

Proposed Names For Hybrid Macaws

by Richard Vagner,
Parrot Jungle, Miami, Florida

During the recent convention in Hollywood, Florida on August 23rd to 26th, 1979 the writer was asked numerous questions about the large number of hybrid Macaws at Miami's Parrot Jungle. Attempting to answer these questions proved difficult due to the lack of recognized hybrid names. In some cases seven different hybrids were being referred to indiscriminately as either Orange-breasted or Red-breasted hybrids. Needless to say, little accurate information could be communicated and trying to describe a Blue and Gold to Scarlet hybrid back-crossed to Scarlet and then crossed-back to a Blue and Gold-Scarlet hybrid only succeeded in leaving the listener bewildered. Therefore the proposed names are being published in an effort to stabilize the nomenclature and recognize these beautiful hybrids.

First permit me to digress and address the subject of hybrids in general using specific examples. The first hybrids we are aware of are in the first plants and animals that man domesticated. Such hybrids are exemplified by the chicken and by corn which today have no counterpart in the wild. Hybrids in nature for the most part are unsuccessful or, possibly in very rare cases, speciate and through evolution become a stable species. I'm not aware of any proven case of such in nature, however if one examines dogs and cats it is obvious that such a stabilization is possible. Were it not so there would not be the number of recognized breeds we know today. In fact if all the recognized breeds of dogs were found geographically separated in the wild they would be recognized as distinct species and *Canis familiaris* would not cover the multitude of different forms it presently encompasses.

The writer is well aware of the call for the purity of species in aviculture. The hybrid is looked on with horror by some as degenerating the species involved. However in the orchids the hybrids have been legion and for over a hundred years they have been registered and you can trace an orchid hybrid back to its original species. In many cases hybrids between different genera have been made. Hybrids in the orchids commonly involve three genera and as high as five different genera have been involved. Thusly,

hybridization can be a valuable tool to obtain new shapes, colors, size and other qualities which are considered desirable. Who would fault hybrid Begonias, or the many vegetables, fruits or flowers we take so much for granted?

While the value of Macaw hybrids lies in their beauty; who will dispute that the value of a hybrid orchid lies in its beauty, or who will criticize using several grasses to produce corn or wheat hybrids? Will those persons stop drinking orange juice because it comes from a hybrid? Certainly not! There is a value placed on hybrid orange juice. If you don't believe that to be true try drinking juice from the presumed wild species. You'll soon go back to the hybrid!

While hybrid Macaws may never reach that point, with the hybrids that exist today it is safe to predict an orange or yellow Macaw in a few more generations. I would feel safe in predicting that when the potential for pets is realized there will be hybridization with the smaller Macaws to produce colorful rivals to the Budgies and Cockatiels. Place the emphasis on color — there isn't a gene pool available to the Budgies or Cockatiels as varied as the Macaws. Today we can see orange, yellow and purple, along with the existing red, blue and green. We have yet to come up with a lutino or cyanistic Macaw; but would it not be reasonable to expect one from the small Macaws? The writer has owned a cyanistic Amazon and has seen other Amazons in both cyanistic and lutino phases. The smallest of the Macaws is only slightly larger than the largest Cockatiels the writer has seen. The thought of yellow, red, orange or blue in a bird the size of Hahn's Macaw is an exciting probability.

The writer's research has failed to disclose the first hybrid Macaw but it is believed to be the cross between the Scarlet and Blue and Gold Macaws (*Ara ararauna X Ara macao*) which has been called the *Catalina Macaw*. Since this name has been published and no other name has been advanced with priority, *Catalina* is believed to be valid for the hybrid between *A. ararauna* and *A. macao* or the reverse cross.

The only other hybrid name in the Macaws that seems to have been validly published appears to be the hybrid between the Blue and Gold Macaw and

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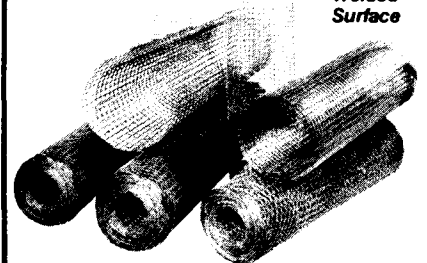
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photo by Ted Grochowski, Jr.



*Scarlet Macaw,
Parrot Jungle, Fl.*

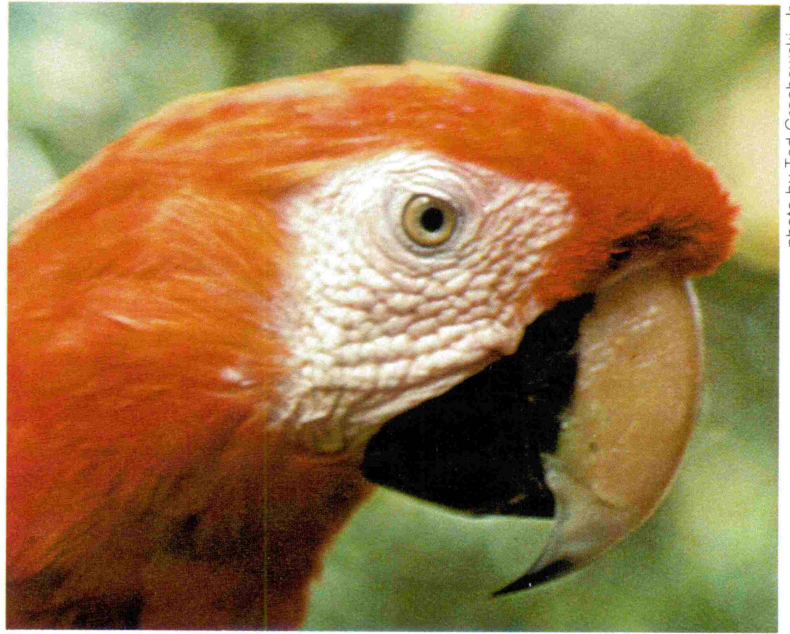


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Scarlet Macaw, Parrot Jungle, Fl.

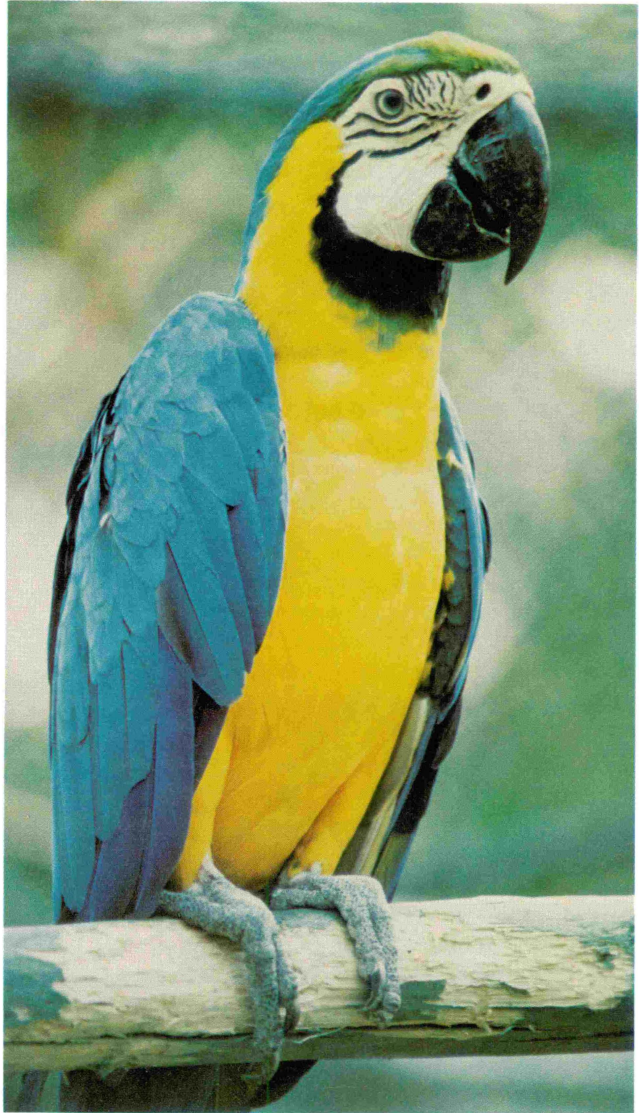
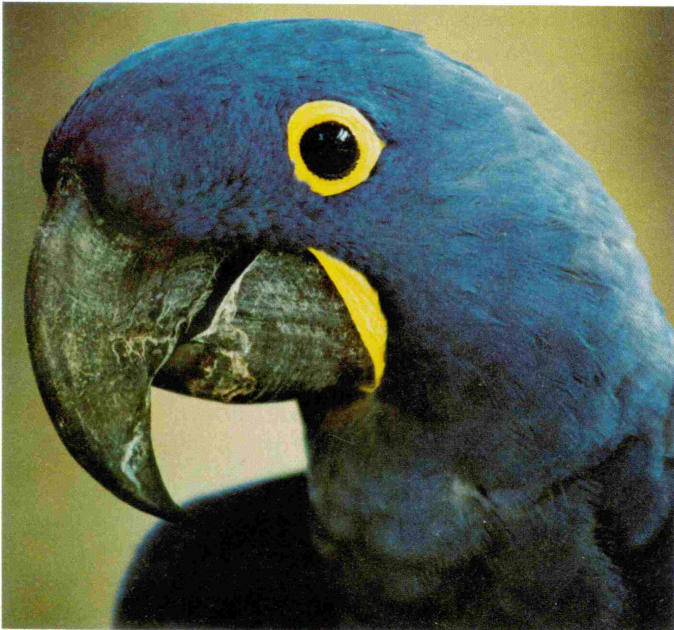


photo by Nancy Vigran

Blue and Gold Macaw, Los Angeles Zoo

photo by Nancy Vigran



Hyacinth Macaw, Los Angeles Zoo

the Green-wing Macaw (*Ara ararauna* x *Ara chloroptera*) or the reverse cross, which is called the 'Harlequin' Macaw.

An aside on nomenclature is perhaps in order here. It does not matter where the publication is made, if it fulfills the Rules of Nomenclature it is valid and has priority. If there are other names that are believed to have priority the writer would like to know of them and the citation.

The first hybrid which the writer proposes a name for is the cross between the Scarlet Macaw and the Military Macaw (*Ara macao* X *Ara militaris*) or its reverse cross. While the first hybrid of this cross is not known for certain that cross is known to have been made a Parrot Jungle in Miami in 1959. In the absence of a valid name the writer proposes the name 'Shamrock' to designate the hybrid between *A. macao* and *A. militaris*. The name has been chosen to allude to the green in the hybrid with 'Shamrock green' connotates.

The hybrid is intermediate between the parents as would be expected in a primary hybrid of this sort. There is some variability but the writer concludes from the ten specimens that it is not significant.

The writer is also proposing a name for another primary hybrid, the cross between the Scarlet Macaw and Buffon's Macaw (*Ara macao* X *Ara ambigua*) and its reverse cross. The writer proposes the name 'Verde' to designate the hybrid between the Scarlet Macaw and Buffon's Macaw. The name is chosen to allude to the green in the hybrid with 'Verde' connotates.

The hybrid is similar to the 'Shamrock' with yellow in the wings where the 'Shamrock' has chartreuse. The colors are more vivid than 'Shamrock' and the variability between the birds is much greater. The red band across the front of the head is similar in both hybrids as would be expected since this feature is common to all parents. However the facial feathers in 'Verde' are more abundant and are predominately red. The hybrid was first raised at Parrot Jungle in Miami in 1977 and a total of five have been raised to date.

There is one other primary of which the writer is aware that should be named. This is the hybrid between the Blue and Gold Macaw and the Hyacinth Macaw (*Ara ararauna* x *Anodorhynchus*) and its reverse cross. In the absence of a valid name and with the permission of one of the owners of a specimen the writer proposes to erect a new genus called *Calsonara* to accommodate the hybrid between the genera *Ara* and *Anodorhynchus* in honor of the originator Calvin Wilson. The writer would propose

the specific epithet 'Tracey's Macaw' for the hybrid between *A. ararauna* and *Ano. hyacinthinus*. The hybrid strongly resembles the Hyacinth Macaw and shows only slight influence from the Blue and Gold parent. There are however definite characteristics of the Blue and Gold Macaw visible on close inspection. The hybrid is close to the Hyacinth Macaw blue in its overall coloration.

The writer knows of no other primary hybrids in the Macaws but would like to hear of any together with the citation and pictures if such are available.

The next two hybrids are primary hybrids back to one of the parents which is a backcross giving a 1/4 ratio. This type of hybrid is frequently used in genetics to intensify the influence of the species used in the backcross. In both cases the species parent is the Scarlet Macaw.

Chronologically the first of these hybrids produced at Parrot Jungle was the Catalina Macaw by the Scarlet Macaw. This hybrid was produced in 1957 for the first time. Since that date in excess of seven of this backcross have been raised. The writer proposes the name 'Camelot' to designate the hybrid between the Catalina Macaw and the Scarlet Macaw. The name has been chosen to allude to the promise of the future which 'Camelot' connotes.

The hybrid resembles the Catalina parent except for a more reddish tint, the facial feathers being red instead of black, being somewhat more sparse than in the Blue and Gold and with the typical yellow in the wings from the Scarlet parent. There is considerable variation between the individuals in this generation which would be expected.

The second backcross is the Shamrock back to the Scarlet parent. The first of this hybrid was produced at Parrot Jungle in 1972. In excess of ten of this backcross have been raised. The writer proposes the name 'Miami' for this hybrid in honor of the area where it was first produced.

The hybrid produces variable results. There remains a strong influence from the Military background as was noted in the previous backcross with the Blue and Gold background. The Scarlet influence is noticeable and unmistakable.

The next two hybrids are among the most beautiful Macaws. The results must be seen to be appreciated. Those who saw these birds during the Hollywood Convention asked many questions regarding parentage. Such answers as were given were totally unsatisfactory. A reference back to the first paragraph where an example of trying to verbalize the parentage

was given will convey the frustration.

The first of these hybrids produced was the Catalina and Camelot cross. The first two young were as differing as night and day. One was Orange-breasted and the other was a Reddish-breasted bird. Others in this line have been equally variable and each is beautiful in its own way. The writer proposes the name 'Liebchen' to designate this hybrid. The name has been chosen to allude to the love child which these hybrids have been. Mere verbal or written descriptions are totally inadequate to convey the colors of these birds. In bright sunlight the colors defy any writer to accurately record them.

The final hybrid in the series is going to sound redundant as the birds are equally beautiful but a completely different hybrid. This hybrid is the second backcross to the Scarlet Macaw. The first hybrid between the Camelot and Scarlet Macaws was raised in 1976. In 1978 a second baby was raised and in the writer's opinion is the most beautiful hybrid produced to date.

The writer proposes the name 'Capri' to designate the backcross of the Camelot Macaw to the Scarlet Macaw. The name has been chosen to allude to the beauty of that famous island.

Any description of the yellows and reds present in this hybrid fails when one sees the birds in sunlight. The writer plans a sequel to this brief article in which representative pictures of many of these birds will be available. Therefore, having hopefully, piqued your interest in these hybrids and having enumerated some of the possibilities for the future we will leave the best for the future.

The original Catalina hybrids were raised at Parrot Jungle in 1940. One bird from the pair raised in 1940 is still alive and daily sits on a perch at the entrance to Parrot Jungle. The bird has had a cataract operation and is showing her age but is obviously enjoying her retirement surrounded by the third generation hybrids. Queen was a member of the Parrot Jungle show cast for many years. Queen has her own claim to fame. In 1946 she posed with Sir Winston Churchill in one of the classical bird pictures. She also appeared on the "I've Got a Secret" show with Gary Moore in 1956. Now as she approaches forty years of age she is still a beautiful Macaw and we hope she will be with us for many more years.

The writer wishes to thank Jerome Scherr, President of Parrot Jungle for permission to name the hybrids, for providing the research material to document the genealogy of the hybrids, and for aid in collating the data from the records.