

# AFA Funds Andean Educational Film, Yellow-shouldered Amazon Field Research And Hurricane Impact Study

by Jack Clinton-Eitniear  
Chairman, AFA Conservation Committee

## Tropical Andes Film Project

**Principle Investigators:** Megan and Greg Epler Wood

The tropical Andes is a highly threatened region which is recognized for its unusually high number of endemic species and extraordinary biological diversity.

An educational film, in Spanish, on tropical Andean natural resources, is currently in production for use by environmental professionals throughout the region. The majority of the footage (10 hours) was shot at the Reserva Natural La Planada, in Narino Province, Colombia. Many endemic species were filmed, including nesting brown Inca hummingbirds, plate-billed mountain toucans and club-winged mannikins performing their unique mechanical display. In-depth, life history footage of nesting toucan barbets was also obtained.

Filmmakers Megan and Greg Epler Wood are working closely with local Colombian advisors to accurately target the film's message for local audiences.

The American Federation of Aviculture joins the World Wildlife Fund, New York Zoological Society, and the Institute of International Education (Fulbright) in financially supporting the film.

## Ecology, Breeding Biology and Conservation of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon on Margarita, Venezuela

**Principle Investigator:** Kirsten M. Silvius  
*Amazona barbadensis*, the yellow-

shouldered Amazon, is the only Venezuelan psittacine listed on CITES Appendix I. A population of less than 200 birds of the insular subspecies *A.b. rothschildi* on



*Toucan barbet (Semnornis ramphastinus)* is one of several Andean birds highlighted in a film on tropical Andean natural resources.

Margarita Island, Venezuela, is currently threatened by intensive poaching and habitat destruction. Ms. Silvius solicited funds for the initial phase of a proposed long-term study which seeks to develop a management plan for this population based on a sound understanding of its general ecology and breeding biology.

The plan will include recommenda-

tions for the legal protection of critical parrot habitat, education of the local inhabitants concerning parrot and habitat conservation and, if feasible, behavioral and habitat manipulation to increase the reproductive capacity of the parrots in the wild.

The project is jointly being funded by the AFA Conservation Fund and the Venezuelan Conservation Organization FUDENA (Foundation for the Defense of Nature).

## Preliminary Study on the Impact of Hurricane Gilbert on the Psittacine Population of Yucatan

**Principle Investigator:** Joann M. Andrews, president, Pro-Natura, Yucatan

As a result of Hurricane Gilbert (September 14, 1988), considerable damage was inflicted upon the coastline of the Peninsula of Yucatan as well as upon the interior vegetation of the state of Yucatan. Many trees lost all of their leaves and were badly scoured by strong winds. Furthermore, wild fruitbearing trees are now lacking their customary flowering, fruits and edible seeds, these having been ripped off by the 200 m.p.h. winds.

As a result of this phenomenon, flower and fruit eating fauna, notably birds and bats, have been observed in very unusual places and engaged in activities never noted before. For instance, keel-billed toucans have been seen in Merida Gardens in search of food; warblers on the east coast have been observed in new localities; and red-winged blackbirds, most frequently found on Cozumel, have flown in large numbers to the mainland.

Among the birds suffering from the lack of wild fruit are the local parrots, *Amazona albifrons nana* and *A. xantholora*. In the area of Oxxutkob, located in central Yucatan, both species of Amazons have invaded citrus groves. Labeled a plague by the local inhabitants as they destroy the oranges ready for harvest, they are being shot at and sometimes killed or captured by the angry farmers. Dr. John Ehrenberg traveled to the area to verify the report on the invasion by these birds. He reported that at 4 p.m. on December 12, 1988 over 1,000 parrots descended on the orange trees in the municipality of Dzan, and started to feed on the oranges; by 5 p.m. they flew off.

With the financial assistance of the AFA Conservation Fund, the conservation organization Pro-Natura will contract a local ornithologist and botanist to conduct a two-week study the results of which will be the development and implementation of a survival plan designed to protect the local parrot population in Yucatan. In addition, AFA Conservation Committee Chairman Jack Clinton-Eitniear will travel into the area during the end of March. A report on his trip will appear in a subsequent issue of *Watchbird* magazine. ●

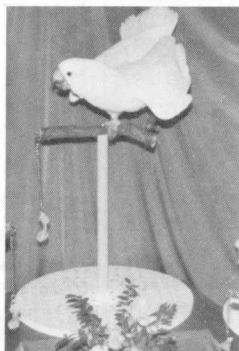
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