



"Going Blue" for The Bird Endowment

Thank You

Laney Rickman

It was an honor to be the Keynote speaker at the 2016 American Federation of Aviculture conference. I am thankful—on behalf of Bird Endowment—for that opportunity.

Working on that presentation made me aware of what a big role AFA has played in my life and the formation and achievements of Bird Endowment.

Got my first bird in 1990. Joined AFA that year. The cover of the 1991 issue of Watchbird magazine caught my attention. There was an article about Caninde Macaws (as they were called then) and how little was known about them. It gave some information about their status in the wild, and stated that they needed help in captivity.

Attended my first bird conference in 1992. The AFA convention was in Miami where I met Benny Gallaway, Bob Berry, Dale Thompson and other influential aviculturists. Some would become mentors. After the convention there was a tour of the private breeding facility, Luv Them Birds. My tour guide was Rick Jordan who worked there at the time. I saw my first pair of wild-caught Caninde Macaws.


After I got home from AFA we heard about an unproven pair for sale in Houston. We acquired what would come to be Founder Pair #1 in September 1992. Their first chicks hatched while I was attending the 1993 AFA convention in Salt Lake City. The parents did a fine job raising them and my parent rearing crusade began.

I looked forward to attending the AFA conventions every year. 1994 in Knoxville, 1995 in New Orleans, 1996 in Concord, 1997 in San Antonio, 1998 in Baltimore. I missed 1999 in Denver because we had acquired Founder Pair #2. Resumed as an attendee 2000 in Los Angeles and 2001 in Houston. I learned so much from the presentations, made many valuable contacts and formed lifetime friendships with speakers, vendors and other attendees.


In 2002 Bird Endowment affiliated with AFA as a Specialty Organization. Starting with the Tampa convention we had a booth each year featuring fundraising merchandise and donated raffle prizes. 2003 in San Antonio, 2004 in San Francisco, 2005 in Miami, 2006 in Dallas, 2007 in Los Angeles, 2008 in St. Louis and 2009 in Houston. Bird Endowment sponsored speakers who presented at AFA for the first time including Joe Barkowski, Diane Bock, Susan Friedman, Bennett Hennessey, Robin Shewokis and me.

From 2002 until 2009 Bird Endowment hosted its annual "Saving the Blues" cocktail reception during AFA conventions. Guests received unique party favors. Our helpful greeters also handed out tickets for door prize drawings. There was a live auction with artwork donated by generous artists. Friends volunteered as auctioneers and models.


I stopped traveling from 2010-15 to concentrate my energy on Bird Endowment's conservation breeding program for the Blue-throated Macaw, which focused on parent rearing at The Blues Conservatory™ in Texas. During that time several captive conservation milestones were achieved.



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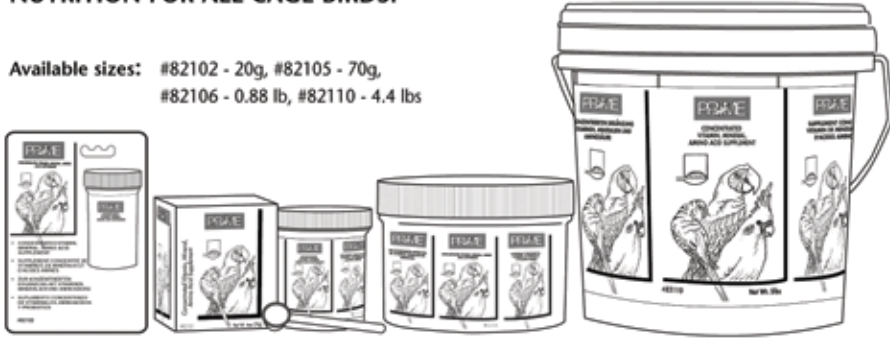


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Meanwhile in Bolivia, Bird Endowment's Nido Adoptivo™ nest box project had taken flight. The excitement of the overall progress of the Blue-throated Macaw Conservation Program certainly demanded recognition in my final presentation on Saturday afternoon.

After these many years, the 2016 conference was much akin to going back home. It was wonderful to spend time with old friends again. I missed the faces of some old regulars; but I got to see the faces of the future of AFA.