in the presence of any predator. Or in many species two or three individuals act as watchmen to give the alarm to the rest. In a group they can also become strong against the arrival of intruders who will feel uncomfortable with the cries generated by a flock well installed in a tree. This confidence allows them to consume the food more calmly and to reach more food for a longer time.

If we apply this knowledge of nature to what happens under human care, the benefits are not long in coming because this concept allows an important advance when we handle juvenile parrots in their development. These young birds must be strong before their first feather change. And for this, their growth must be optimal, especially in this phase where they have not yet finished growing and where it is vital to maintain a constant health to avoid developmental diseases.

Exercise will be another necessary contribution to convert the consumption of good food into reserve energy to face the climate changes and metabolic challenges that parrots always face.

Once young parrots before their first year are properly fed, the variety of food forms is very



important and where there is an option to offer palm fruits this opportunity should not be missed due to their enormous benefits. Bunches of palm fruits are an environmental enrichment of great value since they can be given to them in different degrees of maturity and mean a resource in which they must exercise to obtain the fruits.

For countries with colder temperatures where palm fruits are not easily available, there is no inconvenience in giving small contributions during the year of these fruits in their dehydrated or even frozen forms since in both cases they do not lose their multiple properties, where minerals and vitamins are present. 🍌



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Grey-headed Lovebird

Agapornis canus

By Dirk Van den Abeele
Ornitho-Genetics VZW

Agapornis canus is endemic to the island Madagascar. Unlike its other congeners, it is the only member of the genus *Agapornis* that is not found on the African mainland. **Agapornis canus has two subspecies: *Agapornis canus canus* and *Agapornis canus ablectaneus*.** The nominate type, *Agapornis canus canus* was first described by Johann Friedrich Gmelin in 1788 and the subspecies *A. canus ablectaneus* was described in 1918 by Outram Bangs. **Taxonomically *A. canus* is considered an intermediate type for the genus *Loriculus* (Blyth, 1849) (hanging parrots).**



A *gapornis canus* is about fourteen centimetres tall. The male has a typical pearl grey head, neck and chest. The eyes are dark brown with a light iris ring. The upper bill is horn coloured and the lower bill is greyer. The remainder of the feathers is mainly green, but the wing coverts are a shade darker than the rest of the body. The flight feathers are dark grey with a greenish outer vane. Lower and upper tail coverts are similar to the green body colour, the rump seems to be a bit darker. At the base the tail feathers are yellowish green merging into a black cross band. The tail endings are green. The feet are light grey and the nails are dark grey.

The female is almost completely green with an ash grey shine across the feathers. In addition to the specific colour differences all males, of the sexually dimorphic group, have black underwing coverts. In the female these are greyish green.

A pair of *Agapornis canus*





In the subspecies *Agapornis canus ablectaneus* the males have a deeper grey head, neck and chest, they also have a violet like shine and the general body colour is a darker green. Similar to the males, the female is also darker.

Agapornis canus are mainly found in Madagascar. Madagascar is an island of the eastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. *Agapornis canus* can be found in the coastal areas in deciduous forests. The subspecies lives in the Morondava Delta in the coastal areas in the southwest. There are no reports of *A. canus* in the interior of Madagascar.

Although there has been no real scientific research done on *A. canus* in the wild, we regularly read in travel reports that they live in groups and feed solely on grass seeds. Although they live in groups, they are not gregarious breeders. During the breeding season pairs separate themselves of from the rest of the group. The birds nest in tree hollows where the female use pieces of wood or grass as nesting material. She probably flies these to the nest between her feathers. These birds probably have just one nest per year.

In addition to Madagascar *A. canus* can also be found on some of the Seychelles. The Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean and are located northeast of Madagascar. Whether this is accurate we do not know but these birds are said to be extinct here.

John Latham mentioned in 1781 that Mr. St. Pierre had also found *A. canus* on the island of Mauritius. It is suspected that these were introduced by the local population, as was the case on the Comoros and the island of Mayotte where *A. canus* were released as well. Nests were only found on Comoros and Mayotte later on and here these birds can still be found. On the island of Mauritius there are currently no more sightings of *A. canus*.

Luckily there are presently no indications that this species is endangered in the wild.

Breeding *Agapornis canus*

The import of *Agapornis canus* from the wild was stopped several years ago and to be honest it is not really necessary anymore, as we now have many birds available which were born in captivity and are therefore sufficiently domesticated. You can breed this species but do not assume that if you put two birds together a nest, eggs or young will arrive on their own. *Agapornis canus* is definitely not a bird for the impatient breeder. But as a passionate and specialized breeder who does not shy away from a challenge, you can separate yourself from the ordinary breeders.

Most birds present in aviculture are *Agapornis canus canus*. I have personally found only a few breeders

Agapornis canus – female



Agapornis canus - male



who owned birds that fit the description of *Agapornis canus ablectaneus*. This subspecies has probably been imported several times over the years, but I suspect both subspecies have been mixed in birds bred in aviculture.

A. canus can be housed in aviaries or in cages. It is important that the birds have a night shelter which is frost free, so the birds can avoid cold temperatures. Of course, it is as always preferable to have the shelter as large as possible and if the birds are kept in breeding cages during the breeding season it is recommended to move them to a spacious aviary outside of the breeding season. There they can moult without any difficulties.

There are no special recommendations or demands regarding the breeding of *canus*. Each breeder has his own system. Some provide *A. canus* with a normal flat nesting box for lovebirds (30 x 15 x 15cm) while others use a deeper natural log for budgerigars [*Melopsittacus undulatus*]. Also, the nesting material differs from one breeder to the next. Some use woodchips, others put some peat in the nesting box. Some even provide coconut fibres. **In my experience the best results are achieved by putting some laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) in the nest.** These laurel branches are placed at the

bottom of the cage and the female chews small strips off of the leaves. With these she covers the bottom of the nesting box and lays her eggs on top of this. The white eggs hatch after about nineteen days.

Agapornis canus are quite susceptible to stress and therefore it is recommended to disturb the birds as little as possible during the breeding. Preferably check the nest when the female has left the nesting box. When *A. canus* are disturbed during brooding they often fly away in panic and damage the eggs with their nails. It goes without saying that these eggs will be lost.

Young *A. canus* leave the nest after seven weeks and are fed by the parents for another two weeks. Afterwards the young can be housed separately, preferably in a quiet environment to prevent stress. The difference between the sexes is visible after three to four weeks of age. 🐦



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Red-breasted Parakeets successful breeding of a blue mutation

By Antonin Zeleny
Photos by Alena Winner





I have been breeding Red-breasted Parakeets (*fasciata*), commonly called Indian moustached Parakeets (*Psittacula alexandri fasciata*), in their natural form for many years. It is a beautiful and very intelligent parrot species, originally from Asia. Its colours are impressive and its mutations are equally interesting, which I also concern myself with.

I have always dreamt of the colour blue. Nevertheless, I needn't explain at length the fact that Red-breasted Parakeets in the blue mutation are still very rare and not easy to obtain. At the beginning of last year, I purchased two split individuals, with the male being a potential split. The male was eight years old and the female was two years old. I placed the parrots

in a 2 × 1 × 2.2 m (length, width, height) outdoor aviary. The aviary also includes a 2-metre-long indoor area, which contains a hard plywood nestbox with a base size of 20 × 20 cm and a height of 50 cm. Inside, there is sawdust, lightly sprinkled with bio-oil (skincare) to prevent dust from forming in the nestbox.

The newly formed pair harmonised from the start. The parrots got used to the new environment and seemed to be at ease. In the spring of the same year they nested, but the clutch was not fertilised.

At the end of October 2018, I left the parrots only in the indoor aviary because the days were getting very cold. Here I keep the minimum temperature at 5 °C above zero. Exactly on New Year's Day I started



to extend the day for the parakeets with Arcadia fluorescent lamps. At the end of January, the female nested and the clutch consisted of four eggs. One egg was unfertilized and the others hatched into three healthy chicks, two of which were blue in colour. The parental pair worked perfectly. Both birds took excellent care of the young ones and led them to independence. At the end of March, I made the outdoor part of the aviary available to the parrots, as the weather was favourable. In mid-April, while the independent young ones were still in the aviary with their parents, the female nested for the second time, laying 3 eggs, which hatched into two chicks. One of them was again blue in colour. Here I must very humbly thank my breeder's luck. It is true that sometimes the breeder may not even wait to see coloured chicks from two split individuals, and I did not think it would happen at all, so I feel even happier for that.

I must admit that this year I chose a more moderate way of feeding. I served the Red-breasted Parakeets a mixture of millet, oats and sunflower. They also had a scramble of homemade eggs and carrots available, and instead of breadcrumbs I mixed in industrially produced dry egg from Versele Laga. They were getting quite a lot of apples and fresh green feed (leaves of the common dandelion, ribwort plantain, etc.) growing in the chemically untreated pastures my son and I farm on. The Red-breasted Parakeets like branches to gnaw on, which I regularly bring them from the woods. I usually put pine branches in their aviary that still have some resin on them. They have a calcium block attached to the mesh of the aviary.

In August 2019 the parrots from the first nest were in their own separate aviary and the May chicks were still with the parent pair. At the moment in June 2022 all the birds are nice coloured.





The blue mutation is recessive. It is always ideal to put together a colour × a split individual. I paired two split individuals because the blue mutation is really scarce. However, I managed to get a blue female this year and I am planning on forming more pairs. I recently visited Holland and couldn't resist another mutation, which I brought back. It is an Red-breasted Parakeet in the Bronze Fallow mutation. I am going to continue to expand and improve my breeding stock of mutation Red-breasted Parakeets. Other existing mutations include dominant magpie, turquoise ino, lutino, grey, cinnamon, dilute, and there are others.

Conclusion

I honestly think a more moderate diet is better for the Red-breasted Parakeets. In my opinion, together with a spacious aviary, it's a good combination. The parakeets prefer to nest in the darker indoor area.

Even though the parrots have a fairly long indoor area in my aviary, it is still a shady environment. I have boards fixed around the box to create an even darker environment in which the parrots can feel safe. The parrots then enjoy the sun and natural rain during the spring, summer and autumn months. moustached Parakeets are not mentally unstable parrots, and in my particular breeding facility, they have no problem with the company of house cats and three Caucasian Shepherd Dogs. 🇵🇸

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By MVDr. Helena Vaidlova

FATS in parrot nutrition



Different species are adapted to different fatty acid contents. There are species that are relatively demanding in terms of fat content, such as the Hyacinth Macaw.

Fats or lipids provide the body with energy, essential fatty acids and improve the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. They are used to make certain hormones and other substances important to the body. Fats are made up of fatty acids and are characterized by the length of their chain (how many carbons they contain) and the number and location of double bonds in their chain. Fatty acids with shorter to medium chain lengths (4–12 carbons) are found, for example, in milk, while fatty acids with 10–12 carbons are found in various vegetable oils. Saturated fatty acids do not contain any double bonds; fatty acids with two or more double bonds are called polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA).

Essential fatty acids

Essential means - necessary to take in the diet, as the body cannot make them itself from any precursors. Like humans, birds cannot make certain polyunsaturated fatty acids. The fatty acids found in the seeds and nuts available to captive birds may not be equivalent to what birds consume in the wild. The fundamental essential fatty acid is linoleic acid (18:2, n=6). It has 18 carbons, 2 double bonds, with n=6 characterising their location. It is quite abundantly present in vegetable oil.

A deficiency of essential fatty acids can manifest itself in many ways. Examples include embryo death in the egg, impaired hatchability and growth problems. Feather discolouration can also result from a lack of these dietary components and an excess of others on the other hand. Atherosclerosis is caused by increased cholesterol-rich fats in the diet, lack of omega-3 fatty

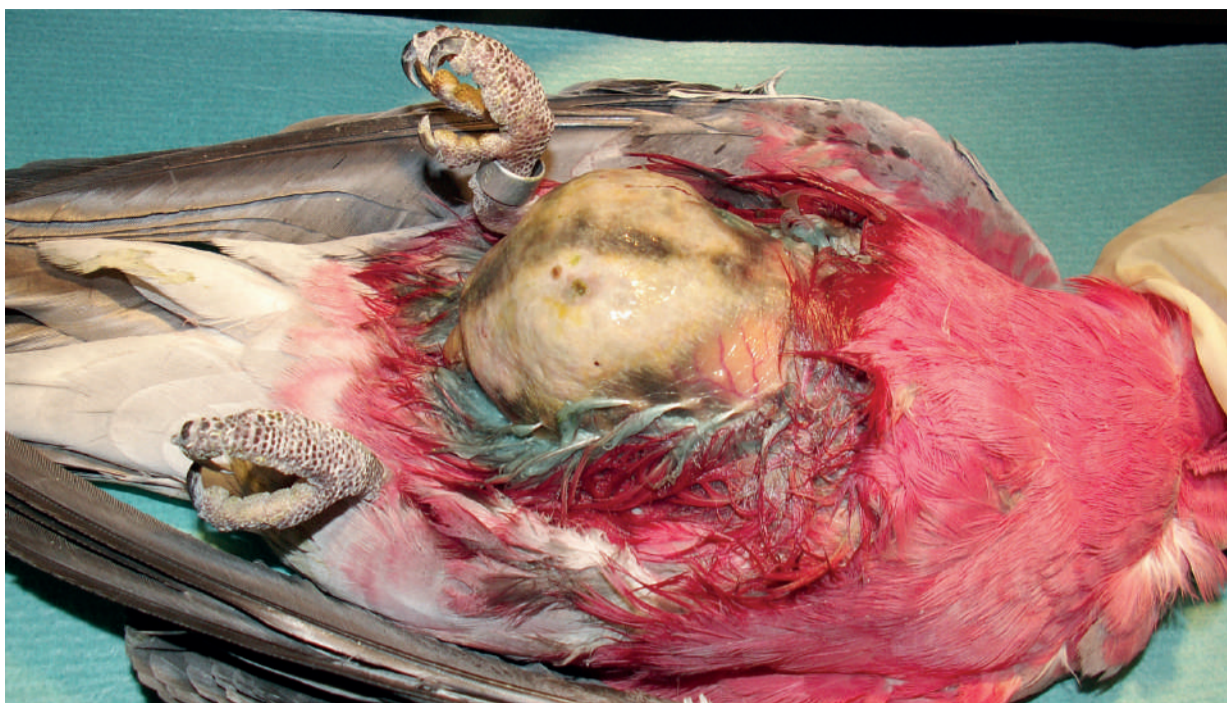


A Galah male with accumulated fat in the lower abdomen

acids, and lack of exercise, or it is potentiated by infection. Certain parrot species are more susceptible to it (e.g. the Grey Parrot). It is not only the amount of total fat ingested that is important, but also its qualitative composition.

The consequences of unbalanced diet or malnutrition can be observed more and more frequently in veterinary practice in parrots. These include fatigue, breathing difficulty, falling off the perch, sudden loss of consciousness, and possibly nervous symptoms. They usually manifest themselves after several years, when the solution is not easy or the condition is no longer resolvable.

A budgerigar with an enormous amount chest fat



◀ Galah under general anesthesia before surgery to remove fat

Function of fats in the body

Essential fatty acids are part of cell membranes and are precursors for the production of prostaglandins. They are part of various processes that affect the immune system and inflammation. Therefore, the availability of various fatty acids in the diet may influence immunity. The yolk, which is used for the development of the bird embryo, contains a large amount of fat. The composition of the fatty acids contained in the yolk differs between altricial and precocial birds. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact composition of the yolk of individual species, or at least groups of species, of altricial birds.

However, we do know that linoleic acid, which we consider to be the main essential acid, is not very abundant in the seeds consumed in the wild by, for example, Australian medium-sized parrots. Perhaps they don't need it as much as other birds and mammals or they can synthesize it? The implication is that we don't know much and we need to look more into the life of parrots in the wild...

Individual species are adapted to different fatty acid contents. There are species that are relatively demanding in terms of fat content, such as the Hyacinth Macaw, but also very modest, such as the Galah. Fats are very important for the brain. During the development of the embryo in the egg, the brain needs docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Its deficiency in the yolk can result in various developmental or behavioural disorders. Therefore, it is very important to supply enough unsaturated fatty acids before laying. Bird semen also contains large amounts of unsaturated fatty acids, which means that it is prone to peroxidation, and supplying vitamin E and unsaturated fatty acids protects the semen while increasing its quality. Increasing unsaturated fatty acids in the diet is often used in kidney treatment.

Antioxidants

There are a number of natural antioxidants that are ingested in the diet. These include vitamins A, C, E, and β -carotene. A lack of vitamin E in the diet can cause impaired fat storage due to peroxidation.

Antioxidants protect against the free radicals that cause this peroxidation, which is thought to be the key to the development of tumours, inflammatory processes and heart disease.

Obesity

This is a big problem for captive birds, which reflects the problems of contemporary human society and the most common pets such as dogs and cats. Affluence is bad for us and our birds if we can't take advantage of it properly. Many parrots kept as pets only live a sedentary lifestyle, many aviary bird keepers will provide a two perch aviary, water, food and nothing else. Flying consumes an enormous amount of energy. If parrots are not allowed to fly appropriately, they should at least be offered entertainment in the form of something to gnaw on as often as possible. If the aviary is structured and the keeper puts in the work to change the branches for gnawing at least weekly, this is much better care for the parrots' exercise and enjoyment than a noodle-shaped aviary with two perches (or more, not to be unfair to longer aviaries).

A high-fat diet of inappropriate composition can bring problems such as atherosclerosis, lipidosis of the liver, pancreatitis, hypothyroidism (with iodine deficiency), twitching, diarrhoea and various types of fatty tumours.

Possibilities of adding quality fats to the food ration

For the winter, many breeders try to add energy to their birds due to lower temperatures. However, we should choose the right sources of fat to avoid doing more harm than good. Naturally, fatty seeds or nuts can be added. Still, this cannot be simplified to the mere adding of sunflower seeds. The disadvantage of seeds and nuts is the danger of mould infestation. In the case of pets, it is advisable to use food intended for human consumption and still check the quality by both smelling and tasting before serving. In the case of aviary birds, financial considerations are usually taken into account, which is understandable, but it should not be at the expense of the quality of the nuts and seeds, and thus the health of the birds.

Each species of parrot has different requirements for its food ration. For some, the fat content needs to be watched and used sparingly, e.g. the Galah and the white cockatoo group. Some species are built for higher fat intake - for example the Hyacinth Macaw, Palm Cockatoo, less so the Grey Parrot, etc. If we don't have a source of both affordable and good quality nuts or fatty seeds, we can substitute them with vegetable oils, which are safer and sometimes cheaper. Generally, moulds and mycotoxins are not transferred to oils.

For example, the following are used:

Evening primrose, sea-buckthorn, rapeseed, palm, coconut, flax, pumpkin and others. The aforementioned antioxidants - vitamin E, β -carotene and others are added to some of them. Each vegetable oil has its own unique composition of fatty acids, and it is best to alternate between them.

Conclusion

- ▶ Fats are important mainly as a source of energy, for the proper functioning of the immune system, skin, heart...
- ▶ The composition of fat in the food ration is as important as its quantity.
- ▶ Essential fatty acids are abundant in vegetable oils; it is wise to alternate them.
- ▶ Obesity and associated lifestyle diseases also affect captive birds.



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New protected area for the critically endangered Lilacine Amazon



By Dr. David Waugh, Loro Parque Fundación

Until 2014, the delightful Lilacine Amazon was somewhat in the shadows as a subspecies of the more widespread Red-lored Amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*). However, in that year the Lilacine Amazon was recognised as the separate species *Amazona lilacina*, with a small and threatened population restricted to south-west Ecuador. The total wild population is estimated by Birdlife International (2021) at a maximum of 3,835 individuals (of which 2,500 are considered to be mature birds), unevenly distributed across a few coastal and inland sites, in mangroves and dry tropical forest.



Two Lilacine Amazons in an American carob tree Photo by Michael Moens/FJ

Sadly, the threats of habitat loss and trapping appear to have severe effects, for example a population decline of 60% between 2000 and 2019 for the coastal roost in El Salado Mangrove Reserve and of 59% between 2014 and 2019 for the inland roost at Las Balsas in Santa Elena province (Biddle et al. 2020). The latter case is especially alarming because Las Balsas accommodates the largest subpopulation of the species, and in

December 2020 the overall situation warranted the up-listing of the species to the category of Critically Endangered

Dry forest habitat of the Lilacine Amazon

Fundación ProBosque



in the IUCN Red List. Clearly the Lilacine Amazons at Las Balsas are in need of help, and with this aim the Ecuadorean NGO Fundación

Jocotoco has established a project there, supported by the Loro Parque Fundación. This project constitutes an important contribution to the national research and conservation actions for this species in Ecuador, spurred on by the UK's Chester Zoo. In Las Balsas the amazons use specific roosting sites in American carob trees (*Prosopis pallida*) along the Piedras river valley. These trees have hard timber and are threatened by logging for charcoal production by the local farmers, even though some natural regeneration occurs along the river banks. Since July 2018, the project team has monitored the Lilacine Amazon population in Las Balsas, observing an annual decrease in the presence

of individuals from August to January, which corresponds to the species' breeding season. The maximum counts of Lilacine Amazons at the roosts were of 2,340 and 2,578 individuals in 2019 and 2020 respectively, although most counts have oscillated between 369 and 1,126 individuals. Due to the overwhelming importance of Las Balsas for the Lilacine Amazon, Loro Parque Fundación has backed Fundación Jocotoco to create a protected area at the site, this being its 15th nature reserve nationally. This has involved the purchase of the right to enjoy the use and advantages of 49 properties, short of their destruction or wastage, covering a total of 99 hectares of Carob forests at 80 - 100metres above sea level along the river. Fundación Jocotoco has also hired two park guards, and they and other team members

American carob trees are very important for the roosting amazons at Las Balsas

Photo by Forest Kim Starr-CC BY 3.0; 4 - Michael Moens/FJ





Installation of a nest-box for the amazons Photo by Fundación Jocotoco

have been searching for nesting sites. In 2019, four confirmed Lilacine Amazon nests were located, plus a total of 24 potential nest sites based on the type of nesting hole, tree species they mostly occupy and the presence of Lilacine Amazons. These were the first nests described for the species in the Santa Elena province, where the parrots were found to choose mainly Bototillo (*Cochlospermum vitifolium*) and Ceibo (*Ceiba trichastandra*) trees to nest in. During the nesting season of 2020, an additional 62 nest sites were identified, bringing the total to 86. During 2021, an additional six nests have been identified, including two within the protected area, to which 25 hectares were added.

Also with support from the Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP), an artificial nest-box programme was started in December 2020, with a total of 50 nest-boxes installed

in four areas, including within the roosting sites because Bototillo and Ceibo trees are present. Nest-boxes were also placed at a site between Las Balsas reserve and Las Balsas protected forest (where natural nests have been seen) and also in primary dry forest of the hills of the Cordillera Chongón-Colonche (also with evidence of nesting areas). All nest boxes are monitored during the first two weeks of every month till the end of the breeding season, and even if some of the nest boxes have attracted the attention of Lilacine pairs, as yet no nest box has been successful.

The project will also include an important component to identify key areas used by the amazons in the Chongón-Colonche hills that may or may not be protected by the current Socio-Bosque Conservation area. This will be accomplished by radio-tracking the movements of individual Lilacine Amazons, and to this end an expert-led telemetry workshop for the park



Lila the lilacine, the project mascot

Photo by Fundación Jocotoco



A local school class show their conservation certificates

Photo by Fundación Jocotoco



A training session for the radio-tracking of Lilacine Amazons

Photo by Fundación Jocotoco

guards and local members of Las Balsas community has been undertaken recently. The data obtained with this monitoring will be key to identifying critical foraging and nesting areas, which will inform the expansion of the reserve in Las Balsas through land purchase. Information on nesting areas will also help to refine the nest-box programme in the future. Moreover, it will improve the identification and pinpointing of potential threats.

All the monitoring efforts supported by Loro Parque Fundación have helped Fundación Jocotoco to gain trust with the local communities and government. Nevertheless, the project must continue to promote the importance of the Lilacine Amazon project in the

Chongón-Colonche mountains by expanding the community campaign in las Balsas. Thus, the intention is to expand the community workshops further around the Las Balsas reserve, where the target is to reach 2000 children. To this end, the project created a costume for the project mascot “**Lila la Lilacina**”, a Lilacine Amazon that will teach local children about the importance of protecting the forest and all the animals that live there. Sadly, due to the COVID-19 crisis, all the school workshops have had to be postponed until such time as the schools in Santa Elena province will reopen and the project will be able to start the environmental education campaign using the existing materials and taking all the necessary precautions. Meanwhile, the protected area is a decisive step in making the Lilacine Amazon safer. 📍

Biddle, R., Ponce, I.S., Cun, P., Tollington, S., Jones, M., Marsden, S., Devenish, C., Horstman, E., Berg, K., Pilgrim, M. (2020) Conservation status of the recently described Ecuadorian Amazon parrot *Amazona lilacina*. *Bird Conserv. Int.*, 30, 586–598.
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