

Blue Throated Macaws

(*Ara glaucogularis*)
previously named "Caninde"

by
Wolfgang Kiessling
Tenerife, Canary Islands

The distribution of this until recently unknown macaw is believed to be north of Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Forshaw, in his edition of *Parrots of the World*, considers it a very mysterious bird. There has been much discussion on the origin of this macaw, but this is not the subject of this report.

A few years ago, this until then unknown specimen of macaw was brought to Europe-USA-Africa. Approximately three years ago, we at Loro Park were fortunate to acquire a beautiful pair of these birds, which we presented to the visiting public.

The cage in which they are installed has the following dimensions: 3-6 meters in depth, 4 meters long and 4-2 meters high. A nesting box 50 cms. in depth, 60 cms. long and 80 cms. high was installed in a sheltered area in the south west corner. The entrance to the box is 14 cms. in size and faces north. The nesting materials are rotten wood and shavings. Although many visitors pass the cage, the birds feel secure and have no fear of the public. We have also discovered this lack of fear with our

other parrots as they breed close to the visitors.

In the centre of the cage is a large tree trunk, the branches of which are so arranged that they serve as perches which enables the birds easy access to the entrance of the nesting box. The tree enhances the natural appearance of the cage and is decorated weekly with fresh pine, or eucalyptus wood, which is pulped down in a short time.

The breeding box was installed at the same time as the birds were introduced to the cage, approximately three years ago. They only used it as their sleeping quarters initially. Approximately 15 days before the hen laid her first egg we saw she left the nesting box only to take food. On the 10th of July we found the first egg, and it measured 44mm by 34mm. Three days later, we found a second egg measuring 42mm by 32mm. The second egg was fertilized, but after 14 days was found to be dead. The hen bird did a fantastic incubation job on the first egg, and 26 days after it was laid (the 6th of August '84) a blue-throated macaw was hatched out. The hen is taking excellent care of the young bird, leaving the nesting box only to eat, whereas the cock bird takes no part in rearing the young bird.

The nest control is a risk for ourselves and the young bird, because the hen becomes aggressive when the nest is approached or opened, and this could cause her to reject or abandon the young bird.

The food given to the birds, is, in the main, similar to that which John Stoodley describes in his book *Parrot Production*.

We are having very good results with this food. Since eating this food, the colours of the plumage are resplendent, and in excellent condition, and the birds are much more active. We supplement the food with condensed milk and white bread together with a large amount of fresh fruit and herbs. The hen bird is looking remarkably healthy on this diet in spite of feeding the young bird.

The young bird weighed 387 grs. after 15 days and after 25 days weighed 510 grs., its eyes opened after 14 days, and the ears opened on the 31st of August '84. The skin around the ears is flesh coloured. The typical light blue feathers are appearing on wings, tail and head. The beak is black.

The male bird stays passive when we do a nest control and does not interfere. We shall not disturb the young bird evolution during the next few weeks, afraid that we may endanger its life. ●



The first rare baby blue-throated macaw hatched at Loro Park.

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