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Book Review by Sheldon Dingle,  
Alhambra, CA

## Parrots

### A Guide to the Parrots of the World

By Tony Juniper and Mike Parr, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1998. Illustrated by Kim Franklin, Robin Restall, Dan Powell, David Johnston, and Carl D'Silva. \$55 retail.

This wonderful new book contains 88 color plates illustrating over 1000 parrots (including subspecies and various color morphs). I know of no other volume with such a comprehensive set of illustrations. And the plates are not scattered about the book, they comprise 176 pages in a

section near the front of the volume. The illustrations are on the right hand pages with the pertinent notes on the left pages. This system is very handy for gaining a quick identification of a particular bird (indeed, the book was designed this way to help wildlife officers, birders, and aviculturists make quick and accurate identifications). The notes give the range of the bird and describe the pertinent items on the illustration — the differences between subspecies, for example.

These notes also refer one to an expanded text and a map relating to the specific bird. For example, the first

plate contains illustrations of five species of lorries. The number one note refers to the Black Lorry. There is a reference that refers one to page 217 for more detailed notes and a map. This system is very easy to get around in.

From my standpoint, another blessing of *Parrots* is that it contains data on *all* the parrot species and subspecies — and it can be lifted with one hand (it weighs about three and a half pounds). Because it is 7 x 9 5/8 inches in size and 1 1/2 inches thick, it can be hauled about as you travel. I keep it on my computer desk and don't have to employ a two-handed book stand to use it. Despite its compact size, it has 584 pages chock full of information.

The book begins with some very useful background information. The first major head is "STYLE AND LAYOUT OF THE BOOK." As this book is organized in its own unique way, it is well to read this chapter. It is a road map, as it were, to the whole volume.

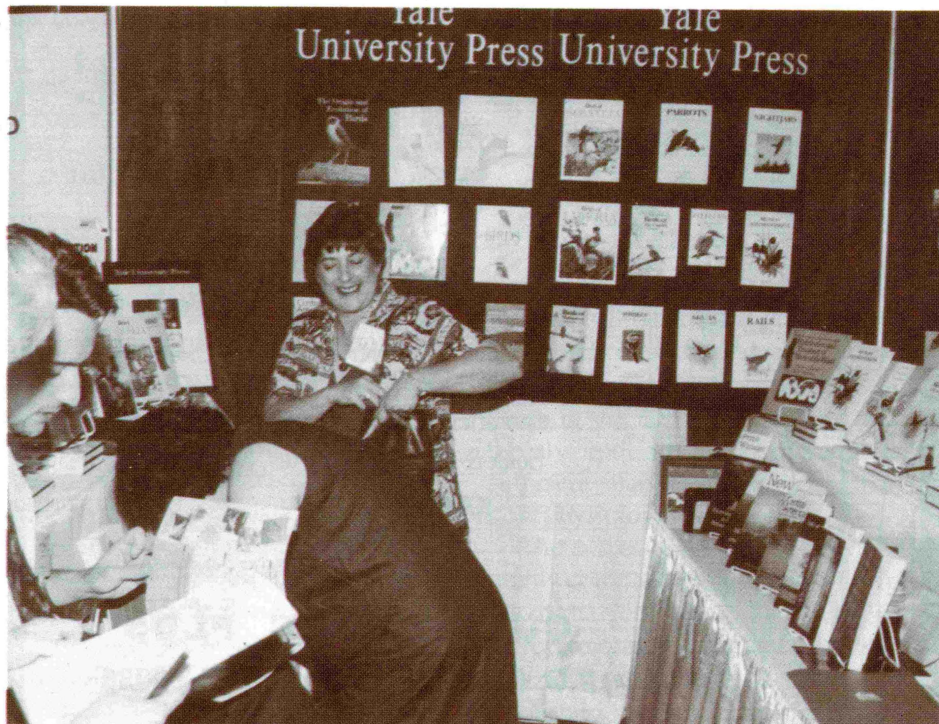
The second head is ORIGINS AND EVOLUTIONARY RELATIONSHIPS which is just one page long. Don't skip over it. You will gain a better appreciation of the parrot, a truly ancient bird.

Next is CLASSIFICATION OF THE PARROTS which discusses the taxonomy of the parrots — which parrots are related and to what extent. In other words, what defines a species, a subspecies, and what to do with natural hybrids. Many questions are discussed here that have a strong bearing on how we identify our birds and why. Good reading and no one should pontificate on the controversial captive hybridizing issue without having read this short but very informative chapter.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE PARROTS follows. It is divided into *General Behavior*, *Distribution*, *Habitat*, *Movements*, *Social Behavior*, *Diet*, and *Breeding*. I believe aviculturists could improve their husbandry techniques by digesting the information in this section. You will learn how different various kinds of parrots really are. One captive technique definitely does not fit all. What are some of the natural characteristics of the birds *you* keep?

CONSERVATION STATUS, the next head, defines the meaning of the various terms such as *Extinct*, *Critically Endan-*

Photo by Sheldon Dingle



The Yale University Press booth drew lots of people who love bird books. Indeed, there was a generous discount on books purchased on site and even a discount catalogue. Yale University Press publishes many books of great interest to aviculturists and bird lovers.



# PARROTS

*A Guide to Parrots of the World*



Tony Juniper and Mike Parr

Illustrated by  
Kim Franklin, Robin Restall,  
Dan Powell, David Johnston, and Carl D'Silva

gered, *Endangered*, and *Threatened*. There are two tables, one listing the parrots under threat of global extinction, the other listing those considered Near-Threatened. What species is the world's rarest bird? Read this section.

Once you have learned which parrots are under the most stress, read the section **THREATS**. This explains why certain species are declining. *Habitat Loss* is first with *Live Bird Trade* second, *Introduced Species* third, *Persecution and Hunting* fourth, with *Storms and Climate Changes* last. As we better understand these pressures on parrots, we can take more focused action to ameliorate some of the damage to some of the species.


The next section is titled **CAPTIVE BREEDING**. It does not tell you how to feed and breed your birds. Rather, it presents the realities of captive breeding with regard to endangered species. Many aviculturists like to feel (and often say) "We are breeding endangered birds and thus saving the species."

Not necessarily so. In fact, almost *never* so. The authors explain, "There are several sets of complex and interrelated issues linked to captive breeding that need to be considered." And they go on to outline some of the issues. I feel this short one-page section should

be mandatory reading for anyone who breeds parrots. It will put your philosophy in touch with reality.

The final section in the volume is the expanded texts treating every known parrot species and subspecies. These notes contain Identification, Voice, Distribution and Status, Ecology, Description, Sex/Age, Measurements, and Geographical Variation (if there is one). Are you aware that there are two races of the Peach-faced Lovebird? I thought not.

In my experienced opinion (I use reference books in earning my living), this is the most useable and up-to-date book on parrots that there is. In my extensive editorial needs, I find myself reaching for *Parrots* by Juniper and Parr almost exclusively. I can't imagine how I got along without it. And I paid money out of my pocket for the thing. I'm not just touting a review copy.

If you have parrots or are interested in them, I don't see how you can get along without the book either. 



## Parrots

Tony Juniper and  
Michael Parr

Illustrated by Kim Franklin,  
Robin Restall, Dan Powell,  
David Johnston, and  
Carl D'Silva

"For parrot enthusiasts and collectors of books about birds, this volume is a **required addition to the library**. . . . [T]he plates and information in it should make it possible to identify any parrot seen anywhere in the world."—*Bird Watcher's Digest*

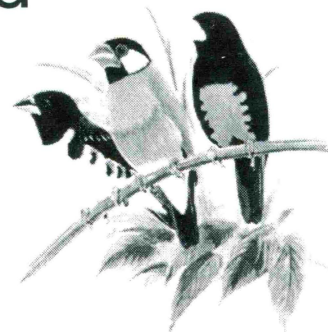
This book offers many first-hand insights into the ecology of each species, vocalizations, life cycle characteristics, and geographical variation. It also provides up-to-date information on the conservation status of those species of parrots that are threatened or endangered.

Copublished with Pica Press 88 color illus. \$55.00 For sale in North and South America

## Munias and Mannikins

Robin Restall

This comprehensive guide to munias and mannikins—a genus of seed-eating songbirds found in the tropical and subtropical regions of the Old World—provides the first complete natural history and taxonomy of each of the forty-one species of the group. Restall's line drawings and paintings in field guide style depict every known plumage and a variety of behaviors, most never illustrated before.



"The definitive work on munias and mannikins. Restall has done an outstanding job."—Noble Proctor

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