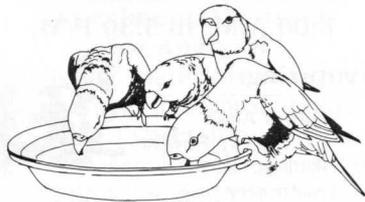


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AFA Funds Eight Conservation Projects

by Jack Clinton-Eitnear
Chair, AFA Conservation Committee

During the AFA 15th annual convention the Board of Directors approved the awarding of small grants to the following eight conservation projects:

**Assessing the status of
Madagascar's endemic land birds**

Principle Investigator:

Michael S. Putnam

The objectives of this study are: 1. to measure the density of endemic forest birds in representative habitats in protected areas; 2. to begin assessing whether there are sufficiently large populations of endemic birds in protected areas to assure their long term survival; 3. to begin characterizing the different geographic bird communities in their major habitats; 4. to provide ornithological training to a Malagasy student, and; 5. to compare different census methods in each habitat. This will facilitate follow-up monitoring by Malagasy investigators and facilitate the censusing of other protected areas.

**Determination of the status of the
Glaucous Macaw and Hyacinth**

Macaw in Argentina and Paraguay

Principle Investigator:

Dr. Manuel Nores

The aim of this project is to determine the status of both species of macaws, in suitable habitat, throughout Argentina, Paraguay and along the Paraguay River of Brazil. In order to locate areas of former occurrence of the Glaucous Macaw, holes in river gullies will be searched for feathers or other items (e.g. coconut hulls) indicating that the macaws were present. Information derived from the literature, museums, bird dealers, private zoos, and from local inhabitants will determine the specific areas targeted for the investigation. In addition, habitats in Paraguay similar to the ones where the species inhabits in neighboring areas of Brazil will be visited.

**The genetics of the Puerto Rican
Parrot, *Amazona vittata***

Principle Investigator:

M. Kelly Brock

The primary objective of the proposed study is to evaluate whether or not there could be a genetic basis for



Scarlet Macaws flying over the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve. The status and conservation of such macaws will be studied by Michael Kreger with a small grant from the AFA Conservation Fund.

Photo by Jack Clinton-Eitnear

the reproductive difficulties and the slow population recovery currently experienced by the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot. Second, a genetic management plan will be proposed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and El Departamento de Recursos Naturales de Puerto Rico to aid in the recovery of the species.

Specifically, the study will look at and compare the amount of genetic variation in three species of Amazon parrots. It is predicted that the Puerto Rican Parrots will exhibit greatly reduced genetic diversity and that there will be a high level of relatedness among individuals in the population, which could be manifested in inbreeding depression.

Natural history of the El Oro Parakeet, *Pyrrhura orcesi*
Principle Investigator: Sergio Lasso

The El Oro Parakeet was only recently discovered (1980) and described in the ornithological literature (1987). Additional information is needed to fill in the major "gaps" that exist in the literature on its life history and ecology. The current population is quite small. Due to this, consideration as a candidate in the Red Data Book (RDB) as a threatened species has been discussed. The purpose of this study is to gather additional information on the species' population, habitat preference, behavior, territoriality, feeding and nesting. Such data is necessary if a reserve is to be established effectively providing the needed resources to maintain a viable population of this species.

Cooperative breeding and habitat utilization by the Toucan Barbet, *Semnornis ramphastinus*
Principle Investigators: Carla Restrepo & Marta Lucy Mondragon

The study will concentrate upon the social organization of Toucan Barbets paying special attention to their cooperative breeding system and reproductive behavior. Specific objectives include: 1. Determining the role of helpers during the incubation, nestling, and fledgling period as well as their role in defending the nests against predators; 2. Determining the role of helpers in maintaining territories outside the reproduction period; 3. Determining territory quality and changes in size throughout the year.

Campaign for the preservation of the Seven-colored Tanager, *Tangara fastuosa*
Principle Investigator: Maria Tereza Jorge Padua

The species is listed in the Red Data Book as being endangered mainly due to its desirability as a cage bird. This study will investigate means of controlling the illegal trade in the species by means of an educational campaign involving posters, pamphlets and other media coverage.

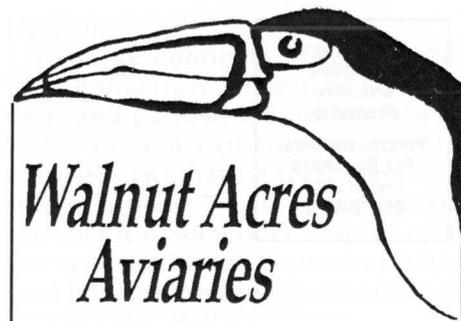
Macaw Conservation in Belize and Honduras, Central America
Principle Investigator: Michael Kreger

While containing large and remote populations of macaws little is known regarding their population parameters, dietary requirements or other aspects of their life history and ecology. Not only is such information desirable but it is necessary if a comprehensive conservation strategy is to be developed within these countries to secure their populations of macaws. This study will investigate the life history and ecology of the Scarlet Macaw, *Ara macao* in both countries as well as implement several conservation efforts including nest boxes, educational campaigns and habitat enrichment.

The use of starch-gel electrophoresis to access the degree of genetic variability in a captive population of Socorro Doves
Principle Investigator: Luis F. Baptista

As part of the Socorro Dove re-introduction project we plan to conduct some studies using starch-gel electrophoresis to access the degree of genetic variability in the captive population. As we do not yet know whether the technique will work, we wish to construct a pilot study comparing proteins of Socorro Doves, Mourning Doves and hybrids. We also have a hybrid between Socorro x *Streptopelia* and it is desirable to look at its proteins as well. This technique has been used with other species.

If this technique proves feasible, we shall be able to: 1. select birds for pairing to promote maximum outcrossing; 2. detect hybrids and backcrosses, if these exist in the captive population; 3. say something about the inheritance of the alleles involved.



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