

# Blue-Throated Macaw Now Listed Under the ESA

As of November 4th, and despite worldwide resistance, the Blue-throated macaw will be placed onto the list of species that require Federal permits for sales across State lines in the United States. Once known as the “Caninde” macaw, *Ara glaucogularis*, joins the list below of species that require permits for commerce from State to State. Additional red tape will apply to those that live in States where the Federal Endangered Species Act lists are used internally to regulate activities by their citizens.

The final rule containing the decision made by our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, DC was published in the Federal Register on October 3, 2013. It is noteworthy that the American Federation of Aviculture, Inc, the Avicultural Society of America, key biologists working with this species in Bolivia, Loro Parque Foundation of Spain, the World Parrot Trust, and many others were among those that provided scientific and trade information and warned the Service of the counter-conservation consequences of this ESA listing.

The U.S. Endangered Species Act does not provide additional “protections” for foreign species already prohibited in trade by their native country, listed on CITES Appendix I, and protected by the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992. What this Act does do is tie the hands of legitimate breeders and conservation researchers using U.S. based laboratories to process their biological samples. The Act, now considered to be more of a dinosaur than a modern conservation tool, is currently under review by Congress. There is still hope that someone will recognize the shortcomings of this law and undo the constraints set forth by this Act on foreign species. It is clearly a law that only works for native U.S. species and should only fund the habitat restoration and conservation of U.S. native species.

One thing the U.S. Endangered Species Act does seem to proliferate is lawsuits. Now commonly used as a tool to restrict pet ownership and trade, this 1972 law costs taxpayers exorbitant amounts of money every year to defend itself. It would seem logical that foreign species listed under this Act, protected by CITES and other international treaties, and legally imported into the U.S. and/or bred here, would be excluded from internal restrictions within the United States. Instead, this obvious oversight is now being used by many anti-trade, anti-pet organizations to make animal ownership more difficult.

The list of foreign species currently regulated under this Act appears below. Those

annotated with an asterisk do not require Federal level permits for Interstate commerce or sales. The penalty for violating this permit requirement is stiff and includes a minimum of a \$50,000 fine and jail time. Both the seller and the buyer require Federal permits for any transaction, and using your permit to buy a listed species for resale into your State is prohibited. Also the Act specifically states that using listed species as pets is inconsistent with the intent of the Act. This could be the very reason that several commonly kept parrot species are currently proposed for listing in the near future (via another anti-pet lawsuit), they include the Umbrella cockatoo, Lesser Sulphur-crested cockatoo, Red-vented Cockatoo, Hyacinth macaw, Red-fronted macaw, and others.

It is imperative that we let our representatives know how we feel about the U.S. Endangered Species Act and its negative impact. Write or call your Congressman or Senator today and tell them to remove all foreign species from the U.S. Endangered Species Act, as the law is not providing additional protections,

but instead is smothering captive breeding and conservation efforts across the United States.

## **Now Regulated under this Act (Common Avicultural name):**

Puerto Rican Amazon  
Vinacious Amazon  
Red-browed Amazon  
St. Vincent's Amazon  
Imperial Amazon  
Moluccan Cockatoo \*  
Golden or Queen of Bavaria Conure  
Blue-throated Conure  
Lear's Macaw  
Spix's Macaw  
Blue-throated Macaw  
Hooded and Golden Shouldered Parakeet  
Turquoise Parakeet\*  
Scarlet Chested Parakeet\*

*\*These species are listed as “threatened” under the act and a special rule was enacted by the USFWS whereas interstate commerce does not require a captive-bred wildlife registration or a federal permit.*

## **Blue-throated Macaw is added to the Endangered Species Act**

In the 1960's and 70's, Blue-throated macaws were so rare in captivity, and so little was known about them in the wild, that they were actually thought to be a “juvenile form of the Blue and Gold macaw”. In the early 1980's small groups were imported into the United States and other countries around the world and a better understanding of this species was growing in aviculture. It was at this time that the very first captive hatching of this species took place in Florida, by Dr. Bernie Levine, owner of Last Chance Ranch in Miami.

Although this species has remained fairly rare in captivity around the world, in the United States captive populations grew rapidly after that first breeding, and at some point their numbers were higher in U.S. aviaries than were thought to be flying free in Bolivia. Aviculture, as it often does, noticed the peril this species was in and responded with special breeding programs, support for wild birds through nestbox management, and other biological assistance for the species. Several heroes emerged in the United States, like our own Bird Endowment founded by Laney Rickman. Together with organizations within Bolivia, and the Loro Parque Foundation from Spain, they took aim at wild bird conservation and began the fight to assist this species to make a full recovery in its native habitat.

Even though progress and an upward trend in the species is being documented in Bolivia, the pressure from animal rights groups in the U.S. has now forced the hand of our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add this species to the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA). Under the act, a species listed as “endangered” cannot be sold across any State line without federal permits. Historically this law has resulted in a loss of interest in a species by the very breeders that are often key players in the recovery of wild bird populations; reference the Hooded parakeet, Vinacious amazon, Red-browed amazon, St. Vincent's amazon, and others.

And so the saga continues. Litigation, red tape and government bureaucracy, once again, tie the hands of legitimate breeders of a commonly kept and bred species. This move by our government could backfire and result in a loss of interest in this species both as companion birds, and as an avicultural subject. In the meantime, be cautious not to sell or barter with Blue-throated macaws outside of the State of your residence. Despite the fact that your bird may be bred in captivity, all Blue-throated macaws now require permits for any sale from one State to another. For more information on Federal Permits for ESA listed species, go to [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) or [www.afabirds.org/esa.shtml](http://www.afabirds.org/esa.shtml).