

## **Worldwide protection of wild parrots - Fonds für bedrohte Papageien (Engl: Funds for Endangered Parrots)**

The Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten- und Populationsschutz e.V. (ZGAP) – (Engl: Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations) – promotes the conservation of highly endangered, but lesser known animal species, which are not usually in the public spotlight, but are nonetheless worthy of protection. While urgent, necessary measures for popular species such as mountain gorillas, giant pandas and tigers already receive much public attention, there are many species, which are threatened with extinction completely unnoticed. It is because of this that since it was founded in 1982 the ZGAP has provided scientific and financial support for conservation projects worldwide. The basic principles underlying this support include training nationals in conservation techniques as well as involving the local population in the measures taken. This concept allows the efficient and cost-effective operation of the projects. In 1997 the “Conservation des Espèces et des Populations Animales” (CEPA) ([www.cepa-association.org](http://www.cepa-association.org)), our French ZGAP sister organisation, was set up. The Strunden-Papageien-Stiftung (SPS) (Engl: Strunden Parrot Foundation), which is managed within the ZGAP, was also set up in 1998. This was followed in 2001 by the Stiftung Artenschutz im Zoobereich (Engl: Species Conservation Foundation). ([www.stiftung-artenschutz.de](http://www.stiftung-artenschutz.de))

The Fonds für bedrohte Papageien (FbP) is a working group which was set up in 1989 within the ZGAP, in which dedicated specialists become involved in the protection and conservation of parrots on an honorary basis. The fact that almost a quarter of all parrots are seriously endangered and of these a quarter are threatened with extinction led to the setting up of the working group. Measures taken in the habitat of the parrots provide the most effective way for long-term conservation. The ZGAP was worldwide the first organisation to highlight the serious situation with the Spix's Macaw, the wild population of which has disappeared in the meantime.

The FbP largely makes its own decisions about project funding. In the 20 years since it was set up some 500.000 euros have been awarded to projects. The FbP is made up of parrot experts, who have dedicated themselves to parrot conservation in the wild. It is formally devolved into a working group with a decision-making committee as well as project guardians elected from its members. It is the task of the FbP or its working group members to examine and evaluate project applications, seek out project proposals, conduct the on-going appraisal of the project work as well as prepare and organise any seminars. At present the committee members are Thomas Arndt, Andreas Bigge, Dr. Marcellus Bürkle, Detlev Franz, Hans-Jürgen Künne, Dr. Rainer Niemann, Dr. Matthias Reinschmidt, Marion Wiegel and René Wüst (spokesperson for the FbP).

Since 1997 the FbP has organised a one-day seminar every year in the autumn for members and other interested persons. It consists of presentations covering a wide range of topics relevant to parrots such as parrot conservation in the wild and the activities of the Fonds as well as the European captive breeding programme and studbooks, breeding and keeping reports of less endangered species, feeding and nutrition, veterinarian and biological topics, reports from the field and the latest developments in taxonomy. Each presentation is followed by open discussion about the topic presented. The seminars attract some 150 attendees so there is a considerable multiplier effect among German-speaking parrot keepers. The surplus achieved by the seminars is used for conservation projects. The seminars are usually held alongside a parrot and bird show or in co-operation with a bird park or zoo.

### Conservation and projects

Very many parrots are threatened or seriously endangered. The main reasons for this are the on-going habitat destruction whether through clearance with fire or settlement on the one hand or the illegal trade, which still supplies "wild-caught" species on the other. In addition to these two main reasons there still exist a range of other causes such as hunting and the persecution of birds as crop pests, the penetration of other non-native species into the habitat, changes to the habitat by people, the threat to breeding locations and nesting trees as well as the pressures on the basic food of the birds.

The FbP supports projects which conserve parrots. An especially important aspect is working closely with conservation organisations and the human population of the region concerned to ensure that through co-operation and education the measures taken for the conservation of the species and habitats are lasting. The ZGAP bases its priorities closely on the Red List of the IUCN. ([www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org))

Two examples of the work of the FbP

In the conservation work for the Santa Marta Conure (*Pyrrhura viridicata*) in Colombia FbP supports a project of the Colombian foundation Alianza para Ecosistemas Críticos (Engl: Alliance for Critical Ecosystems) ([www.alpec.org](http://www.alpec.org)). This project promotes close co-operation with the Indians living in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The endemic Santa Marta Conure acts as a key species in the education work on the uniqueness of the flora and fauna of the mountain range. The conservation project includes all participants as equal partners in the observation activities in the Indian reserve and the establishing of distribution patterns, the identification of breeding areas and the migration corridors as well the analysis of the population situation and the causes of endangerment. Through the optimising of the cheese production by small farmers in the distribution area of the parakeet with the assistance of a dairy specialist from the FbP and the setting up of a brand for the cheese products it will be attempted to safeguard the habitat structure of the parakeet in the long term. Further local products earmarked for development are honey and coffee

([www.partnerschaftsprodukte.de](http://www.partnerschaftsprodukte.de)) Another important partner in Colombia is ProAves ([www.proaves.org](http://www.proaves.org)). This organisation has been very successful in the conservation of the Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*). At present the research work into the Rusty-faced Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca amazonina*) is also being supported. Also we work with SELVA ([www.selva.org.co](http://www.selva.org.co)). In South America the FbP works furthermore with Asociación Armonía ([www.armonia-bo.org](http://www.armonia-bo.org)) in Bolivia and with Aquasis ([www.aquasis.org](http://www.aquasis.org)) in Brazil.

The problematical situation with the Citron-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata*) on the Indonesian island of Sumba is different to that of the parrots of South America. The main causes here are the loss of nesting opportunity as well as the capture and trade for the black market. In addition to the collection and evaluation of basic information on the species distribution, population density and the importance of the various factors threatening the species, the control and monitoring of trade is a main project task. Recently the successful prosecution of poachers has been achieved for the first time. At the same time a strategy to arouse the awareness of the local population has been developed, including, for example, visiting schools and showing an educational film produced by the FbP. As many small schools do not have an electricity supply, showing such a film is always a major event. The local partner for this is Burung Indonesia ([www.burung.org](http://www.burung.org)).

Further examples of parrot species in funded projects in Asia are the Umbrella Cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*) on Halmahera and the Red-vented Cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*) in the Philippines. There we work with the Katala organisation ([www.philippinecockatoo.org](http://www.philippinecockatoo.org)).

Several ZGAP members are in the IUCN Conservation Commission and IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Why not become a member and support our common goals!

[www.zgap.de](http://www.zgap.de) and [www.papageienfonds.de](http://www.papageienfonds.de)