

## New Technique to Revive Almost-extinct Macaw

A research collaboration between the Loro Parque Fundación of Tenerife, Spain and the University of Giessen in Germany is using a new technique to help the recovery of the Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*), a species that is almost certainly extinct in the wild since the year 2000. The species still exists in captivity, although there are less than 80 individuals within the recovery programme overseen by the Brazilian Government, and reproduction within this population is slow.

The main objective of the project is to increase the number of young birds being recruited to the population, by the use of sperm collection and artificial insemination (AI). Although successful in humans, many other mammals, and some other types of birds, sperm collection and AI



PHOTO COURTESY OF LORO PARQUE

Collection of semen from a Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) at Loro Parque.

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Laurie Baker



in parrots have had very limited success. However, the use of this new technique shows very promising results, and hopefully will lead to an improved breeding success in this incredibly rare macaw.

The initial phase of the project started in 2009/2010, during which time the technique was successful for the first time in collecting sperm from this species, in

the Spix's Macaw Breeding Centre of the Loro Parque Fundación in Tenerife. There are nine macaws on loan from the Brazilian Government, which gave its permission for this technique to be tested. As yet no successful AI has taken place, but the technique will also be used elsewhere, especially at the Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation centre in Qatar, which has more

Spix's Macaws to include in the trials.

During the same period, and using the new technique, there was successful semen collection and AI performed in over 100 species of large species in the Loro Parque Fundación's collection of parrots, the world's largest and most diverse. It is a significant step for species conservation efforts, and this pioneering first phase now acts as an excellent foundation for establishing a method for cryopreservation (frozen storage) so as to establish a parrot sperm bank.

~Loro Parque

## 'Funky Nest' contest seeking participants

It's time for the "Funky Nests in Funky Places" contest held by the Celebrate Urban Birds project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. With breeding season in full swing, birds are in a flurry of nest-building or may already be raising chicks—but birds don't always build in the places you might expect. People have discovered bird nests in boots, grills, flower pots, traffic signals, fence posts, rakes, old tires, and all manner of assorted odd places.

Project leader Karen Purcell said those interested in participating may send in a photo or video, write a story, produce artwork or a dance.

Many prizes are being offered, including binoculars, regional bird-sound audio guides, waterproof field guides, bird journals, bird notepads and bird game cards. Deadline for entries is July 15, 2012.

How to participate:

1. Email your entry to [urbanbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:urbanbirds@cornell.edu)
2. Write your FirstName\_LastName\_City\_State\_FUNKY2012 in the subject line
3. Include your address in the body of the email
4. Explain where the photo was taken and the type of bird, if known

~Cornell Lab of Ornithology



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