

Greencheek Parrot Project Takes Flight

by Sherry Rind
Redmond, Washington

Several years ago, the founding members of the Amazona Society began forming a Greencheek Amazon Studbook (*Amazona viridigenalis*). Jan Roger Van Oosten prepared registration forms and information to be sent to Amazona members telling them about the severely reduced numbers of the wild population and the need to register breeding pairs in order to maintain a healthy captive group and prevent extinction.

Soon the Amazona Society pooled its resources with AFA and the Greencheek Project, as it now exists, was hatched. Response was good and now nearly a hundred Greencheeks are registered through the SPARKS computer program, under the direction of Studbook Keeper Gary Clifton.

But merely registering pairs will not ensure the survival of a breeding

population of purebred Greencheeks. The next step is to create a breeding consortium along the same lines as those of the Red Siskin Project in which birds will be donated to the AFA and breeders housing the birds will reap a share of any offspring. Co-chairpersons are Ron Holtz of Arizona and Sherry Rind of Washington, with a committee made up of Gary Clifton, Vicky Fletcher, Mary Goodman, Sue Jordan, Nancy Neil and Bill Vaughn. Avian biologist James Murphy of the Amazona Society was elected a consulting member.

Here is how the consortium works. Interested members will make tax deductible donations of single or paired Greencheeks (also known as Mexican Redheads) to the project. These birds will become the property of the AFA. You may donate

pairs already in your possession and keep them on your premises or you may send them to someone who has volunteered to house and care for the birds. A percentage of the offspring of this founding stock will be closed-banded with AFA bands and paired by the studbook keeper. People housing the birds will keep a percentage of the offspring to sell as pets or raise for their own breeding stock.

This program will be advantageous to both the wild and pet population of Greencheeks by making sure healthy birds are bred and siblings are not inadvertently paired. Zoos world wide perform a similar function with different species of animals in their Species Survival Plans. While they are backed with money, space, employed professionals, and huge computer resources, we have only ourselves and our volunteer efforts. The Consortium is looking for people to volunteer their birds, publicity skills, fundraising, and space to breed the birds. This is a chance to show that individuals can get together to save a species before it reaches a crisis point. By the time the big organizations step in, it is almost too late. To help, call Ron Holtz, (602) 982-2125, Sherry Rind (206) 869-9212 or Sue Jordan in the AFA office. ●

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