

2009 AFA AVIAN RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

By Janice D. Boyd, Ph.D., Avian Research Grants Committee Chair

The American Federation of Aviculture is pleased to announce the two projects for the 2009 Avian Research Grants. They were recommended by the Grants Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at the November Board meeting. One grant will be given to Dr. Bennett Hennessey and the Bolivian nonprofit organization Asociación Armonía (BirdLife International Partner in Bolivia) for their Red-fronted Macaw project. AFA has a long history of interest in Red-fronted Macaw conservation, and the Armonía project seems poised to join their successful Blue-throated Macaw project as one of parrot

conservation's success stories. The second grant will be given to the U.S. non-profit organization the Indonesian Parrot Project for their conservation efforts on behalf of the recently re-discovered Abbott's Cockatoo, the rarest of the four subspecies of Yellow-crested Cockatoo.

All funds for the Avian Research Grants come from specially designated donations from AFA's members and friends. No monies come from the general fund. To see AFA make a difference, please support this program, either online at www.afabirds.org, or in response to the fundraising appeals you will receive this year.

Project Abbotti—Indonesian Parrot Project

By Stewart Metz and Bonnie Zimmerman



DUDI NANDIKA
INDONESIAN PARROT PROJECT/KONSERVASI
KAKATUA INDONESIA

A pair of Abbott's Cockatoos in their only home in the wild on tiny Masakambing Island in the Masalembu Archipelago in the Java Sea.

Parrots are the most endangered bird family. A number of the parrots threatened with extinction are found only in Indonesia. Four of the five cockatoo species listed on the highest category of protection by the CITES are found in Indonesia. The continuing magnitude of the illegal trade in wild psittacines in Indonesia is perpetuated by a lack of awareness and pride in local villagers concerning their endemic avifauna as well lack of training and facilities by government officials for conservation programs.

Of these cockatoo species, the Yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) are the most imperiled. This species contains four subspecies, with three of them being fairly well studied. However, one (*C. sulphurea abbotti*) has remained largely a mystery until now. It was known to be at great risk if not already extinct.

Recently, this fourth subspecies was rediscovered in the wild when ten individuals were sighted on the island of Masakambing in the Masalembu Archipelago in the Java Sea. The Indonesian Parrot Project has initiated Project Abbotti to help protect this rare bird and to work towards its conservation.

Project Abbotti includes working with local authorities to interdict trapping and smuggling; promotion of pride, education, and conservation awareness among the adults and schoolchildren of Masakambing; and provision of alternative, sustainable sources of income to former parrot trappers.

Rediscovery of the Abbott's cockatoo:
www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/abbotts-cockatoo.html

Website of the Indonesian Parrot Project:
www.indonesian-parrot-project.org/

The Red-fronted Macaw Project, Asociación Armonía, Bolivia

By A. Bennett Hennessey



MILENIUS SPANOWICZ

A pair of Red-fronted Macaws.

The survival of the Red-fronted Macaw in the wild is threatened by three main factors: illegal capture for the pet trade, habitat loss and conflict with farmers.

Illegal capture: Capture for the illegal pet trade continues to pose a serious threat to the survival of the Red-fronted Macaw. Young are taken from nests and adult birds captured with traps or by using sling-shots to stun them.

Habitat loss: Much of the Red-fronted Macaw's native foraging habitat has been converted to agricultural land and remnant patches of native forest are severely degraded through overgrazing by goats.

Conflict with corn and peanut farmers: During the non-breeding season, the macaws congregate in large foraging flocks (up to 250 individuals) that feed on corn and peanut crops. This puts them at risk of

being captured or shot by angry farmers.

Armonía's Red-fronted Macaw Conservation Program has an integrated approach that includes three principal lines of action.

Awareness raising and education: Most Bolivians do not know that the Red-fronted Macaw is an endemic species endangered of extinction. Through presentations in communities, activities with children

and poster campaigns we are raising local awareness of the macaw, which in turn is generating community pride in the species and support for its conservation. A wider public is reached with television spots and newspaper and magazine articles.


Sustainable community development assistance: Sustainable conservation of the Red-fronted Macaw depends on the integration of conservation needs with community development needs. The local people are very poor and therefore do not have the luxury of supporting conservation actions unless these generate direct economic benefit in the short term, which is sustainable in the long term. The two main areas we are working in are community ecotourism and honey production (bee keeping).

The Red-fronted Macaw Ecolodge built by Armonía directly benefits three communities and promotes the protection by local residents of a key nesting site. Community honey-production projects generate income for local people and promote the protection of native forests.


Investigation and monitoring: We conduct an annual population census, monitor key nesting sites, and monitor wild bird traffic in Bolivian pet markets. Studies are needed to determine the extent of crop loss caused by the Red-fronted Macaw and to identify practical and sustainable measures to reduce conflict with farmers.

See BirdLife International's webpage at www.birdlife.org/worldwide/national/bolivia/. More pictures of red-fronted macaws and the red-fronted macaw ecolodge at www.birdbolivia.com/Red-fronted%20Macaw%20Lodge.htm


Please give generously to help these projects through the AFA Avian Research Grants Program. Information on donating online can be found on the AFA website, www.afa-birds.org or you may send a check made out to "Avian Research Grants" to AFA Avian Research Grants; P.O. Box 91717; Austin, TX 78709-1717. To donate via credit card, call 512-585-9800. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.



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