



The Yellow-shouldered Amazon population has increased in Venezuela, due to protection efforts.

Loro Parque Fundación and Provita Achieve a Record for the Yellow-shouldered Amazon

Dr. David Waugh
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The Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*) is the most endangered parrot species in Venezuela, the only species of its genus adapted to live in arid regions. It is found only in four small localities on the Venezuelan coast and on the islands of Margarita, La Blanquilla and Bonaire. The only population under protection is that of the Macanao Peninsula in the island of Margarita, where in 1989 some 650 parrots were surviving. During the most recent ten

years, the Loro Parque Fundación has collaborated with Provita of Venezuela in various activities to protect the Yellow-shouldered Amazon. Thanks to these inter-institutional actions and the support of the local communities, the wild population of the Amazons has increased to more than 1,600 today.

Every year from March to August, the Yellow-shouldered Amazons raise their chicks in Macanao. Also each year, the nest-poachers and traffickers of birds engage in the robbing of these chicks from their nests to supply the pet trade. In order to curb the trafficking which threatens this Regional

Bird of Nueva Esparta state, every year a team of conservationists dedicates itself to protecting the parrot nests located in a valley called La Chica, which is the main breeding area. The surveillance is an arduous and dangerous task, 24 hours a day, undertaken by local youths grouped together in the Eco-Guardians Cooperative under the direction of Provita. This surveillance has the support of the Municipal Police of Macanao Peninsula, the National Guard Command of Boca del Rio, the Mayor of Macanao Peninsula and the Ministry of Popular Power for the Environment of the state of Nueva

Esparta, among other institutions.

Thanks to the Eco-Guardians and this grand alliance, on Sunday August 18th the last chick under protection in the reproductive period 2013 flew from the nest, thus achieving a total of 77 chicks saved to live in the wild this year. This figure is a record in the 24 years of work, filling with hope everyone involved in this initiative. Over 95% of the remaining nests located in other areas of the peninsula of Macanao were looted, and therefore the 77 chicks which fledged are of vital importance for the conservation of the species.



Top, a view of the native landscape of Venezuela. Above, Dr. David Waugh, Director, Loro Parque Fundación. Right, a protected nest of Yellow-shouldered Amazons.

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