

**ASA**  
Avicultural Bulletin



**ASA**

A JOURNAL FOR BIRD BREEDING, CONSERVATION,  
RESTORATION AND EDUCATION

November/December 2021



*"Spix flying  
free again"*



**ACTA**

The purposes of the Society are the study of foreign and native birds to promote their conservation and protection; the dissemination of information on the care, breeding, and feeding of birds in captivity; the education of Society members and the public through publications, meetings, and available media; and the promotion and support of programs and institutions devoted to conservation. Front Cover: Red-necked amazon (*Amazona arausiaca*) Photo: Simon Degenhard. Inside cover: Christ the Redeemer Photo: ACTP © 2012-2022 Avicultural Society of America. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced without express written permission by ASA.

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November/December 2021

## President's Message

Greetings, fellow Aviculturists:

ASA had an election and this is my last president's message!

It has been an honor to have served you as ASA president since 2016, and it's now time to officially pass on the torch to Sarah Brabbs, who was elected last fall. Stay tuned for election result details in the next e-Bulletin issue.

Sarah has much to offer ASA in her new role as president, and she is also CFO for Advocates for Bird Conservation, and a member of the American Federation of Aviculture and the Organization of Professional Aviculturists.

In the meantime, there are many gems to enjoy in this issue. We have a feature article by Simon Degenhard on the red-necked amazon (*Amazona arausiaca*). I wish they had called it red-necklaced. It is an interesting review of conservation in action.

We also have a blast from the past: *The World of the Tanygnathus Parrots*, by Dale R. Thompson. Although Dale is no longer with us, his writing is as pertinent today as it was when he wrote it.

Also, Editor Susie Christian, affectionately known as iSue, has contributed artwork for the season's holidays which include eclectic.

Finally, I hope you take the time to enjoy this issue, enjoy your birds, and that you continue to remain informed about your rights as aviculturists and responsible bird owners.

Stay safe and take care,

Carol Stanley, President, YOUR Avicultural Society of America

**Officers & Staff**

**President**

Carol Stanley 925-698-0191

**Vice-President**

Sally Huntington

**Secretary**

Kimberly Robertson kroberson@safariwest.com

**Treasurer**

Mary Rose maryd4\_8@msn.com

**Board of Directors**

Sarah Brabbs sbrabbs@gmail.com  
 Roger Bringas rogerbringas@gmail.com  
 Roland Cristo rcristo@sbcglobal.net  
 Steve Duncan 909-599-7577  
 Sheri Hanna turacoldy@aol.com  
 805-208-1759

Rick Rosenthal rickatbnb@aol.com  
 Dick Schroeder 760 743.3156  
 dick.schroeder.911@gmail.com

**Aviculture Apprentice Program**

Kimberly Robertson kroberson@safariwest.com  
 Director

Carol Stanley 925-698-0191

**Board Advisor**

Genny Wall 949-859-0861

**Web Master**

Steve Duncan 909-599-7577  
 www.asabirds.org

**Legislative Liaison Officer**

Laurella Desborough 904-291-9043

**Membership Committee**

Sarah Brabbs  
 Steve Duncan 909-599-7577

**Conference Coordinators**

Steve Duncan 909-599-7577  
 Carol Stanley 925-698-0191

**Editorial Panel**

Susie Christian winged1s@aol.com  
 805-772-2038  
 Steve Duncan 909-599-7577  
 Sheri Hanna 805-208-1759  
 Lisa Marun  
 Carol Stanley, Art Director 925-698-0191  
 Lisa Woodworth templeaviaries@gmail.com

**AFA Delegates**

Steve Duncan 909-599-7577  
 Carol Stanley 925-698-0191

**Lifetime Honorary Members**

Frank Miser Dick Schroeder Steve Duncan

**Conference Raffle Coordinators**

Richard Dickinson 623-544-6973  
 408-313-4986  
 rgdickinson@yahoo.com  
 maryd4\_8@msn.com

Mary Rose

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## World First Captive Breeding Delivers Hope for Dominican Amazons; Supports Decision to Initiate Ex Situ Safety Net Population

“On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 a significant hatching occurred at the breeding facility of the Association for the Conservation of Threatened Parrots e.V. (ACTP), located near Berlin, Germany; that of the world’s first captive bred Red-necked Amazon (*Amazona arausiaca*).”



Turn the clock back a short 14 months to the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 and the emergency transfer of 12 amazon parrots from the island of Dominica to ACTP in Germany, backed by the Government of Dominica and the German CITES authority.

This emergency transfer was initiated in response to the devastation brought upon the populations of both of Dominica’s endemic parrot species, the Red-necked Amazon (*A. arausiaca*) and the Imperial Amazon (*A. imperialis*) by Hurricane Maria in September of 2017. Dominica was struggling to come back from this devastation, they needed help, trying to care for the birds they held at their botanical gardens, when at the same time their people were in dire straits, this meant that outside help was the only way to secure the birds. It was recognised by both the Government of Dominica and German CITES authorities, that immediate action was required in order to take the necessary steps to help safeguard the survival of these two species; therefore, the joint decision to transfer the 12 parrots that were held at the aviary within the Botanical Gardens in Roseau, Dominica to ACTP’s state-of-the-art psittacine breeding centre in Germany, was taken. This decision was not taken

lightly, and as per all major conservation actions, there was controversy, one can never satisfy everyone. But as with previous conservation decisions that have saved species, they too were marred with negative press until they proved their critics wrong.



Pair of Red-necked Amazons at ACTP's breeding centre

With the increasing threat imposed by human induced climate change, and the increase in the frequency of high category hurricanes in the region, it is crucial, to not only work on the in situ aspects of the projects, but also on safety-net populations, to safeguard these species for generations to come. It is for this reason that ACTP and the Governments of Dominica, St Lucia and St Vincent, plus the German CITES authorities, recognise the ever-increasing need for ex situ safety-net populations of the endemic parrots of these islands to be established outside of the Caribbean Region. It is also very clearly recognised that ex situ conservation work **must** take place hand-in-hand with in situ conservation work; without a dedicated and long-term commitment to both, efforts to safeguard the future of these birds will not be successful. Parrots are not the only family that suffers, Hurricane Matthew in 2016 caused the collapse of the Bahama Nuthatch (*Sitta insularis*) from 2000 individuals to only 5. Hurricane Irma 2017 completely destroyed the native habitat

of Barbuda, the endemic Barbuda warbler (*Setophaga subita*) is now under massive risk of extinction with their population dropping from an estimated 1000 - 2500 individuals to a number considered below 100 individuals.

ACTP recognises that a new census of the parrot species will be a crucial next step, to get a better indication of the populations of the species and show how critical these projects are for the parrots of these islands.



Red-necked Amazon at the ACTP breeding facility

In the end, our goal in the production of a safety-net population starts with that very important word "PRODUCTION" and this is exactly what has happened here. Remember this date, the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019; the "world first" breeding of the Red-necked Amazon (*A. arausiaca*), and in such a short time after their arrival at ACTP's breeding centre in Germany. We are of course very pleased that we have been able to



achieve this incredible and unprecedented success with this species, just 14 months after their arrival at our breeding centre, having been transferred to our care for this very purpose. To be able to share this success with the world, after it having been reported that such success would be most unlikely to occur, gives both, the Government of Dominica and ACTP great confidence in the decisions that have been taken so far and also the future conservation of the species. **The successful pair produced 2 eggs in their clutch and the first egg hatched on the 10<sup>th</sup> May, while the second chick hatched on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019.** All the data related to this breeding event and the future breeding events of this species is being collected and will be published in peer-reviewed journals.

Both chicks are doing well, along with a chick of an amazon species from Dominica's sister Island, St Vincent.

We would like to thank the Commonwealth of Dominica for their trust and all respective authorities that made this important transfer to our institution happen, along with all of the others involved in this unprecedented success.

Combined with our success with the breeding of the St Vincent Amazon (*A. guildingii*) at our facility in Germany and the funding of in situ work on and training of Forestry staff from the Caribbean islands, we are further motivated by this latest breeding success and look forward to continuing our pioneering conservation partnerships in the Caribbean Region.

**For further information or to obtain high resolution images to accompany this text for publication, please contact us via email at [communication@act-parrots.eu](mailto:communication@act-parrots.eu)**



Red-necked (left) and St Vincent (right) Amazon chicks hatched at ACTP



Male Great-billed parrot *Tanygnathus megalorhynchus* photo Dale R. Thompson

# The World of *Tanygnathus* Parrots

Dale R. Thompson

## INTRODUCTION

The *Tanygnathus* group of parrots originate from the Philippines, Sulawesi (Celebes), Borneo and other smaller islands of Indonesia. All are known for their large, heavy bills and relatively short, rounded tails. This gives them a topheavy look. They are very beautiful with their shades of brilliant blues and greens contrasted by a large

reddish orange bill. Some have greenish-yellow scalloping on the primary and median wing coverts. The feathers on the chest region are often hair-like in appearance. This feature is well known in the Eclectus Parrots. In earlier times both the *Tanygnathus* and Eclectus Parrots in Germany were known as "Edelpapagei" or noble parrots.

This term is still being used today. Indeed, both groups are very noble in their appearance.

### **SPECIES AND DISTRIBUTION**

**Great-billed Parrot**, *Tanygnathus megalorhynchos*, is found on the islands of western Papua, Tanibar and Lesser Sunda, the Moluccas and offshore islands of Sulawesi (Celebes), Indonesia. Joseph M. Forshaw's *Parrots of the World* gives it eight subspecies.

**Blue-naped Parrot**, *Tanygnathus lucionensis*, is found in the Philippine Islands and offshore islands of Borneo and Sulawesi, Indonesia. It is given three subspecies.

**Muller's Parrot**, *Tanygnathus sumatranus*, is found in the Philippine Islands, Sulawesi and the smaller islands of the Sulu Archipelago, Talaud and Sangir, Indonesia. It is given six subspecies.

**Black-lored Parrot**, *Tanygnathus gramineus*, is found on the Island of Buru, Indonesia. It is monospecific.

**Rufous-tailed Parrot.** This parrot is taken from one specimen (type), presumably from Sulawesi; regarded as an aberrant specimen of *T. sumatranus* (Forshaw 197: 193).

Only the first three species are found in American aviculture.

### **BEHAVIOR**

The *Tanygnathus* parrots belong to the Subfamily Psittaculinae which also include *Electus*, the ring-necked group, king parrots, hanging parrots, blue-rumped parrots and lovebirds. They have several intriguing features and behaviors that are different from most other parrot groups. Although not identical in each group, their similarities are unique enough to be grouped together. These include:

- The females are usually dominant in behavior.
- This group strongly prefers to not touch each other (exception-lovebirds).

Even though one-way or mutual preening is done, the sexes usually maintain a minimum distance from each other. Often head-plucking is a problem.

- A reddish-colored bill is very prominent in this group, often found only in the males. This red or coral coloration does not seem to fade as is seen in many museum specimens even after many of the feathers have begun to fade.
- Eye blazing is often a characteristic with this group. This is a threatening action.

- Feather coloration. If the parrot species has feathers of a different color on its back, rump or nape other than on the body, it is usually blue. This can be seen in the blue rumps of the Great-billed and Muller's Parrots and the nape of the Blue-naped Parrot. This color difference changes to red on the rump coloration of the hanging parrots. Often the tails are tipped with yellow, red or orange, which

gives them a more threatening (or in a courtship, desirable) display when spread.

- Behavior. Due to the dominance of the female, many of these parrots have quite a courtship display. The male will go through number of head and body movements to entice the female. This is often manifested by the male bowing and stretching its body, drooping or lifting its wings and swaying from side to side. Often the male will jump up and down or spin on its perch. The bright plumage and the coral bill coloration of the male is credited as being part of this courtship.

### **GREAT-BILLED PARROT**

*Tanygnathus megalorhynchus*

This parrot is aptly named as its very large head and bill are almost "macaw-like" in appearance. These large green parrots (6 inches) do not have the long, pointed tails of the large macaws but have medium sized tails that are rounded. They have a blue rump and yellow-tipped green tail feathers and have beautiful outer wing feathers (coverts) that are black with orange to bronzy-gold scalloping or margins. Both sexes have the coral-red bill with the adult male's usually being much more massive than the females.

I observed my first Great-billed Parrots in the early 1970s. They were two males whose heads were much larger than birds of the same species I later observed in the 1980s. I can only assume that I was observing a different, and larger,

subspecies than those now seen in aviculture. Checking with the books, I probably was observing the largest subspecies, *T. m. sumbensis*, from Sumba in the Lesser Sunda Islands.

The Great-billed Parrot has been imported in small to moderate numbers over several years. The greatest number was brought into the U.S. during the last few years before parrot importation came to a halt (in October, 1993) due to the enactment of the Wild Bird Conservation Act [WBCA] of 1992.

There was little to no success reproducing the Great-billed Parrot in the U.S. until it was accomplished by Joan Davis in 1989 (May 25) in Fremont, California. Prior to this, a number of aviculturists had infertile, and sometimes even fertile eggs, but with no success. These poor captive reproductive results were due to several reasons, the main cause probably being incompatibility between the mates. The dynamics of female-dominant species is not easily understood under captive conditions. Aviculturists are more used to pairs with dominant males that often drive the females to go to nest. With the roles reversed, it often results in a shy and somewhat intimidated male. I feel it is important to allow these birds to choose their own mates. This is seldom done because it is difficult to obtain several birds to place together for bonding.

Wild-caught Great-billed Parrots can be quite shy, and placing



Philippine blue nape *Tanygnathus lucionensis* photo Don Harris

two new birds in a cage can be very stressful to both of them. Although incompatibility does not usually result in serious aggression, other symptoms often result. Feather chewing and plucking may result when there is serious incompatibility or after long term bickering or confrontations occur. Often a bird in perfect feather condition will pluck out its chest feathers completely in only a few hours. Sometimes the birds, mostly males, will soon have fuzzy feathers along their primary wing coverts.

Feather chewing and plucking can also be caused by an inadequate diet or the lack of sufficient water to bathe in. A large open crock or bowl in which the birds can stand in, is ideal. The bathing bowl should not be same source as their drinking water as the large bathing bowl can be easily

polluted with dirt, feathers, old food, or fecal matter. An overhead misting system is also a good way for these birds to bathe. Polluted water should always be changed immediately. The Great-billed Parrots have a very raucous voice which can be quite annoying. This is especially true if one keeps them in a residential area where their noise may disturb the neighbors. These birds usually do not sound off unless disturbed and this loud voice can even be emitted from youngsters inside a nest that has been opened for inspection.

Even though these birds have a sedate personality, they can make interesting pets. They are often kept as pets in their home country of the Philippines, but due to the difficulty and low numbers being reproduced in captivity, these large parrots should be held back for future breeding stock. Usually two to three eggs are laid per clutch and there is now a concerted

effort to have the parents do some or all of the feeding. Pulling eggs for artificial incubation has to be done if the eggs are broken or abandoned in the nest. But more and more aviculturists are allowing their pairs to feed the youngsters for at least two weeks. Several are allowing the babies to be completely parent-reared which will be ideal for future breeding as they will have gained the needed parental instinct for rearing future clutches later on in their lives.

Compatible pairs tend to be very attentive to each other and will be diligent in their duties as parents. The babies grow fast, and a chart for early weight gains can be found in the January/February, 1994 Watchbird article on breeding the Great-billed Parrot authored by Ma. Regina R. de Dios and Roger G. Sweeney. By the 32nd day of age, both babies mentioned in their article topped the 400 gram mark. This breeding was accomplished at the facilities of B.I.I. (Birds International Incorporated) in Quezon City in the Philippines.

There is a preponderance of females in captive Great-billed Parrots both as wild-caught birds now available and as domestic babies. Why there are so few males hatched and reared in captivity compared to females is still a mystery. Even the Arizona aviculturist, Barry Sky, noted for his great reproductive success in the Great-billed Parrot and the other *Tanygnathus* parrots has a very lopsided sex ratio of extra females,

Of great interest is a certain dietary supplement Barry Sky gives to his Great-billed Parrots. While reading in Thomas Arndt's LEXICON of Parrots, Sky noted that this parrot species readily consumes the flower of the Coral Tree, *Erythrina* sp. He then proceeded to plant and grow several Coral trees on

his property for consumption by his Great-billed Parrots. He feels this is one of the key ingredients for his excellent reproductive success.

### MULLER'S PARROT

*Tanygnathus sumatranus*

The Muller's Parrots are medium sized birds measuring from 12 to 13 inches in total length. The males have a coral-red bill, while the females have a whitish or horn-colored bill. Adult males appear to be slightly more brilliant in feather condition than females. This parrot is also known as the Muller's Great-billed or Philippine Great-billed Parrot. Sometimes it is referred to as the (Mueller's) Blue-backed Parrot due to the blue patch of feathers found on its lower back.

Of the six subspecies, it is thought that the Everett's Blue-backed Parrot, *T. s. everetti*, was the most commonly imported subspecies. The Muller's Parrot is another *Tanygnathus* parrot that was not common until the latter years when U.S. importation was still allowed. It has never been very common.

The first successful reproduction of the Muller's Parrot in the U.S. was accomplished by M. D. Moll and K. K. Muser in 1984 (February 21) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Their pair was housed in a 4 X 3 X 3 ft. cage placed high off the floor. They had a vertical nest box measuring 12 X 12 X 24 in. with a 3 in. entrance hole placed off center and 20 in. above the bottom of the box.

A courtship was observed where both birds would hang from the top of the cage. Mutual preening and feeding was done from this position. Both parents were observed participating in the incubation duties. The baby was parent fed for eight days before the chick was

removed for handfeeding. This was a very compatible pair.

As with the Great-billed Parrots, the Muller's Parrots are also prone to become feather pickers. Many aviculturists working with Muller's Parrots find incompatibility a problem (unlike the pair above). Another similarity is the overabundance of males in this species, especially in the offspring. A secluded environment with a good diet appears to be key ingredients in reproducing the Muller's Parrot along with the importance of having a compatible pair.

### **BLUE-NAPED PARROT**

*Tanygnathus lucionensis*

This *Tanygnathus* parrot is mainly emerald green in coloration with a beautiful shade of blue found on its nape, oftentimes extending into the cheeks. The color of its chest feathers range from light green to olive-green and they are very fine in texture, similar to the chest feathers of Eclectus Parrots. They also have the distinctive yellow-margined wing coverts similar to the Great-billed Parrot. Both sexes of the Blue-naped Parrot have coralred upper and lower mandibles. The Blue-naped Parrot has never been imported in substantial numbers in the past. During the latter years of importation when Great-billed Parrots and Muller's Parrots were becoming more abundant, the importation of the Blue-naped Parrots came to a complete halt. This was because the Republic of the Philippines stopped exporting its wildlife. Thus two very important Philippine large parrots, the Red-vented Cockatoo and Blue-naped Parrot, began to decline within the U.S.

From past literature, it appears that the Blue-naped Parrot was successfully reproduced in the 1930s and 1940s.

Records show that Mrs. H. S. Bonestell of California bred them in 1935 and years following. Dave West also reproduced the Blue-naped in the 1940s and he wrote that they were "easily bred." Considering the low numbers reproduced in recent years, it would be difficult to assume that they are easily reproduced. I can only assume that the scarcity of this species in present day American aviculture is the main reason for this.

Mrs. Bonestell described the courtship behavior of the Blue-naped as weird. The male stretched out his body and swayed back and forth in front of his mate. The male then slowly flapped his wings and blazed his eyes to where they showed mostly white. Mrs. Bonestell also related that her breeding pair of Blue-naped Parrots built a very compact nest of feathers, bamboo leaves and small sticks, bits of string and any other types of material on the top of the nesting material (peat moss and leaf mold) she placed in the bottom of the nest box.

### **DIET**

From reading in the literature, it appears that the Great-billed Parrot is a specialized feeder. In the wild it feeds on the fruits from trees found on the beach and in mangrove areas, primarily from *Sonneratia alba*. The internal gut tract of the Great-billed is quite complex with its long length and folds. It is believed that this parrot needs a diet made up of fibrous plant material.

It is not surprising to read of the captive diets given to Great-billed Parrots by Joan Davis and the Muller's Parrot by the Moll/Muser team. The Great-billed Parrots were fed corn-on-the-cob, carrots (at least one or two per day per pair), green beans, Chinese peas in the pod and Brussels breed sprouts. Their fruit included apples and pomegranate



Great-billed parrot chicks *Tanygnathus megalorhynchos* photo Dale R. Thompson

(some pairs even ate the skins of this fruit). The seed mixture was fed in a cornbread form.

The Muller's Parrots were supplied a 20-30 % diet of whole seeds (sunflower, parakeet and canary seeds, buckwheat and safflower), peanuts peppers, oats, hemp, hard corn and squash seeds. The diet also included chopped whole wheat bread, carrots, apples, chicory, whole kernel corn and a variety of other seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Each of the above diets is high in fibrous plant material. If the gut and bowel systems of the parrots do require a specialized diet rich in fibrous food, these breeders certainly supplied it. Whether this aided in their reproductive success is unknown but it is important to note that these two first breeding successes did include a high fibrous diet for the birds.

#### AVICULTURE

Most pairs of the *Tanygnathus* parrots now set up in breeding situations are housed in suspended cages measuring from 3 to 4 feet in width by 3 to 4 feet in height and 4 to 6 feet in length. Suspended cages are recommended as the food and water can be placed in the cages through small doors, thus allowing more privacy for the birds.

These parrots, however, can be reproduced in 8 to 10 foot flights, but entering flights can be extremely disturbing to these birds. I say this with some trepidation as at the present time I am documenting two baby Great-billed Parrots being parent reared in a long, narrow flight or aviary that reaches the floor.

Nest boxes usually are the standard grandfather-type, being vertical in shape. Measurements range from 12 in.



X 12 in. X 24 in. to nest boxes that are deeper in depth. The most successful breeder of Great-billed Parrots (Barry Sky) in the U.S. and probably in the world uses vertical wooden nest boxes that have a smaller width at the top than they do at the bottom, similar in shape (not size) of an outside bricked chimney. I have observed cockatiel-sized nest boxes hung on the cages of Tanygnathus parrots, but these appear to be too shallow. Shallow nest boxes may be one of the reasons that so many eggs disappear or are buried or broken under these parrots. These parrots are very shy by nature, especially the wild-caught ones, and secluded nest boxes should always be supplied to them. Nest boxes do not seem to be the key to reproducing these parrots. Diet, compatibility and seclusion, however, do appear to be very significant.

#### **FUTURE OF THE TANYGNATHUS PARROTS**

Although there is a slow breakthrough in the reproduction of the Tanygnathus parrots, it would be very unwise to place any of the offspring in the pet market. This is especially true regarding the males. Every adult male that is a pet or a single bird should be placed in a breeding situation and all male offspring should be held back for breeding in one's own aviary or supplied to other dedicated breeders of Tanygnathus parrots.

Although a goodly number, presently and in the future, will end up as pets, American aviculture is still a long ways from establishing these beautiful parrots. There is so much more to learn about their unusual behavior. We do not know for sure if the domestic birds will act like their wild-caught counterparts under breeding conditions. Early reports show they are very different.

Communication and the sharing of information will be extremely important. Aviculturists must be ready to give their long-time commitment to these parrot species for they must be considered one of the more difficult psittacine groups to establish in captivity. These parrots will certainly be challenging to maintain, let alone reproduce in captivity. All of these parrot groups are good candidates for dedicated and well run consortiums.

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## Aviculture *Thirty Years to Self-Consumption*

Howard Voren

The following lecture was presented at:

The American Federation of Aviculture 30th Anniversary Convention

August 2004 - San Francisco, CA

It was given with no slides or pictures, and was presented as an Evangelistic sermon with appropriate gestures and inflections. When you read it, try to imagine it in that way.

Howard Voren  
Aviculture – Thirty Years to Self-Consumption

I've come here today to talk about a lot of things, but in reality,  
I'm gonna talk---- about LOVE  
I'm gonna talk about CARING  
I'm gonna talk about DEVOTION  
I'm gonna talk about TRUST  
I'm gonna talk about FULFILLMENT  
of NEEDS and FULFILMENT of DESIRES

Every person in this room--- is here because they love & care about their birds.

Every person in this room is here because they are devoted to their birds.

Every person in this room is here because they want to trust those that are knowledgeable about birds.

AND Every person in this room is here because they want to fulfill their needs and desires and do the best for them.

---BUT--- every person in this room is in danger of loosing their right to keep their birds.

AND it is a condition that you, in most cases, have unknowingly supported.

You are the spokes of the wheels that roll us to the precipice of the cliff AND as the spokes of a wheel, if you eliminate your support, the rolling will stop.

ALWAYS REMEMBER ---- If the Pied Pipers Tune was not Sweet, the Children would have never followed!!

We've spent 30 years. 30 years traveling over a long hard road.

We traveled 30 years to get to where we are today. A lot can happen in 30 years. In 30 years we saw the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall. In 30 years we saw a simple computer go from the size of 10 refrigerators to something that will fit in the palm of your hand. Just think of all that can happen in 30 years.

In 30 years a newborn human infant becomes a full adult and those

that choose are already involved in raising the next generation.

30 years.

Now in order for anyone to really appreciate where we are today, we have to take a look at where we came from.

30 years ago when a bird got sick-- the vet would scratch their head, shrug their shoulders and you'd take it home and tearfully watch it pass away.

30 years ago it was generally understood that most parrots would not breed in captivity. 30 years ago there was no scientific method to accurately determine whether a parrot was a male or female.

Now of course, everyone knew that macaws bred at Parrot Jungle in Miami but that just proved the theory of those that claimed "macaws need to soar through the air" in order to breed because they can only copulate in mid-flight.

30 years ago---

Looking back it almost seems like the dark ages.

But you don't have to go back 30 years, to get a good picture of where we came from.

Just 20 years ago no one heard of breeding Parrots as a full time profession.

20 years ago when someone asked you what you did for a living and you said you raised birds! They came back at you with ---"I didn't asked what you did for hobby I asked what you did for a living"

20 years ago when I went for my first car loan at a used-car dealership in Florida, the salesman, a very proper Southern gentleman, asked me what I did so he could fill out the credit request.

I turned and smiled and with pride said "I breed parrots" The gentleman turned red, winced, looked around--- and whispered "Son, I don't think we wanna put anything down here about your sex life,"

20 years ago imported birds were coming in, by the droves. --- A never-ending supply.

But all of us that loved birds and cared for them knew something. --- We all knew that one day it would end.

We all knew that something had to be done in order to guarantee that those who wished to do so would always be able to share their lives with something as wonderful as a parrot.

Because like every living thing on this planet ---- birds die.

Who would supply the coming generations with our beloved feathered friends when importation ended?

Who would supply you with the birds that you all know and love and share your lives with at this very moment?

Who would devote the Blood, the Sweat, the Tears, the Time, the Energy, the Intelligence and the Resources to do what had never been done!!

The call went out. It went out with urgency.

There must be aviculturists that will rise to the occasion.

There must be aviculturists that will put in the time and energy to turn what had previously been considered luck into an art and into a science.

Now the last time I stood on an AFA stage, was 20 years ago. And what you! --- You! --- The parrot loving public wanted and demanded and expected, was that there to be a concerted effort for us to have the ability to produce enough baby parrots, so you and no one in the future would ever be denied.

Not one of YOU in the future would ever be denied the opportunity to share their life with a parrot.

There was also a very vocal group--made up of some scientists, zoologists and Animal Rights Activists. They all sang a similar song!!

This is nothing but a consumptive industry!! They cried out... These birds are not going to ever be

breed in captivity in the quantity necessary to supply the pet trade!! These birds are just being consumed and will continue to be consumed until we close importation or there are none left in the wilds.

The breeders are worse than the public because they are consuming birds by the hundreds with the foolish assumption that they'll be able to set up captive breeding populations.

It has been shown that this can not be done.

And in trying to do so they are just consuming thousands of birds that should never have been imported and will only die before they ever produce!!

So now! Let's take stock at where we were at that moment in History. You, The Bird Loving Public demanded that we put time and energy ---heart, body and soul into perfecting methods that would supply the pet trade with domestically bred parrots so when importation was shut down your children and your grandchildren and your great grandchildren would never be denied.

You wanted the art of Parrot Production perfected to the point that your fine feathered friends could and would be produced in commercial quantities so this demand could be met.

You realized the fact that if a species was to survive in captivity, it must be domesticated. And production

breeding is a necessary step toward domestication.

You demanded and WE listened to your demands.

And we did so because we shared an equal concern --- And an equal understanding of what the future would bring if this was not done.

"Hey", you would say "Do you breed maroon bellied conures?"

"Nope" We would answer

"Oh come on why don't you breed maroon bellied conures,?"

"Oh come on yourself, how can you expect me to breed maroon bellied Conures when you can buy all you want in Miami for \$25 apiece."

"Oh no, you've got to breed maroon bellied conures!! Don't you realize that some day they're not going to have any more imports. And then there won't be any maroon bellied conures. And the reason there won't be any maroon bellied conures is because you didn't want to breed maroon bellied conures because maroon bellied conures were here by the thousands.

"Okay OK I'll breed maroon bellied conures!!"

There was also the mishmash of Animal Rights, scientific and zoological people that warned that we were trying to do the impossible, These birds would never be productive and in creating a breeder market for the imports we were doing nothing but horribly expanding the consumption. And so it was.

But we rose up to the occasion.

Literally with blood, sweat, and tears we chartered new territories. We did what had never been done before Never mind that it took a commitment of 7 days a week for 365 days a year in order to make this happen.

And --- when we did take a few days off --- we came to conventions like this one and taught those that wished to learn from our hard won successes. We published articles and we wrote books. Many of us loved it enough and were good enough at it to devote our lives to it.

Some of us were actually able to lift ourselves above the poverty level in doing it and get to the point where we could actually support our families and make a good living, --- doing what we loved and what you had asked us to do.

So now for the very first time in the history of the world you have a Professional Parrot Breeder, not just an aviculturist but a Psittaculturist. Psittaculturists were now productive members of our American Economy & Society.

We pride ourselves in the production ethic. We are proud of the fact that we produce what our society wants, holds dear and places value upon. We are proud that we have the privilege to work toward the domestication of an order of birds, that by their GOD given attributes, have taken their rightful place with mankind.

We are proud that through the Production Ethic we have eliminated any reason to continue to take birds out of the wilds for the purpose of companionship.

Now don't think for one minute that back in the old days at conventions like this, we didn't sit around and talk about bettering our profession. Don't think for one minute that we never considered the BAD BREEDER. But, if there was one thing that we all could agree on it was that the bad breeders would disappear on their own---when importation stopped. We all knew that if you didn't care, house and feed your birds in the very best way possible, at the best, production would be extremely limited and at the worst they would die.

The bird mill could not exist and all those that tried had failed. We knew that once imports stopped and domestic production was the only supply, we would never need to worry about humankind's beastly greed.

The sheer nature of parrots and what was required to keep them healthy and prolific would in and of itself prohibit the Beast from ever existing.

There are no bird mills, not because humankind is so moral!  
Not because there are not those that wouldn't do it if they could!  
There are no bird mills because the nature of Psittaculture does not allow them to exist.

Parrots that are kept in "Bird Mill

Conditions" produce very little or nothing and die young. Anyone that speaks differently is purposely lying or has been lied to by those with other motives.

So we turned our backs to such worries because our understanding of how important Psittacine husbandry is, proved that this could never be a problem.

We turned our backs and devoted the 16 hour days, 7 days a week that it took to be successful. We also talked about another problem.

Where would WE the caring breeders get our Future breeding stock? Yes, importation would end and with its end, there would be an eventual end to all the bad breeders that had large quantities of birds.

But it would also be the end of our ability to acquire more adult breeding stock when we wanted to expand or when what we had became old and less productive. 20 years ago I sat at this convention with the late great aviculturist and president of the AFA Tom Ireland and several other breeders, and we discussed this very issue.

Now we all knew that we would be holding back future breeding stock from our yearly production but we also knew that there were two things to be concerned about.

The first was that it would not represent new bloodlines to our flock

The second was the lengthy time that it took for parrots, especially the larger ones, to achieve the physical and mental maturity that was required for them to become regularly productive.

However it was realized by all of us that we could count on the parrot and the thousands of parrot owners to solve this problem for the benefit of both the parrot and the breeder. Because no matter how well you raised them and how well you socialized them, they were intelligent thinking creatures.

Like all intelligent thinking creatures, there would always be those that wore out their welcome. Some would be too noisy, some would grow up to be nasty and some would be cast out when their owners grew tired of them or went through a life change.

It was from this pool of mature birds that we would get our future breeding stock.

IMPORTATION STOPPED and for years we took in the birds where either they matured or their human families matured in a direction that caused the relationship to be an uncomfortable fit.

We found them mates that they fell in love with and turned them loose in a flight to set up their own household.

The birds were happy --- Their previous owners were happy --- And we were happy

IMPORTS STOPPED and we were proud to be able to supply your needs.

Imports Stopped and the BAD Breeders that existed began to disappear.

They could no longer pick up the phone and order more adult wild caught cheap imports and the baby birds we were producing were too costly and took too long to mature. They could no longer fill the empty cages of those that had died from improper care.

At that point our work didn't get any easier. The 16 hour days, 7 days a week didn't end.

But somehow—somehow-- we should have made more time because the literal EXPLOSION in Parrot Popularity was far from over. As each year brought tens of thousands of new parrot owners to the fold, there were hundreds that wanted answers to the questions---

Why does my parrot scream when I leave the room?

Why does my parrot bite me when I take it out of the cage? Why does my parrot hate my husband?

Over worked, over stressed and in most cases underpaid we didn't find time to return the phone calls, letters or emails and most of us went further into seclusion because being inaccessible was much less rude than not returning phone calls or answering letters.

But ALAS help was on the way!!  
There were those that did not have every waking hour consumed with avicultural chores.

There were those that were caring and sensitive to the behavior patterns of parrots.

Never mind that they only owned a bird or two.

Or happened to notice that they seemed to have no trouble with a "problem" bird at the local pet shop. Through sensitivity and caring they discovered that they had a talent for correcting many bad behavior patterns in parrots.

They would fill the gap that the breeders and pet shops left open. They would use their talents to fill the void!!!

In fact this was actually a natural occurrence.

There are breeders of dogs and sellers of dogs but there are also dog trainers, all of which work with behavior modification or correction. There are breeders of horses and sellers of horses but there are also horse trainers, many of which work with behavior modification or correction.

So it was normal within our society for the bird trainer to emerge to fill the gap.

BUT here is where the first tell tale sign of a possible problem emerges.

Here is where we allowed a seemingly harmless decision to set us up for future abuse.

They were not going to allow themselves to be called bird trainers!!

Because they not only understood something about the bird psyche but something about the human psyche as well.

It was so much more clever to present oneself as a bird behaviorist!!

Never mind that animal behavior was and still is a legitimate university course of study. Just think of the how much more respectable Bird Behaviorist sounds compared to BIRD TRAINER!! It immediately pretends to have an educated expertise. Well, that's OK as long as it's not misused.

An egoistic claim that would leave the average person with the idea that there was some formality behind acquiring such a title. Instant respectability!!

And it's still OK as long as it's not abused.

How noble the title behaviorist sounds compared to trainer. When the average person hears that someone is a behaviorist they imagine something like Sociologist or Psychologist! What a wonderful title!!



Now of course these bird trainers that decided to call themselves behaviorists will be the first to complain that they are doing nothing different than what we are doing when we call ourselves aviculturists.

Well that is not true.

Because there is no formal university study of aviculture. The title Aviculturist does not pretend to have years of university study or a scientific basis like behaviorist does.

Now before anyone takes offense!! --- I'm certainly not talking about the particular behaviorist that you hold dear!!

I'm sure that they came along after the name had been coined by those that wished to enhance their credibility.

AND After all, --- I don't think that there is one garbage man in the entire USA that resents being called a Waste Disposal Engineer!!

I will say that in reality, I as well as professional aviculture as a whole, have no problem with what they choose to call themselves. Regardless as to whether or not it creates an illusion

But I do want you to know that we do have a major problem when the illusion of authority is used to convince the public into believing falsehoods for a personal agenda

Now I also want you to know that I have read and looked at much of their work and I'm going to tell you that quite a bit of it is brilliant. I'm also gonna tell you that many have done a marvelous job. I'm also gonna tell you that they filled a very necessary void. I'm also gonna tell you that most are extremely intelligent people.

EXTREMELY intelligent.

Now there's one major drawback to being extremely intelligent. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS??? You ARE and should be held accountable for the decisions that you make and the things that you do. Well as good as these behaviorists might be they had a problem.

They knew what they wanted. --- They wanted much the same things that everyone wants. They wanted to be successful. Now we all know that WE, as a society, frown on those that would needlessly step on others to become successful. But that didn't stand in the way of the behavior of some of these behaviorists!

Their problem was they found they could not resist an overwhelming urge. They found they could not resist temptation.

They crossed the line from honesty and sincerity to deceit and manipulation. They could not resist the egotistical base desire to point the finger and LAY BLAME!!

While basking in the sunlight of their new found profession, many could not resist wallowing in the self-righteous glee of being Judge, Jury, and Executioner.

The one thing that most all concerned caretakers have in common when things go poorly with their wards, is to ask the same question that has been asked of GOD or highly respected humans since we had sufficient language to communicate.

That question is "My GOD, Where have I gone wrong?"

Now when some behaviorists heard this age old question, they had a big problem. The problem was the temptation I just spoke about.

The dilemma was to remain true to their noble and truthful mission or to place a higher priority on inflating their dubious credibility and to cement the loyalty of their following.

With this temptation in mind how would they answer the question from the concerned parrot owner as to "where they went wrong?" Every one of them realized the problem in telling their new found client that their bird was a behavioral wreck because they were horrible insensitive people that never stopped to think that a bird is not a dog or a cat!! That would certainly chase them away and eliminate any possibility of referrals.

Unfortunately almost none of them did the honorable thing. Almost none of them made the simple statement----- "Pointing fingers and laying blame is not important. Let's identify the problems and work on ways to fix them." What many that pioneered the field did-- was succumb to the temptation to lay blame.

After all, it wasn't important that they didn't have the expertise to lay blame. It wasn't important that they knew little or nothing about the developmental stages of a parrot for the first 6 months of life. What they did know was that their clients had a natural desire to blame someone or something other than themselves.

What they did know was that if they offered up someone or something to rid them of their guilt, they would have cemented their loyalty. What mattered was that they wanted to appear all knowing and to do so required that they lay blame.

The PET SHOPS DID IT!!! Was their first proclamation. Can't you imagine how horrible it must be for a small little child to be torn away from its loved ones and put in a Pet Shop. The Pet Shops are responsible for your birds problems not you!!

Well, that turned out to be a big mistake and created big problems. You see the pet shop owners were accessible to these newly enraged parrot parents. And when

they went back to the shop for a confrontation, the owner explained just how inexperienced and unknowledgeable that particular behaviorist was.

Well that certainly didn't assure the behaviorist of the cult following that some of them wanted so they looked for a better place to lay blame.

THE BREEDER!!! THE BREEDER DID IT!!! Was their new proclamation!! What a brainstorm!! What a great idea!!! Why didn't they think of that to begin with???

The breeders were almost always inaccessible. In fact their inaccessibility was one of the reasons for the behaviorists existence in the first place.

Never mind that these BLAMERS had either never raised or only hand raised a couple of birds in their life. That would never be questioned!! Now you might ask yourself, why was this so important to them? Why did this laying of blame become such an important part of their presentation?

The reason it's important is the psychology behind it. Not parrot psychology but human psychology. Remember that they are not selling a product that rises or falls on its quality like we breeders do with our baby parrots.

They are selling a service. Politicians sell a service and many of these parrot trainers are fantastic

politicians. Fantastic politicians can inspire a fanatical following The method that is used and has been used for centuries---- is to place blame.

And with that you effectively alleviate guilt and give your followers a scapegoat. A scapegoat they can hate. A scapegoat they can blame for all their problems.

History has shown that this not only polarizes a movement against the race, religion or profession that is used as the scapegoat--- it also magnifies the importance and stature of the One that showed them the way.

Showed them the path that would alleviate their guilt. And what better scapegoat is there, than those that have committed the horrible sin of being the most successful in the art of Psittaculture!!

What better scapegoat is there, than those that have committed the horrible sin of making money!! If you can make just enough money to feed your birds you're okay. But if you make enough money to also feed your family you're an evil sinner!!

Not only that, but later there was another exciting development in Parrot Land!! The emergence of the national pet chain store. There was now PetCo and PetsMart. What a wonderful thing!!!

They could now go back to include their original idea of laying blame

on the pets shops. But now it would be the BIG BIG Chain pet shops!

There was no owner that could be confronted by just walking into the store. How perfect! PetsMart is bad! Petco is bad! They have big breeders with big birdie mills---was and still is the cry!!

**BIG BREEDERS ARE BAD!!!!  
THE POULTRIFICATION OF  
PARROTS!!!**

**THOSE THAT WOULD MAKE MONEY OFF  
THE BACKS OF THEIR BIRDS!!!**

These have become the often heard cries of the parrot trainer's followers. They now have someone to hate --- There are always plenty of people that just love to hate the BIG GUYS --- And the Cult Chants begin --- PETNO PETNO PETNO PETNO PETNO

Hundreds of people that have absolutely no idea why or what the big breeders do in raising birds and not the slightest conception as to how the big chains acquire their birds.

I've been selling birds to pet shops for thirty years. When a local ma and pa pet shop wants birds that they can't buy locally they call up a breeder that they heard sells good birds and all they want to know is how much they are and when can you ship.

When Petco wants your birds, you first need to convince them that you're completely competent in all aspects of Psittaculture. They then fly to your aviaries and do a personal onsite complete inspection to determine if you meet up to their rigorous Standards of Excellence that make the MAP Program look like a walk in the park. You then need to promise never to ship a bird that is not in full feather and

perform multiple health tests at your expense on each and every bird that you will ship.

After that, they may call you back in a month or so if they have decided that you can live up to their standards.\

If PETSMAST wants your birds they send their personal representative to inspect your aviaries and if you're acceptable they buy them young and personally drive them to their facility where they raise them themselves.

But forget all that, none of that's important!! --- BIG is Bad-- PetCo and PetsMart are Bad --- BIG Breeders are Bad!!

Everybody knows that the big guy is always the Bad Guy and deserves whatever punishment comes their way. You All Know that don't you?

Just ask all those wonderful little countries that we financed for years that applauded with JOY over the HORRORS of 9/11. You are allowing the creation of a Taliban mentality!!

You therefore MUST be willing to accept whatever comes of it. -----  
Now with all of this you can certainly forget about the hundreds of unwanted parrots ever being offered to breeding farms.

After all-- those of us who devoted our lives to your bidding, to make sure that no one was ever denied----were now --THE Enemy.

So now where will all these parrots go? Who will take them in? Enter stage left!! The new phenomenon of the Parrot Industry - The Parrot Rescue!!

PARROTS FOR FREE.com  
Just send \$29.95 and we'll show you how to get all the parrots that you want for free, pay off your mortgage and

send your kids to college TAX FREE!! For this minimal investment plus the cost of two dozen rusty parrot cages that can be purchased at your local garage sales and the 501c3 corporate filling fees; You can be your very own boss and open a "SAVE THE PARROT" STP RESCUE CENTER location of your very own. Donations will come pouring in just like they do to all STP Rescue Centers as long as you remember to follow instructions and tell everyone that you will never allow the birds donated to go into a breeding situation and keep on chanting PetNO Big Breeders are BAD, PetNO Big Breeders are BAD, PetNO Big Breeders are BAD...

To be perfectly honest there are many reputable sanctuaries. Parrots are intelligent creatures and with intelligence comes certain baggage. There will always be those birds that are major mental screw-ups or birds that become handicapped. For those birds, a sanctuary existence is necessary. I as well as all professional breeders applaud the unselfish efforts of such facilities. But the moment you see the claim that they do not allow birds to go into a breeding situation you know that they have a twisted political agenda.

A twisted Taliban type mentality... The type of Taliban mentality that creates the biggest lies of all:

There are thousands if not millions of unwanted birds!! We must do everything we can to prohibit breeding!!

In fact since we are in California why don't we make it illegal for a bird to be un-weaned!!! In that way we can put all the breeding pairs of birds in prison for daring to have an un-weaned baby in the nest!!!!

Can you believe that such a law was actually proposed and seriously

accepted by politicians and would have passed if it were not for the efforts of an avicultural counter movement. So now we have all these birds going into so called rescues. Why? Because it sounds good. It fits the overall lie created by those that called themselves behaviorists and the anti-breeding rescues that followed.

Why would anyone allow their bird to go to a breeding farm!! Haven't they had a hard enough life as it is!!

Don't allow your bird to go into a birdie mill where it will be forced to produce until it drops in order to supply those evil chain stores. Bring your bird here to the STP Rescue Center where it can live its life with dignity while we search for an adoptive family that meets our rigid qualifications which include four surprise 3am inspections a year for as long as they own the bird.

Unwanted birds?

Are there really unwanted birds?

Of course!! There are unwanted human children, why wouldn't there be unwanted birds?

Do they exist in vast numbers? NO!! ARE there birds for which there is no home? NO—That is nothing but a fantastic and outrageous LIE!!

Those facilities that boast hundreds of birds that they cannot place have acquired them because they have presented a scenario to the parrot loving public that causes them guilt and hence the desire to make sure that their bird goes anywhere but a breeding farm.

At the same time their adoption requirements are so rigid that most prospective owners do not qualify. This allows their holdings to go up and the tax-free donations to keep pouring in. Are there birds that need to be euthanized because they're homeless and no one will

take them in? Absolutely not—Only the ARF Rescue facilities would publicize such outright lies. Their goal is to convince legislators that we have the same problem as exists with unwanted Dogs and Cats.

The only ones that cannot seem to find homes for unwanted birds are the ARF rescues, and that's because they don't wish to.

Every unwanted bird that has ever been presented to a pet shop or a breeder has been found a good home AND there are thousands of willing people that will take them in.

Years ago I went to an auction where the owners of a breeding farm had been killed and the County was auctioning off the birds. I had known these people and they had an aged Hahn's macaw that they pampered like a baby. They felt sorry for the bird because it had a cataract in one eye, a broken wing that had not healed correctly and it limped when it walked.

Up came this little macaw on the auction block and I thought about buying it to make sure it lived out its years in a nice way. My budget was limited but I was sure it would sell for a minimal price. Gimme \$100 --- I have \$100 Gimme \$150 --- Gimme 2 --- Gimme 3

Three different people were fighting to buy this bird. When the dust of the competition settled this little half blind, half crippled bird with a crooked wing went for \$900.

As it turned out I saw an acquaintance of mine talking to two of the bidders so I went to her later to ask why in the world they would fight so voraciously over such a bird. Her explanation showed me a deceitful world that at that time I had no idea existed.

"Oh that bird," she said, "It was very important to them all. They all represented different rescue organizations and they all wanted

that bird as a poster child for their fundraising. Since it came from a breeding farm they can actually say that this is a real example of what happens to birds on a breeding farm."

So now we have many Rescues making up lies for their own fundraising benefit. Talking about thousands upon thousands of homeless birds.

Birds that by majority were obtained by embarrassing owners into giving them up, or making the public feel that it's a horrible sin to send a bird to a breeder. The perfect stage for the Animal Rights Fanatics to jump on.

Animal Rights Fanatics ARF's Several of these ARF groups have already made the US Government list of TERRORIST organizations right along with Al Qaeda. Groups that will do anything to achieve their goals of taking your rights away because they devoutly feel that your rights are wrongs.

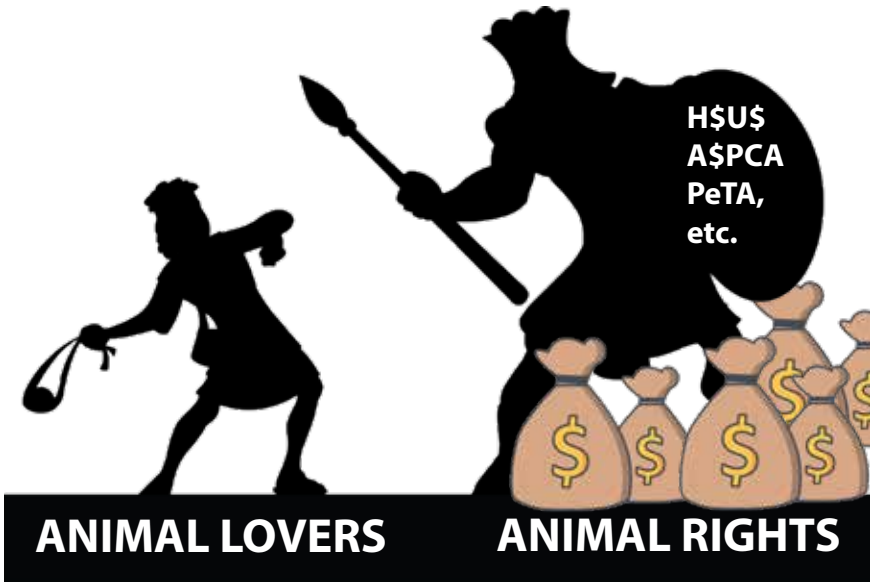
There is hardly a month that passes by without these groups, along with the support of many rescues, proposing new restrictive laws against you. My colleague Laurella Desborough will speak after me and give you the sad statistics concerning the ASSAULT on AVICULTURE

Now the stage is set.

The Behaviorists built the foundation The Rescues put up the walls and roof And each and every one of you or anyone else that has supported these types of behaviorists and rescues, have opened the door that allowed the ARF's to walk in.

So now that you have allowed these people to stab professional breeders in the back and you have opened the doors of this house to the DEVIL. What will you do??

Because MARK my WORDS! The NEXT one they are Coming for is YOU!



- Animal loving public generally unaware of activities to end their having pets, eating meat, medical research, entertainment, education, etc.
- YOU can help: Take ACTION when asked. Watch for proposed BAD laws.
- Call your senator or representative when asked - always be respectful & polite
- Respond only with truth
- Join National bird organizations: AFA, ASA, OPA, SPBE and DONATE to legislative causes when asked
- INFORM OTHER BIRD AND ANIMAL LOVERS about this

- Continuously lobbying the end of all animal use: Food, entertainment, pets, conservation, medical research
- Have warchests of money collected based on lies from unsuspecting animal lovers
- Target retirement savings of unsuspecting seniors
- Most income goes to marketing and legal fees
- Use misleading marketing practices to steal dollars from unsuspecting pet lovers
- Hypocrites: Personally use medical advancements developed through research
- Make used car salespeople look like saints

# Legend of The Christmas Parrots

Artwork and story by Susie Christian

Once upon a time on a cold cold night in the middle of winter, in a country far far away, there sat a pair of very nondescript, average brown birds. They were commonly known as "Sand Drabs," inhabitants of the Sinai Desert. These birds were the lowest of the low, having no permanent home, they were the nomads of the desert, and shifted from dune to dune in rhythm with the wind and sand.

On this particular night Holly and Berry sat shivering close together behind a sand dune, with only the memory of the last summer's vitalizing sun to sustain them through the bitter cold of the night. Berry slowly half opened one sleepy eye, and couldn't believe what he saw. Far off in the distance was a faint light coming through the otherwise inky depths of the cruel night sky. He thought that this was perhaps just a dream of a dazzling sun-lit day. However he did open his eyes fully, and perceived the glow wasn't a dream after all.

Berry nudged Holly awake with his beak to make sure he wasn't seeing things. Holly saw it too. Uncertain if it was a far off sun, or what it was, they agreed they should investigate it's source. Sand drabs are natural sun worshipers. The anticipation that it would be warm and light

made them move from their night's sleeping burrow, toward the direction of the glow.

It was a hard trip they made that freezing night. They first flew for miles, then they would rest a bit and walk part way. With every passing mile the light became brighter and more beautiful. They knew they had to reach it no matter what it took.

Panting and limping they finally made it, feathers frozen together, weighted with ice crystals and toes completely frostbitten. The great light in the sky appeared to be a very bright star, and as they got nearer, it seemed to be hovering over a dilapidated stable. Holly looked at Berry with dismay. "We came all this distance chasing the light of a star!," Holly exclaimed. Berry tried to console her for their apparent bad judgment, and suggested they roost on top of the stable roof for the rest of the night. With one last burst of energy, they flew to the roof, and couldn't believe their tired sand filled eyes.

A most wondrous glow came from within the weathered rude wooden lean-to of a building. There was a warmth coming from the area, just as if the sun was shining brightly. As Holly and Berry looked down, they



saw the most beautiful newborn baby lying in a manger on a bed of straw. They turned to look at one another with a puzzled gaze. What was the meaning of this, they inquired of each other.

Their questions were soon to be answered, as they felt the gentle whirl of a pair of glorious huge white wings over their heads. A beautiful Angel of the Lord emerged from out of the velvety blue depths of the night sky, and took her place beside the pair of Sand Drabs. She explained to them that this was the most special night of all nights, it was the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. The star they followed to get to Bethlehem guided them as well as others to the holy event.

Many animals had arrived, as well as shepherds, and off in the distance they could see three kings approaching, decked out in the finest garments, bearing wondrous gifts. Wise men were kneeling down in adoration of the Blessed Baby. A small drummer boy stood at the side, shyly holding his humble gift of a bunch of fragrant Desert Lillies. The two homely brown Sand Drabs began to cry. The Angel of the Lord asked them why they were so sad at such a happy event. They told her that they were embarrassed because they neither had a present to offer Baby Jesus nor were beautiful enough to present themselves to Him.

The Angel of the Lord smiled sweetly and wrapped her splendid wings around Holly and Berry

ever so gently. Don't worry she told them, as she gave them new beautiful colored feathers to wear. Holly became the most intense shade of velvety red, and Berry was turned a scintillating grass green. She designed their feather cloaks with accents of various shades of blue and yellow as well. they were astounded as they looked down and discovered all the dull brown was replaced with finely textured dazzling colored raiment.

Our two transformed friends were speechless at this point, but that was soon to change! The Angel of the Lord took their straight, heretofore speechless beaks, put a bend in them, and gave them the gift of speech. You will have the ability to speak from this day forward, my children so that you may go forward into God's wonderful world, and praise the Lord. You are to be God's chosen birds, my dear shining ones, and you will contain the spirit of all Parrots. Your name shall be called Eclectus, because your origin is composed of elements from many of the bird kingdom.

Holly and Berry suddenly realized they were the most elegantly attired creatures there, and immediately used their incredible gift of speech to sing praises to the precious Baby Jesus. Preferring to remain on the roof and vocalize from an unseen perch that first night, Eclectus still carry that same trait to this day.



As a rosy dawn broke over Bethlehem, The Angel of the Lord detected faint shivers from our newly garbed pair. She inquired about this, and Holly and Berry told her that they felt so privileged to be present and be a part of such a wondrous event. They didn't want to seem ungrateful, but they really would prefer to live in a climate that didn't chill them to the core of their delicate bird bones. Once again the Angel of the Lord embraced them lovingly in her powerful wings, and poof! ...they were half way across the world, and found themselves gently placed high atop a tree in the middle of a lush emerald green tropical forest. Sunlight streamed through the leaves, and the Red and Green ones smiled that little Mona Lisa grin that they still do today when partaking of Pomegranate.

Berry looked at Holly and said, "We must be very, very special birds to be guided to Bethlehem

for the blessed event of Jesus' birth, and transformed in so many wonderful ways from our original state of being." It is an honor that Eclectus parrots bear to this day, the privilege of being red and green in honor of Christ's birth, Christmas. This is the true story of how Eclectus parrots came to be God's own chosen red and green "Christmas Birds."

Editor's note: Susie Christian, affectionately known to all involved with editing the ASA e-Bulletin is creative and giving beyond measure. Always will to help, iSue has been a staunch ASA supporter for many years. Thank your for this and for all your help with the ASA e-Bulletin team!



# THE GRANDEST LORY OF THEM ALL THE ECLECTUS PARROT LORUS RORATUS

Dale R. Thompson

Published in Watchbird Magazine  
September/October 1995

Having reproduced the eclectic parrot for over 20 years with a count numbering in the hundreds, I have often wondered if this bird was not just one big lory. Now having the lory as a pet and observing many lorries in the collections of successful breeders, I am even more convinced there is a correlation between these two bird groups.

## Behavior and Breeding

When observing the Lorius group of lorries, the similar traits become even more clear. Most of us relate lory behavior to the Trichoglossus group of lorries. These are the "rainbow" lorries which have a great variety of rainbow colors, energetic behaviors and are overall wonderful pets when handfed. The Lorius groups of lorries, however, are much larger in size and have a much more sedentary behavior than the jerky movements of the rainbow lorries. The common lorries belonging to the genus Lorius are the Chattering and Black-capped Lorries; the uncommon lorries in this group (of which several are found in captivity) are the Purple-bellied, Purple-naped (Purple-capped), Yellow-bibbed and the White-naped Lorries.

My theory is that the eclectic parrot belongs to the Lorius group of lorries or at least is closely related. The large lorries, as the Black-capped Lory, are still much more active than an eclectic parrot. This would be the opinion of almost anyone knowing both of these groups of parrots. However, I would like to dispel this observation. Even though most breeders feel the eclectic parrot is extremely sedentary, this is because their eclectic are almost always kept as pairs or singles in one cage or flight. Of those eclectic kept as pairs, the female is often spending extended periods of time within the nest box.

Most breeders have not had the privilege of observing their eclectic in group situations or they would see a very different behavior. The statements that eclectic parrots are dull birds would change immediately. They certainly do not have dull personalities. The energetic personality of an eclectic can also be seen in the young, handfed pet bird.

In the wild, eclectic parrots are most often seen in pairs or small groups. Sometimes they can be seen in very large groups within a fruiting tree. Eclectic are quite noisy and conspicuous with their loud, raucous vocalizations.

Their flight is somewhat slow with full deliberate wing beats having brief periods of gliding. Joseph Forshaw in *Parrots of the World* relates that eclectus do not raise their wings above body level during their flights.

With the possibility of being somewhat slow in flight, the above description could be said of a lory. And a large lory would obviously be slower with its large body mass than a small lory or any of the lorikeets which are certainly fast on the wing.

In captivity, eclectus parrots are usually purchased as singles or pairs and pair bonding behavior is seldom observed. George Smith relates in his book, *Lovebirds and Related Parrots*, "The courtship has not been described save that males make a seriously hollow-sounding chee-ong chee-ong or bonging. They make this sound year-round; but the intensity increases with courtship. Sometimes he may bong almost in the ear of his wife as he pursues his hen; and most particularly after she has entered the nest cavity. I have been told that males "flash" their red sides by suddenly lifting the wings or by taking short flights in the vicinity of the hens. When pairing, as with the hanging parrots and lovebirds, they frequently change sides."

Lories also show the same behavior in courtship except that it is done with greater intensity. But how many eclectus breeders observe their males getting excited as George Smith describes?

I have been only one of a very few eclectus breeders to have bred this species in a colony situation. After several years of infertility, I placed four pairs of eclectus parrots together within a 12 ft. flight that had four partitioned areas within that the birds could utilize as nesting booths. Each of these areas contained one nest box. To aid the stimulation of the males, I added an extra mature male. This made a total of five males and four females.

The behavior of the males within this colony situation changed dramatically. For years the males had appeared to be very lethargic as they only had a domineering mate to contend with. Now with other males in their direct vicinity, it was as if each male received a large dose of hormones as they immediately responded to the challenge of an opposing male. With a resurgence of energy they each immediately chose a mate and began to defend her from any advances by another male. Completely different personalities began to emerge. When pair bonding had occurred, a visual courtship was observed. Eye blazing, bobbing and "beaking" between the mates occurred. I actually observed a male hop over its mate on one occasion. This correlated to George Smith's description of mates frequently changing places. Only on rare occasions did I observe the wing-lifting behavior of the males and it was done as a reaction to another male instead of a courtship behavior. Now for the first time did I observe a lory behavior among the eclectus. This was the first time that I began to

firmly believe that the eclectus may be a large lory in disguise.

When discussing my theory of eclectus being lories, the topic of female dominance in eclectus is almost always brought up. First and foremost, have you ever seen a “wimpy” female lory? If there ever was a dominate parrot, this behavior belongs to the lory group of parrots, both male and female. Lorries, both as breeders and pets have very dominant personalities. They are not afraid of very many circumstances.

Taxonomists refer to the eclectus parrot as being related to the Tanygnathus parrots. In my experience the eclectus is certainly “closer” to the large lory group that it is to the Great-bills and Mueller’s parrots. Both the Great-bill and the eclectus parrots are referred to in the german texts as Edelpapagei or “noble parrots.” Certainly the Great-bill is a noble parrot but the eclectus is a noble and grandiose lory. The Tanygnathus parrots lay a three to four egg clutch while the eclectus lays a one to two egg clutch.

One of the greatest reasons for placing the eclectus parrot within the lory group is that it lays a one to two egg clutch. This is exactly the clutch size of the large lorries and is so dissimilar to the larger clutch sizes of most of the large parrots.

Unlike almost all of the large parrots such as macaws, cockatoos and the Tanygnathus parrots, the eclectus is a light to moderate chewer. They do not destroy wooden perches and

nest boxes as do other large parrots. The eclectus is very similar to the large lorries in this behavior.

## Dietary Needs

In *Parrots of the World*, Joseph Forshaw states that eclectus in the wild feed on fruits, nuts, seeds, berries, leaf buds, blossoms and nectar procured from the tree tops. Is it not surprising that this is also the diet of lorries in the wild?

Although captive eclectus need to be fed fruit, seldom is a captive eclectus given nectar as a part of its regular diet. For those eclectus breeders who supplement their diet with nectar, it is not surprising that the nectar is one of the first food items these birds go to.

Eclectus have a large “true” stomach which is very long. This is an indication that their diet must consist of items that are both bulky and fibrous. This is obtained from fleshy fruits, leaves and blossoms. This is the same as the leaf-eating monkeys (langurs) with their extended stomachs. For the eclectus parrot that this is only a slight variation of a lory’s diet which includes more pollen and nectar. The nectar is used by lorries to add subcutaneous fat which is quickly burnt off with their energetic behavior. The similarities in their dietary needs gives credence to the concept of the eclectus being a lory.

Eclectus parrots are not primarily seed-eaters and must be given green foods and fruit. In the past years, the



eclectus parrot was plagued with candidiasis produced by an infection of yeast-like molds. This was thought to be strongly linked with the lack of Vitamin A. Vitamin A is synthesized in the body from carotenes, which gives the color to plants. Seeds are generally very low in carotenes. Green foods in the form of blossoms, buds and nectar is used to fortify eclectus in the wild. In captivity, green foods including fruits and vegetables should always be given to eclectus parrots. Seeds should be fed in minimum amounts.

I personally feed eclectus parrots on a regular basis, two times a day. This is similar to their feeding habits in the wild when they have two main

feeding times (morning and dusk). Eclectus can often become very radical in their behavior when given a nutritionally deficient diet. They can show very erratic behaviors both as babies and as adults.

Giving a nutritionally balanced diet on a regular basis to eclectus is important. This is similar to lorries which absolutely must have a routine schedule in their feeding times. They must replenish their energy and nutrition both in the morning and evening and periodically throughout the day. They should not be without food and this is also important for eclectus.

Although a lory's tongue with its brush-tipped papillae is different than the eclectus' smooth tongue surface, this does not mean the eclectus parrot cannot obtain nectar from a bowl. Just provide some to the eclectus and you will soon see the nectar begin to disappear. I have observed the tongues of several young (3 to 18 months of age) eclectus and they are somewhat different in shape than those of the cockatoo, macaw, and Amazon. The tip of the eclectus tongue is thinner and flatter than those of the other parrots which have a well defined pad for holding solid food items. The eclectus' thin tongue enables it to consume the juices of fleshy fruits and nectar. If the lory tongue, which narrows towards the end, lacked its brush-like papillae, it would, in my opinion, be very similar to that of the eclectus.

Although this is my opinion, I know for sure that the eclectus parrot must be given a nutritionally sound diet that includes a variety of fruits and vegetables. Why not try one of the lory nectar foods that are commercially available? It will increase the eclectus' consumption of many of the amino proteins lacking in many parrot diets and they will certainly enjoy it.

### **Size and Color**

Joseph Forshaw gives a measurement of 31cm (12.4 in.) for the Black-capped Lory versus 35cm (14in) for the eclectus parrot. The large lorries and the eclectus are very close to being the same

size. The large lorries of the Lorius genus are much more stocky than the rainbow type of lorries and they have a squared or rounded tail. They have the same outline form of the eclectus. The dominant colors of the large lorries are red, green, and blue/purple. Guess what the main colors of the eclectus parrots are? Yes, they are red, green and blue/purple.

One big difference is that the eclectus parrot divides these dominant colors by sex; even so, both sexes have these colors somewhere on their bodies. When observing colorful birds in the wild, the colors red and green turn to black under the canopy. When the sun hits a green bird, it is reflected as the green of the forest vegetation. Seldom does the red eclectus parrot perch in the sunlight. If they do reflect the sunlight, they are generally on the move and the necessity of camouflage is not needed. While observing the female eclectus parrot in New Guinea and Australia, they were always dark and were lost in the canopy. Why should not there be a large lory that is sexually dimorphic. Being an advocate of adaptation (not evolution) I often wondered if both sexes of the eclectus could have originally been green or red. Quite surprising, while reading George Smith's book, *Lovebirds and Related Birds*, I found the following:

"Females Eclectus} are said to be less common, yet captive records show that the sexes are born in approximately equal numbers for of 73 birds, 38 were hens. We do not know the age of the wild population,



nor have we any population counts; but some explanation ought to be offered to explain this apparent (or real?) disparity in numbers between the sexes. One explanation that must immediately be scotched is that because the hens are red, and therefore more brilliantly colored (to us), they are most easily caught by predators. It is observed that a red parrot sitting just inside a canopy of leaves, in bright sunlight, is perfectly well-camouflaged; for, in the broken shadows of disrupted light coming from green leaves, red becomes a dark shadow and inconspicuous. Hen eclectuses, like red lorries, the red king-parakeets and red shining-parrots are seemingly this color because it is cryptic. For they are not red poppies in a field of growing wheat but a dark shadow in a tree full of shadows. If it happens that more hen Eclectus are killed by predators than males then the selective pressures to have cryptic plumage is higher. Therefore their redness is the consequence of a positive selection for this hue. Were they green, like the males, then even more would be killed. Perhaps they are killed inside the nesting hole. It appears that the "original" color of Eclectus is red and the selection has colored the male green."

Lastly, the beak color of the eclectus is bright orange and the black, the same as can be found in the lory group.

## **Taxonomy**

In reading many books of an older vintage, I see where taxonomists

have changed the genus name of the eclectus parrot from Lorius to Eclectus. Why did they originally give the eclectus the genus name of Lorius which should have been given to a group of lorries.

Not surprising, taxonomists did give the genus Lorius to a group of lorries sometime in the middle of the 1900s. This group of lorries including the Chattering and Black-capped Lorries and all of the large lorries I have mentioned at the beginning of this article. These large lorries originally were given the genus name of Domicellus.

In my opinion, they should have left the eclectus parrot in the genus Lorius and added the other large lorries to it. They are all similar in size and color (especially if the eclectus was "originally" red in both sexes), behavior and in their dietary needs. Would the taxonomists have called the eclectus the Red and Green Lory? Or as I often fantasize, should it have been called the Grand Lory? For it is indeed the grandest lory of them all. Why they now call it the Grand Eclectus!

Although I will probably never change anyone's thinking, I will always enjoy keeping and reproducing this Grand Lory. For when it clings to the side of its cage or stands on a perch, it will turn its head in an inquisitive manner giving me an all knowing look and I truly know it is a Lory!

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ASA Auction donation from Australian wildlife artist Rachel Lewis  
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**Simon Degenhard has arranged for the donation of these 6 approximately 7 " x 7" collection of prints.**



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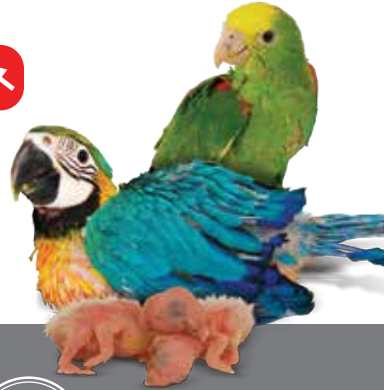
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Wednesday, Nov 2	Cocktail Hour Meet & Greet
Thursday, Nov 3	Full Day of Talks/Everything Birds Event
Friday, Nov 4	Morning Talks, Zoo Tour, BBQ Social
Saturday, Nov 5	Full Day of Talks, Auction, Banquet
Sunday, Nov 6	OPA/ASA Free Flight Demonstration



**Schedule of Events**

**Wednesday - Woodland Foyer**

- Icebreaker social
- 6pm - Last man standing

**Thursday - Banyan Room**

- Talks (9am to 5pm with 2 hour lunch)
- 6pm - 9pm - Everything Birds Cornhole Tournament and Event Showcase (offsite at Everything Birds Store) Hosted by Kirsten & Jason Cunningham



**Friday - Banyan Room**

- Morning Talks
- Tampa Zoo Tour and BBQ

**Saturday - Banyan Room**

- Talks (9am to 5pm with 2 hour lunch)
- Saturday evening - Cypress Cove**
- Cocktail reception/banquet/auction/keynote

**Sunday**

- OPA/ASA Free Flying Demonstration at Weeki Wachee State park. Individual free-flyers welcome to join in group flight with Buddy Waskey, Chris Armstrong, and more after demonstration. (Free to the public)
- OPA meeting with catered lunch onsite after demonstration (provided with donation)



EDITOR'S NOTE: Airfares are reportedly dropping just in time for fall travel. You've got to come to the 16th Annual Avicultural Society of America Educational Conference

## Birds in Shoes

Jim Sorensen

From my memories today. A Murder of Baby Crows Nesting in a Boot. In many areas, crows start nest building as snow begins to melt. When the fledglings start to leave the nest they tend to stay in trees and don't stray far at first. They make clamorous "begging" calls to their parents and older helpers. After a few weeks, the fledglings will follow their parents. A group of crows are called a murder but because they are so darn cute I'm sure the charge will be reduced to justifiable homicide.  
[www.jimsorensen.com](http://www.jimsorensen.com)



Thank you, Jim Sorensen for allowing ASA to share your beautifully creative images!



# Who's Your Daddy?

Stumped? See answer on page 50



Photo: John Messmer

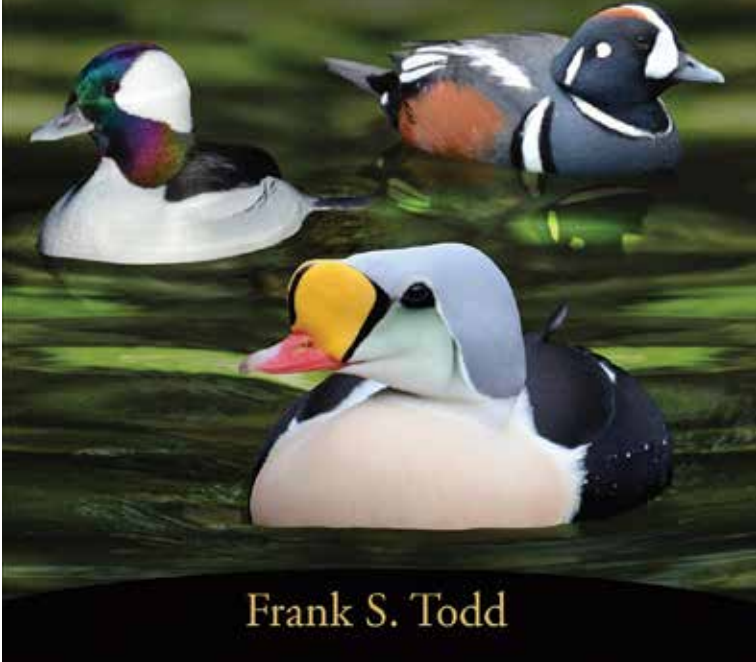


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Keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) Photo: Steve Duncan

## Who's Your Daddy?

From page 47, Answer:

Keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*)

The Keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*), is a colorful Latin American member of the toucan family. It is the national bird of Belize. The species is found in tropical jungles from southern Mexico to Colombia. It is an omnivorous forest bird that feeds on fruits, seeds, insects, invertebrates, lizards, snakes, and small birds and their eggs.

Including its bill, the keel-billed toucan ranges in length from around 42 to 55

cm (17 to 22 in). Their large and colorful bill averages around 12–15 cm (4.7–5.9 in), about one-third of its length. It typically weighs about 380–500 g (13–18 oz). While the bill seems large and cumbersome, it is in fact a spongy, hollow bone covered in keratin, a very light and hard protein.



From Wikipedia.com

# EVENTS

## 2022 EVENTS



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[SEE PAGE 39](#)



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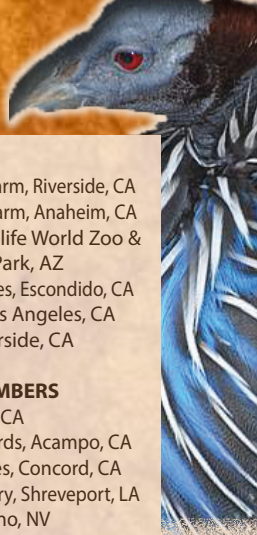
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