

# Microsoft Donates \$10,000

## TO BLUE-THROATED MACAW CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN BOLIVIA

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and Microsoft Studios collaborated to give fans of the Zoo Tycoon game series the opportunity to build their own virtual zoo and support real-life wildlife conservation field projects at the same time.

Microsoft worked with AZA during game development to ensure that Zoo Tycoon players learn about the responsibilities of running a zoo and how to meet physical, mental, and emotional needs of the animals, as well as provide a good experience for their virtual-zoo visitors.

Microsoft also issues a conservation-based “Community Challenge” each month to the Xbox One online community. Players are invited to vote for real-world field conservation projects, run by non-profit organizations endorsed by AZA’s Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs, that they wish to support. If the Xbox One gaming community meets the challenges, Microsoft Studios will donate \$10,000 to each project to help protect endangered animals and their habitats.

Zoo Tycoon fans met the Blue-throated Macaw Community Challenge, which will benefit the Blue-throated Macaw Conservation Program in Bolivia. Microsoft contributed \$10,000 to Asociación Armonía.

Bennett Hennessey, executive director of Asociación Armonía, said “We are working on protection of the Blue-throated Macaw, only found in the Beni savannahs of Bolivia. One of the key threats is habitat destruction. Almost the entire area of the Beni, twice the size of Portugal, has been used for cattle ranching which includes burning the fields every year. We created the Barba Azul Nature Reserve; 25,000 acres of tropical savannah in the center of the department of Beni. It protects the highest concentration of Blue-throated Macaws in the world; over 100 come into the region during the year.”

Gen Anderson, General Curator of St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park said “As the Species Survival Plan coordinator and Studbook keeper for Blue-throated Macaws, my primary focus is to maintain the genetic integrity of the species within North America. Wild populations are at risk though. This critically endangered dynamic parrot species will greatly benefit from this collaboration between Microsoft and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.”

Zoo Tycoon Blue-throated Macaw challenge video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reynYpCAEUY#t=140>

## Go Blue for Blue-throated Macaws Challenge

The ‘Go Blue for Blue-throated Macaws’ challenge was hatched-up by Barbara Heidenreich to help the critically endangered ~ 300 birds left in native Bolivia by promoting awareness and raising funds for *in situ* conservation.

It launched August 23, 2014 with Barbara issuing challenges and establishing the rules in a YouTube video featuring the gorgeous Blonde and Blue Ms. Barbara herself. <http://www.goodbirdinc.com/index.html>

She explained that when challenged (nominated), you have two choices:

1. The first is to dye your hair blue and hope people question you about it so you can explain the plight of the Blue-throated Macaw in Bolivia.
2. If you do not want to dye your hair, you can donate to Bird Endowment, an all-volunteer nonprofit organization dedicated to Saving The Blues™.

To keep the chain going, you nominate more people to take the challenge. (Many—if not most—participants have elected a “third” choice combining both of the above No. 1 and No. 2.)

