

Avian Research Grants Program for 2007-2008 AFA Helps Avian Research

The Conservation and Research Committee has selected four projects for the 2007-2008 Avian Research Grants Program. The projects are summarized below, and for more information, see the links given or contact the AFA contact person.

(1) Niau Kingfisher Conservation

AFA Contact: Myles Lamont, myles@hancockwildlife.org

The Niau Kingfisher is a critically endangered endemic to Niau island in the South Pacific. Recent surveys have concluded that there could be as few as 30 individuals remaining in the wild, making it one of the most endangered species of bird in the world. It has, unfortunately, received very little publicity and the projects through the Pacific Islands Conservation Research Association (PICRA) (the current organization involved with the kingfisher research) are in need of financial support to continue their work with this species. A recent doctoral graduate, Dr. Dylan Kesler, who has formerly extensively studied the Micronesian Kingfisher, is in the midst of carrying out a more in depth study of this species biology, and financial support is needed to aid in this species recovery. (Organization website: picra.net). (An article on the Niau Kingfisher recently appeared in the Watchbird, Vol 33 No.3.)

(2) Puerto Rican Parrot (PRP) Reintroduction

AFA Contact: Janice Boyd, jboyd46@charter.net

In the past AFA has been fortunate to have Aviary Manager Jafet Velez speak at our Conventions about the USFWS / Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program and his work in the PRP captive breeding aviary. Captive breeding has raised the number of these highly endangered birds to about 200, and now there is a sufficient number of individuals available for a major effort to reintroduce the species to the rugged karst region of Puerto Rico, the northern interior mountainous part of the island which harbors the island's richest biodiversity. The Puerto Rican Parrot formerly lived here in large numbers and it is an excellent choice for the establishment of a second wild population of the birds. The first of at least 3 releases took place in November 2006 and this grant will provide funding to aid in subsequent releases. (Press release at <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/2006/r06-019.html>)

(3) Hawaii Endangered Bird Conservation Program (HEBCP)

AFA Contact: Margrethe Warden, birdbrain@mindspring.com

Hawaii is not just paradise in the United States. The islands are home to some of the most endangered birds in the world. In 1993, the state of Hawaii, the United States Department of the Interior and the Zoological Society of San Diego and private landowners joined forces in a collaborative effort to save these fragile species. Utilizing captive breeding strategies, this program has successfully hatched and fledged at least 750 critically endangered birds. Financial support is necessary to continue the fight to bring these American birds back from the brink of extinction. (Project website http://cres.sandiegozoo.org/projects/sp_hawaii_birds.html) (An article on "Saving the Hawaiian Birds" appeared in the Watchbird, Vol 33 No.4.)

(4) Joint Conservation Grant with Loro Parque Fundación

AFA Contact: Janice Boyd, jboyd46@charter.net

Our joint grant with Loro Parque Fundación allows AFA to team up with one of the major organizational funders of parrot field research projects, and with our grant to help support a project

that has been closely scrutinized by a team made up of some of the best-known names in parrot conservation, including our own Cooperative Breeding Program subcommittee member Dr. Susan Clubb. Each year LPF advertises this joint grant for us during their annual call for proposals and forwards to AFA several projects with avicultural content that meet their criteria for funding. AFA then reads the proposals and determines which one of these we select for funding. LPF matches our grant of \$2,500, giving the selected project a total of \$5,000. We try to have a researcher associated with the selected project be a speaker at one of our later Conventions. (LPF website <http://www.loroparque-fundacion.org/>)


Fundraising for this year's Avian Research Grants Program runs through summer 2007. The total amount raised will be announced at the Convention, and funds will be disbursed in fall 2007 for project execution in 2008.

AFA is making a difference in bird conservation. Recent projects supported through the Research Grants program have included:

- 2005-06: "Breeding the Red-browed Amazon (*Amazona rhodocorytha*) for Future In-situ Conservation," Louri Klemann Junior of the Brazilian conservation organization Idéia Ambiental (with Loro Parque Fundación)
- 2006-07: "Blue-headed Macaw Conservation Assessment and Census in the Tambopata Area of Peru," Dr. Donald Brightsmith, Texas A&M University
- 2006-07: "Numerical Abilities in African Grey Parrots," Dr. Irene Pepperberg, Brandeis University and The Alex Foundation
- 2006-07: "Puerto Rican Parrot Breeding Aviary," Jafet Velez, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- 2006-07: "Blue-throated Macaw Nest Box Program," A. Bennett Hennessey, Armonía-Bird Life International, Bolivia (with Loro Parque Fundación)

Help AFA help avian research. Donate online through the Avian Research Grants announcement on the AFA website (www.afabirds.org) or send a check payable to the AFA Research Grants Program to: American Federation of Aviculture, Inc., Avian Research Grants Program, P.O. Box 7312, N. Kansas City, MO 64116. If you would like to support a particular project, indicate that when you make your online donation or on the memo line of your check. Your donation is tax deductible and eighty percent will benefit the Avian Research Grants program and twenty percent your AFA General Fund.

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