

The Endangered Red and Blue Lory

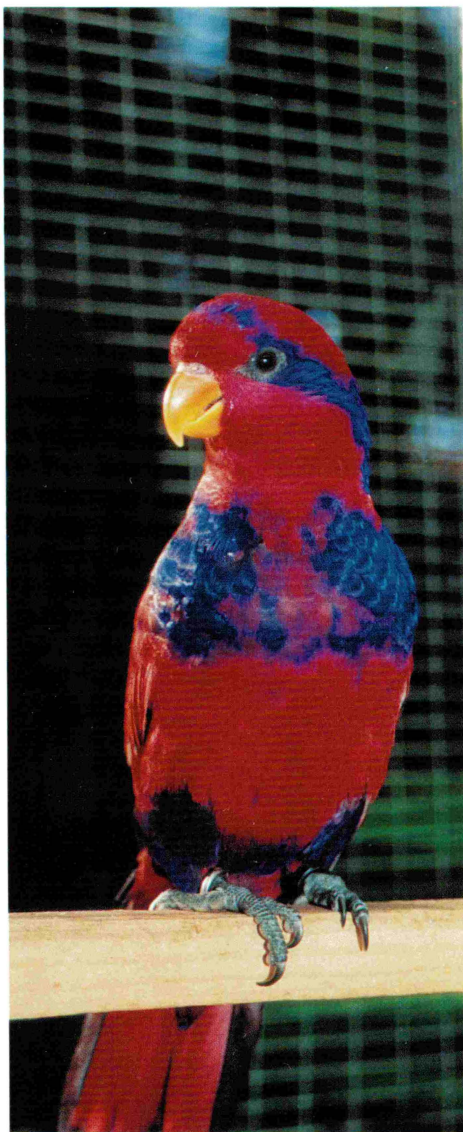
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The Red and Blue Lory *Eos histrio* has always been a rare and little known species which has existed only from a small group of islands in Indonesia and which has received almost no biological study. Three sub-species are recognized although it is widely speculated that the nominate form which originated from the islands of Sangihe, Siau and Ruang may already have become extinct. The two other sub-species; *Eos histrio taluatensis* which is found on the Talaud islands and *Eos histrio challengerii* which is found on the Nenusu islands both still exist in limited and confined populations which until recent years had been little studied and which had been left largely undisturbed.

In the last five years, however, an international trade has developed from the birds of the Talaud islands, this was considered very disturbing as the wild population that existed on these islands probably never exceeded 2,000 at any time in the past. It is now thought that somewhere in the region of 50% to 75% of the original wild population from the Talaud Islands has now been removed from the wild and has entered into the international bird trade. At the CITES meeting in Fort Lauderdale that took place at the end of 1994 the *Eos histrio* was moved to Appendix 1 of the CITES convention to try and prevent any further dissemination of the fragile remaining wild population. It was also very clear, however, that a serious field assessment needed to be carried out on the remaining populations of all three sub-species and some biological study of the species was also required given the almost total lack of any information about this species in the wild.

Dr. Frank Lambert, the principle investigator for the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN, has therefore prepared a field project which will assess the present remaining distribution and status of the *Eos histrio* on the islands of Sangihe and Talaud. It will

Photo by Roger Sweeney



The Red and Blue Lory is highly endangered in the wild. There are a few captive birds in scattered small collections that, hopefully, will breed and increase the population.

be important to see if the moving of this species to Appendix 1 of CITES has proved to be effective in preventing the further trapping of wild birds on these islands. The study will also try to provide much needed biological data about the wild lifestyle of this species which may help to better assess what further steps will be required to conserve this species in the wild. Training of local field scientists and the establishment of a long term monitoring plan with local field workers are also considered to be important features of the field project. Finally, at least two other highly important endemic bird species are found on Sangihe; the Sangihe Hanging Parrot *Loriculus catamene* and the Elegant Sunbird *Aethopyga*. The opportunity to obtain population and biological data on these endemics will also be possible during the proposed study.

The Loro Parque Foundation for the Preservation of Parrots has agreed to fund the above field study to the sum of \$14,000, which represents 50% of the total cost of carrying out the project. Other funding is also being provided by the Zoologische gesellschaft für arten- und populationschutz, the International Loriidae society and also by the AZ organization in Germany.

The Loro Parque Foundation is very pleased to act as the principal funder of this important field project as we consider the status of the *Eos histrio* to be one of the most grave situations in the current assessment of the global conservation needs of psittacines.

In captivity, a small population of *Eos histrio* does exist in a small number of specialist collections. In the 1995 EEP convention, held in Poznan (Poland), Loro Parque took a further step towards the conservation of the *Eos histrio* by petitioning the Psittacine Taxon Advisory Group to support the initiation of a European regional studbook to be established for the *Eos histrio* which will be operated by Loro Parque. ➤