



Definitions of Conures:

1. Loosely-defined group of large New World parakeets.
2. Wedge-tailed parakeets.
3. An old term originally used as a descriptive name for the members of the now-abandoned genus *Conurus*, which included the members of *Aratinga* and *Pyrrhura*.
4. The reason the International Conure Association exists.

Conures are one of the most popular species of parrots kept as pets. Often known as wedge-tailed parakeets and parakeets in other countries, the term Conure is widely used throughout North America to describe this diverse group of Central and South American parrots. No matter what name you choose to call this group of parakeets, it describes a lot of bird in a small package.

Because conures are sociable, adaptable and flexible, they have been kept as pets and aviary birds extensively. They are popular pets in North America as well as their native homelands and many countries across the world.

On August 8, 1997 the International Conure Association (ICA) was formed by co-founders Brent Andrus and Sandi Brennan and those conure lovers who were able to attend the AFA convention in San Antonio, Texas. Since that time this small organization has demonstrated many of the qualities similar to the birds they love.

ICA immediately started working on projects to promote the quality of life for pet conures, preservation of species in captivity and conservation of species in the wild. ICA officially gathers one time a year at the annual

AFA conventions. The ICA group is easily found by their colorful personalities, friendly members and rather festive (loud) conversations.

ICA consistently sponsors speakers at the AFA convention each year to assist in educating people about conures and parrots in general. In addition to sponsoring several grass-roots speakers with extensive knowledge on parrots and conures, ICA has sponsored well-known speakers such as Thomas Ardnt, Liz Wilson, Paul Salaman, Mark Bittner and Dr. Susan Clubb.

The Yellow-eared Conure Project (Proyecto Ognorhynchus) became the first major conservation project for ICA in August 2000. A variety of fund-raising projects, including a collectible Yellow-eared Conure pin and silver pendent were put together to raise both funds and awareness for this critically endangered parrot. Over the next several years ICA assisted in creating awareness through presentations at local bird clubs, magazine articles and the Internet. ICA has donated over \$3,500 to the Yellow-eared Conure



A pair of Yellow-eared Conures at a nest site. The Yellow-eared Conure Project was the first major conservation project for the International Conure Association. - Photo courtesy of Proyecto Ognorhynchus.

conservation in Columbia. All profits generated by these items go directly to ICA conservation projects.

The Yellow-eared Conure Project was started in 1998 in an effort to locate and enact conservation strategies for a bird that many feared to be extinct in 1998. Since that time two colonies of the conure have been located and are being carefully studied in hopes of saving the species. The Yellow-Eared Conure (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*) may be one of the most endangered parrots in the world. This large, macaw-sized South American parakeet once was numerous and commonly seen in the high Andes mountains of Ecuador and Colombia. However, due to habitat destruction and being hunted for food, the Yellow-Eared Conure now is on the brink of extinction.

Many bird species are threatened due to pressures of trapping for the pet trade, but this is not the case with the Yellow-Eared Conure. In fact, it is essentially not kept in captivity and no successful breeding has ever been achieved in captivity. The Yellow-Eared Conure is listed as "Critically Endangered" and appears in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Project Nest Box recently promoted the purchase of artificial nest boxes for endangered Pyrrhura conures. ICA provided funding for both Project Pyrrhura and the Santa Marta conure projects. ICA donated \$1,000 to a project specifically concentrating on the conservation of the Santa Marta Conure and \$1,500 for nest boxes to be utilized in Proyecto Pyrrhura which focuses on the Santa Marta (*p. viridicata*), the Brown-breasted (*p. calliptera*) and the critically endangered Sinu (*p. subandina*),

The researchers have been unable to locate the Sinu conure, although they have been successful at locating nesting sites of the other two species. They aim to initiate a concerted effort to ascertain the current status of all three species through field searches and standardized monitoring protocols. They also aim to rediscover *P. subandina* after over 80

years. Results of Project Pyrrhura in 2005 will be the basis for elaborating a detailed a conservation action plan with the aim of securing the future survival of all three species.

The two greatest communication vehicles for the ICA are the quarterly journal and our website at www.conure.org. Both of these mediums provide information about the different species, housing, nutrition, care, training and conservation of Conures. The quarterly publication is set up so that the information can easily be kept in a standard 3 ring notebook as a reference manual. The website generates visitors and contacts from people all over the world who have an interest in conures. ICA members, both pet owners and breeders, are able to share information, questions and just general conversation at the members only chat group.

While not one of the largest organizations in the avicultural community, ICA makes a significant impact to those involved. The slogan for our beloved birds is "Conures – Birds of Play". ICA makes every effort to ensure that our special birds will be available for future generations of play while having the best life available either in captivity or the wild.

Dues: \$20 for individuals or \$30 for families and \$15 for juniors (persons under the age of 18). International members need to add \$5 for postage.

Memberships are for one year.

For more information: www.conure.org
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International Conure Association



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