

Breeders of Cockatiels,
Lovebirds, and Zebra Finches

BARONA BIRD FARM



BIRDS
OF ALL KINDS
and
everything you need in
bird supplies

■ WE SHIP BIRDS ■

Send stamped, self-addressed
envelope for prices.

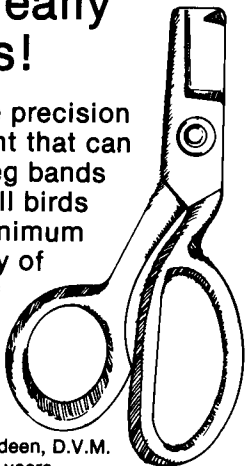
Hours:
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed Mon.

(714) 443-8315

12995 Old Barona Road
Lakeside, California 92040
(near San Diego)

At last
a professional
leg band cutter
that really
works!

A durable precision
instrument that can
remove leg bands
from small birds
with a minimum
possibility of
damaging
delicate
legs.



Designed by
Kendal P. Svedeen, D.V.M.
after eighteen years
of experience with birds.

\$14⁹⁵ plus \$1
shipping/handling

(Please add state sales tax where applicable)

UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE
FOR ONE YEAR

B&B Enterprises
5290 Marguerite Pkwy., #A
Mission Viejo, Ca. 92692

the status of *Aratinga euops*

by Tony Silva
Illinois

The Cuban Conure was once abundant and widespread, but they are now restricted to the wilder areas. The great decline can be attributed to the loss of suitable habitat, and unless Cuba's remaining forests are protected this species will surely become extinct.

Euops once ranged over most of Cuba; presently they are found in the Las Villas Province and possibly parts of the Sierra Maestra Mountains in Oriente, eastern-most Cuba. Recent reports indicate that there are small flocks in El Pan de Guajabon, in the Trinidad Mountains and in Zapata Swamp, all in Las Villas Province.

On Isle of Pines *euops* were formerly abundant, but they are now believed to be extinct there. In 1876 Juan Gundlach¹ wrote that unless the massive exportation of chicks would cease, *euops* would become extinct. Sixty years later Thomas Barbour² wrote that, "This will be one of the next birds to become completely extinct on Cuba as it already has on Isle of Pines where forty years ago it was to be found in great flocks." More recently, 1975, Garrido and Montaña³ wrote that "Jorge de la Cruz recently saw two flocks, at different times, in Northern Isle of Pines." The authenticity of this recent sighting is doubtful. In 1980 an islander informed me that "There are no parakeets on the Isle of Pines, and none of the residents here ever remember seeing any." It seems very unlikely that this species would survive nearly three quarters of a century without being seen.

Euops inhabit virgin and mountain forests, and occasionally open country in the lowlands⁴. In the 1920s and 1930s they would occasionally attack ripening fruit, doing considerable damage to agriculture.

According to Dr. Abelardo Moreno⁵, director of the National Zoological Park in Havana, Cuba, this endangered species has been offered legal protection. But apparently this law is not being enforced because Cuban birds were, until recently, flowing freely into Eastern European Countries.

This conure nests in hollow palms and trees which have been previously hollowed out by woodpeckers; they have also been observed nesting in termites' mounds. Only active mounds are used, those not occupied become brittle and break very easily. The termites' belong to the genus

Nasutotermes. Nesting begins in April and May and chicks fledge in July and August. The incubation period lasts 26 days, like all other conures, and the average clutch consists of three, four or sometimes five eggs.

In the wild *euops* feed on guavas (*Psidium sp.*) a favorite, mangoes (*Mango magnifera*), palm nuts, and the ripening fruit of Jobo (*Spondias luteus*). On Isle of Pines they fed almost strictly on palm nuts and the shoots of *Pinus carribea*.

These fairly small conures, which measure 10 inches, are basically all green with red speckling on the head and thighs. Hens can be distinguished by the orange-red underwing coverts; these are red in males. Immatures lack the red speckling, they have grey iris, and the underwing coverts are green with varying amounts of red.

This species has, to my knowledge, never been successfully bred in the U.S. Success was almost achieved at San Diego Zoo in California. In 1968 the zoo obtained a pair of Cuban Conures from Tom Riggs of Capricorn Aviaries. While in the collection the hen laid once. The clutch consisted of three eggs; two proved fertile, but failed to hatch. Soon afterwards the hen died and in 1980 the male was sent to Gene Hall of San Marcos, California⁶.

Unfortunately this species is not established in aviculture and is never likely to be imported again. Captive breeding programs should be initiated in Cuba under the auspices of the National Zoo or the Academy of Sciences, Havana. Unless this species is firmly established in captivity and is afforded better protection it will undoubtedly vanish on Cuba as it already has on Isle of Pines •

Editor's note: Anyone breeding, raising, having in their possession, or even knowing anything about this Cuban conure, please contact Mr. Tony Silva at 8225 W. 30th St., No. Riverside, IL 60546.

Bibliography

- ¹Gundlach, J., 1876, *Contribucion a la Ornithologia Cubana*, Havana.
- ²Barbour, T., 1946, *Cuban Ornithology*, Mem. Nuttall orn. club, pp 1-144.
- ³Garrido, O.H., and Montaña, F.G., 1975, *Catalogo de las Aves de Cuba*, Acad. de Cien. Cubana, Havana.
- ⁴Bond, J., 1971, *Birds of the West Indies*, 2nd ed., London. Collins.
- ⁵Dr. Abelardo Moreno, pers. comm, 1980.
- ⁶Wayne Schulenburg, pers comm, 1980.



Cuban conure, *Aratinga euops*