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Book Review:

Parrots: Their Life in the Wild

by Thomas Arndt

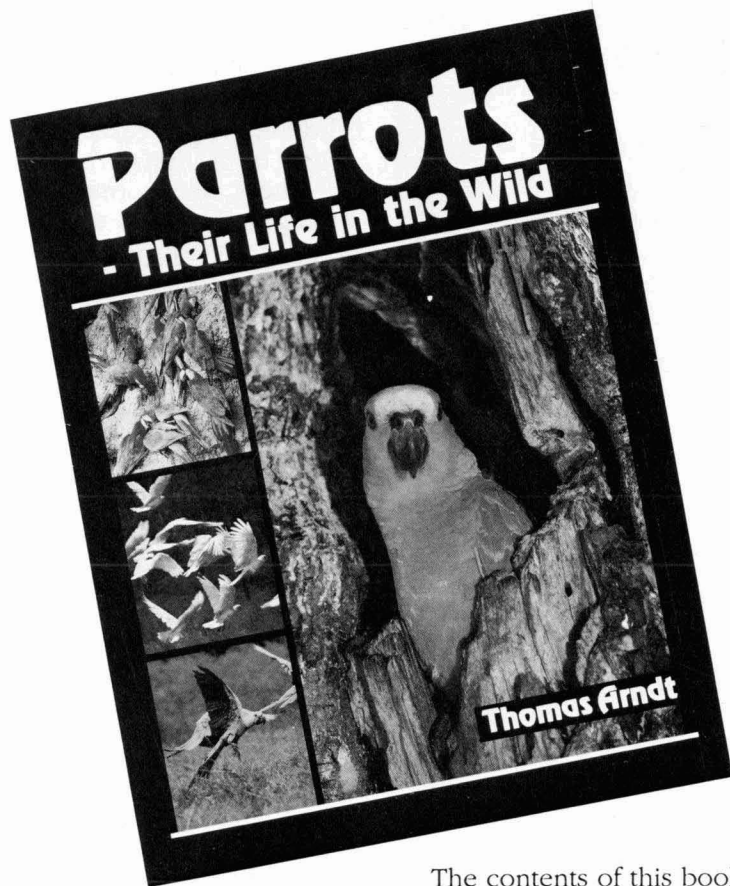
reviewed by Dale R. Thompson
Canyon Country, California

A unique parrot book. *Parrots - Their Life in the Wild* was first published in German in 1986 by Horst Muller-Verlag Walsrode. The author was Thomas Arndt, an author of many parrot books and editor of *Papageien* (translated *Parrots*), an excellent German subscription magazine on parrots both in captivity and in the wild.

Both Dale Thompson and Rainer Erhart were given copies of the German version of this book and both realized that this book was written strictly on parrots in their natural habitats. It had information that was not common knowledge to most aviculturists and parrot lovers. They both felt it should be translated to English.

A team was then formed to translate this book from German to English and later "Americanized," as straight German to English translation can be quite confusing. Two translators, Rainer Erhart and Renata Decher, were used with Dr. Erhart doing the bulk of the work. Dale Thompson coordinated the team with Janet Tassjan Hanson doing the vast computer work. The English translation of this book became available in the U.S. in December 1992.

Parrots - Their Life in the Wild gives a vast amount of information on parrots' natural feeding, nesting and many other behaviors in the wild. It includes many other types of information such as "Why are parrots so colorful?" Each chapter is, indeed, very detailed. For example, the major chapter on "What is the breeding behavior of parrots?" This chapter includes sections on choosing a partner, the Casanova, the first clutch, courtship display, the nest and the eggs, nesting in tree cavities, parrots not nesting in trees, nesting in mounds, nest builders, ground nesters, the clutch, the nursery and poor parenting. This chapter alone has



great insight to natural nesting that could be very helpful to aviculturists.

Just about every type of parrot, from lorries to Amazons, is mentioned in this book. The concluding chapter is on "Why are parrots endangered?" including several species profiles. The following is a quote from the primary translator of this book who would certainly know it well. ●

reviewed by Rainer Erhart
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Reading a book from cover to cover doesn't guarantee that you learn everything that is found in between. But translating every page in a book into English is quite a different matter. That's what I did with a newly published book *Parrots: Their Life in the Wild*, written by the well-known author Thomas Arndt. I liked what I saw and read and hoped that it could soon be made available to English speaking readers. Hence I contacted the publisher and offered my services to translate the book into English without charge. He happily agreed and the English version was finally published in 1992.

The contents of this book are quite different from other books on parrots. It doesn't tell you how to breed, feed and house them; nor does it tell you about disease or genetics, but it does tell you what all of us should know long before acquiring any new bird; their life in the wild. The various chapters guide you through the diverse habitats in which we find parrots including the rainforest, the desert even urban environments. Other chapters inform about feeding habits, courtship behavior, selecting nesting sites and defending against predators. There are also interesting sections on hunting and trapping, habitat destruction and conservation projects. The final chapters are devoted to some of the endangered parrot species including the Spix's Macaw, the Orange-bellied Grass Parakeet, and the Puerto Rican Amazon Parrot.

Though the book is informative and innovative in its treatment, it is, above all, a volume filled with splendid color photos of parrots in their natural habitat. You don't see cage wires and fancy photographic settings, just a beautiful harmony of birds feeding on their favorite fruits, grasses and seeds, sitting cautiously in front of their nesting places and drinking eagerly at the old watering hole. I guarantee you will enjoy this special treat. ●