




WORLD
PARROT
DAY

HELP US
CELEBRATE
MAY 31, 2021

Design by Stephanie Casanova

 @casanova_art

Dear Parrot-Holding Zoos and Aquariums:

World Parrot Day is on May 31! This annual awareness day serves to celebrate parrots and highlight the threats to wild and captive parrots around the world.

The AZA Parrot TAG is asking for your support in celebrating this event. There are many ways your institution can engage guests for this event! This packet provides a variety of resources that can be catered to your institution's mission, messaging, and parrot collection.

This year our CALL TO ACTION is: **"I will protect parrots by engaging in responsible pet ownership"**. By using a unified message with guests throughout AZA we can make a bigger impact across our organizations.

While any parrots in your collection can create a connection with guests using these materials or your own, this year we are also providing extra information on a "spotlight species": the **Thick-billed parrot** (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) - pages 18-23 of this slide deck. This endangered AZA SSP species is endemic to Mexico and used to range into the mountains of the southern United States, making it a great spotlight species for catching the attention of our guests.

Thank you for supporting this important and fun awareness day in 2021!

Sincerely,

Jessica Theule JTheule@sdzwa.org

Jessica Meehan JMeehan@denverzoo.org

And the Parrot TAG Steering Committee



The AZA Parrot Taxon Advisory Group's Mission:
*The AZA Parrot TAG will inspire best practices in
parrot management, population sustainability,
education, and conservation.*

For more information on the AZA Parrot TAG, visit the
[2020 Regional Collection Plan](#)

How to Use this Slide Deck

This slide deck includes a collection of ideas and reproducible resources to help you create your own World Parrot Day event!

Page 4: AZA Parrot TAG's Call to Action messaging for World Parrot Day 2021

Page 5-7: General and surprising information about parrots to use in your messaging

Page 8-9: Ideas for online and in-person activities

Page 10-16: Materials to use in your activities - add your institution's logo!

Page 17: Parrot TAG recommended conservation organizations to highlight and support

Page 18-23: Spotlight Species Thick-billed parrot

World Parrot Day 2021: AZA Parrot TAG Call to Action:

I will protect parrots by engaging in responsible pet ownership.

- Before choosing a parrot as a pet I will research its needs carefully and make sure I can provide the best care for my pet.
 - Parrots are social animals and need constant companionship
 - Parrots have unique and often expensive dietary needs
 - Parrots need space to fly to be as healthy as possible
 - Parrots are destructive and need a lot of enrichment (toys) to chew
 - Parrots can live decades longer than dogs and cats
- I will only obtain ethically-sourced parrots as pets
 - Many pet parrots are taken from the wild, which harms populations.
 - Typically 50% of parrots captured for the pet trade die before making it to the pet store.
 - Many reputable rescue organizations are looking for homes for parrots
 - Always check for the source/history of the parrot before buying one from a store.
 - Checking for a closed ring band on the leg is a good place to start - these can only be placed on young chicks in breeding programs.

With commitment to ethical sourcing and quality care, budgerigars, cockatiels and other parrots can make good pets!



Tim Snyder, Brookfield Zoo



Buffalo Zoo

What Makes a Parrot?

While species vary dramatically, parrots have some common characteristics that define them as a taxonomic group:

- Upper beak hooked over the lower beak
- Zygodactyl toes (2 in front, 2 in back)
- Intelligence
- Powder down
 - Feathers that break down into powder for preening
- Psittacofulvens
 - Pigments for red, orange and yellow coloration unique to parrots



Joe Barkowski, Sedgwick County Zoo



Did You know?

1. There are over 415 different types of parrots in the world

Parrots are a diverse family of birds that range in size from the Kakapo, which weighs as much as an average house cat, to the tiny Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, that weighs an ounce. Almost 45% of parrot species are considered in threat of becoming extinct

2. Parrots live on every continent on Earth except for Antarctica

Most people think of parrots as only living in tropical environments, but in fact some live in the arid climates or even the snow. There used to be two species of parrots native to the United States- the Carolina Parakeet and the Thick-billed Parrot

3. Parrots eat a wide variety of foods

There is a common belief that parrots only eat seeds and nuts. Many species are omnivorous meaning they eat almost anything- fruit, seeds, nuts, insects and even meat. Some species like Lories and Lorikeets are specialized nectar feeders and have a bristled tongue to help them eat.



Surprising Parrot Facts!

- Tool use has been recorded in parrots, notably the greater vasa parrot, which uses pebbles to grind calcium powder from stones [New evidence of tool use discovered in parrots - News and events, University of York](#)
- The kea, a New Zealand parrot, is the first non-mammal proved to have an “infectious laugh” - a play call that causes kea to begin playing when they hear it. [Positive emotional contagion in a New Zealand parrot: Current Biology \(cell.com\)](#)
- The palm cockatoo from Australia and New Guinea creates human-like music by drumming with sticks in a regular and individualized pattern [\(PDF\) Tool-assisted rhythmic drumming in palm cockatoos shares key elements of human instrumental music \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- The African grey parrot has the ability to mimic human words, count, recognize colors, materials, and shapes, as well as recognize the concept of zero. [Research and Links - Alex Foundation](#)
- Feather pigments unique to parrots, Psittacofulvens, were found to be resistant to bacterial degradation. [Colourful parrot feathers resist bacterial degradation \(nih.gov\)](#)



Kea, Jessica Meehan



African grey parrot, Ashley Arimborgo

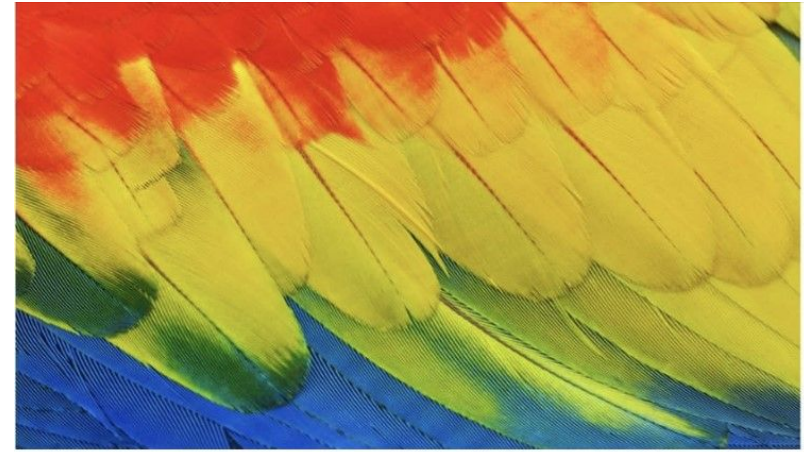


Bruce Watts, Cape York, Queensland, Australia

Social Media

The easiest way to engage with a large audience is to post on social media and/or your institution's website. Here are some sample captions/content for you to use:

- **CALL TO ACTION 2021: I will protect parrots by engaging in responsible pet ownership.** Parrots may not be the best pet for everyone – they can live a long time, are loud, messy, expensive and have specialized diets and high social needs. You can take action to protect parrots by making sure a parrot is right for you before adopting it, and making sure it comes from a breeding program rather than from wild sources.
- The order to which parrots belong--*Psittaciformes*--consists of roughly 415 species. The IUCN lists 189 species (45%!) as Near Threatened or higher. Parrots are threatened for many different reasons. Some direct threats include poaching for their characteristically colorful feathers or for the pet trade.
- Parrots, like many other species, are threatened by habitat loss, primarily due to unsustainable farming practices. Palm oil in particular is a product that is often farmed using clear-cutting techniques that destroy habitats for many animals. You can take action by buying products that use sustainable palm oil - download [Cheyenne Mountain Zoo's app](#) to help you shop sustainably!



Parrot TAG

Environmental
Conservation
Organization

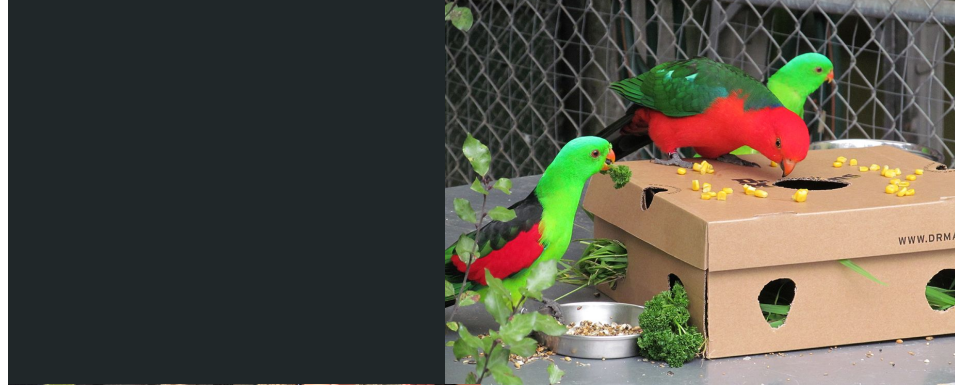


**Be sure to check out and share the
Parrot TAG Facebook and Instagram
pages**

Onsite Activities

Join other zoos in hosting activities onsite to share parrots with your guests! Use the pre-made activities in this slide deck to create fun activities.

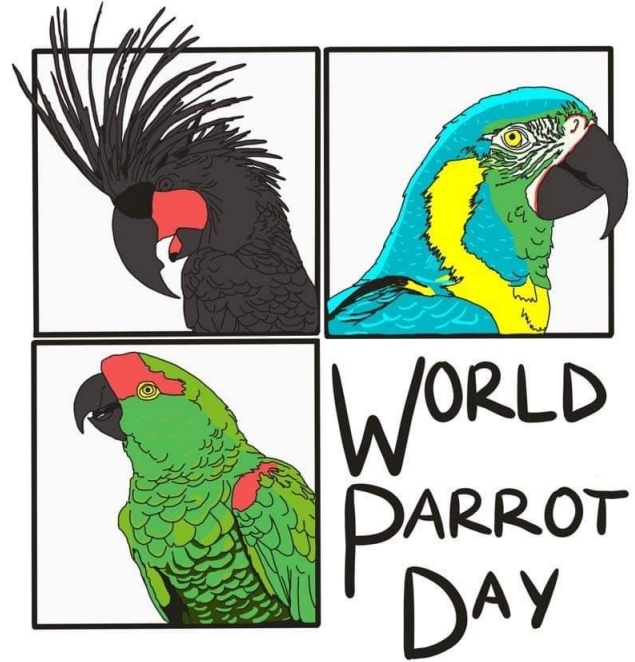
- Have a special enrichment session for your parrots or even have public help make approved enrichment for the birds
- Have a Parrot Passport Adventure through your zoo
 - Create a passport that people can get stamped at various locations throughout your zoo where parrots are located and offer up parrot facts at each stamp spot (see pages 10-11)
- Offer supplies to make paper feathers and talk about the importance of feathers in the headdress of various cultures (page 12)
- Have kids make a Parrot Promise: have kids color write down the promise they want to make to parrots for a better future (page 13)
- Kids coloring (pages 14-16)
- Host in-person or virtual keeper talks--show off your parrots!
- For info about SSP species in your collection, check out the [2020 Parrot TAG Regional Collection Plan](#) and find the Species Information Pages (pages 28-47 in the linked RCP).



Your Zoo
Logo here



Parrot Passport



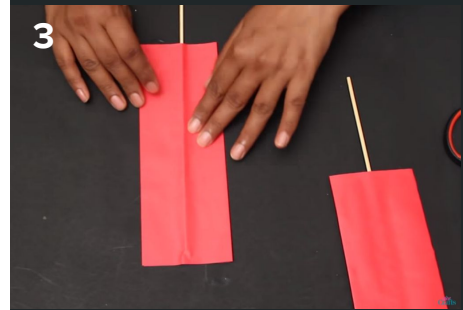
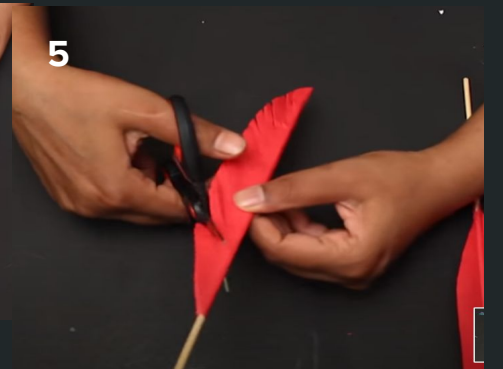
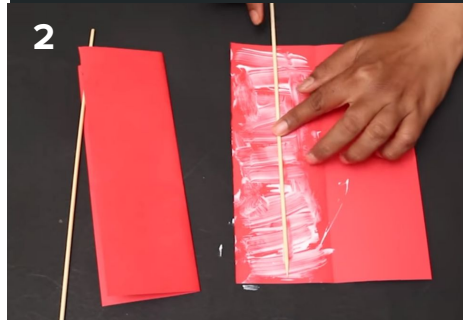
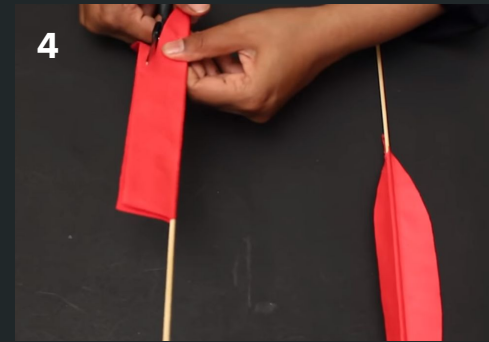
Paper Feathers

Items needed

- Colorful paper -It's easiest if you cut construction paper in half ahead of time to make 9x6 pieces
- Scissors
- Wooden sticks (skinny and round are best)
- Glue

- 1) Fold each piece of paper in half
- 2) Place glue on one side and put stick in middle
- 3) Then fold paper over stick to make a paper popsicle
- 4) Fold paper over stick and cut paper into shape of feather
- 5) Then cut lines inward towards stick to make the feather barbs

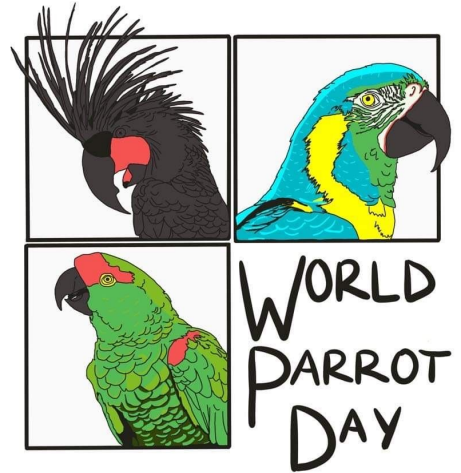
Learn more about the importance of paper feathers here:
<http://armoniabolivia.org/2016/09/24/six-thousand-macaw-s-saved-by-armonias-alternative-feather-program/>





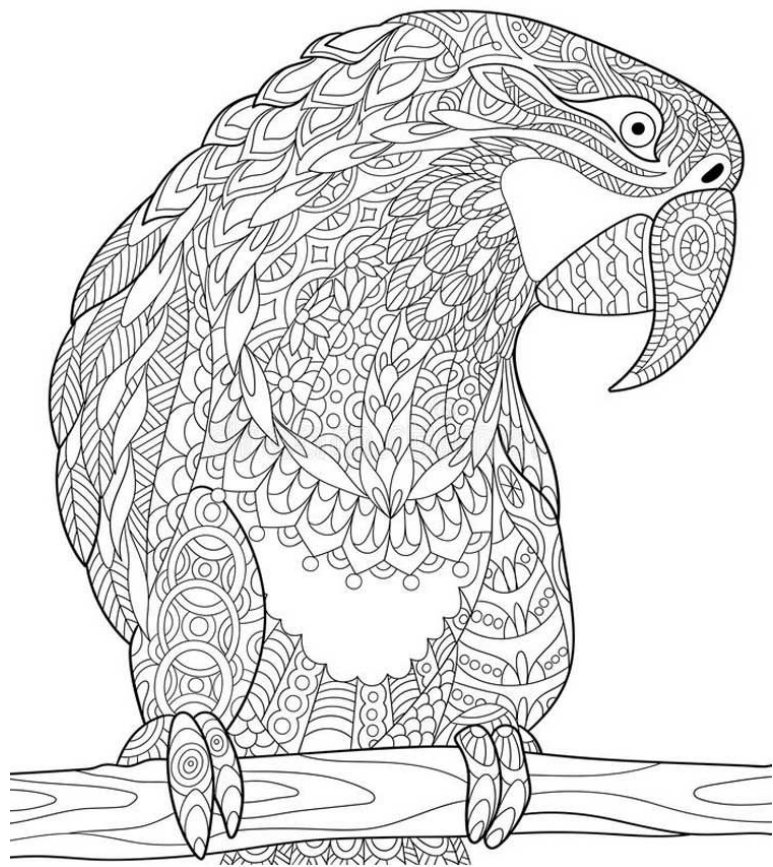
Your Zoo Logo here

I promise









Original Drawing
by
Diana S. S. S.

How You Can Help

Support a Parrot TAG recommended parrot conservation organization such as:

- Thick-billed Parrot Project via San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (<https://secure3.convio.net/sdzoo/site/Donation>)
- Nido Adoptivo Blue-Throated Macaw nest box project (www.birdendowment.org)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Guatemala Scarlet Macaw Recovery (<https://guatemala.wcs.org/en-us/Wildlife/Scarlet-macaw.aspx>)
- Kea Conservation Trust (<https://www.keaconservation.co.nz/>)



2021 Spotlight Species: Thick-billed Parrot

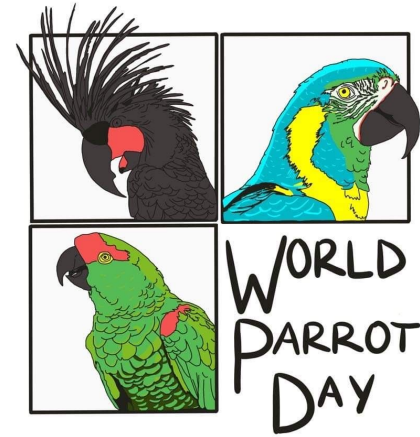


Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha

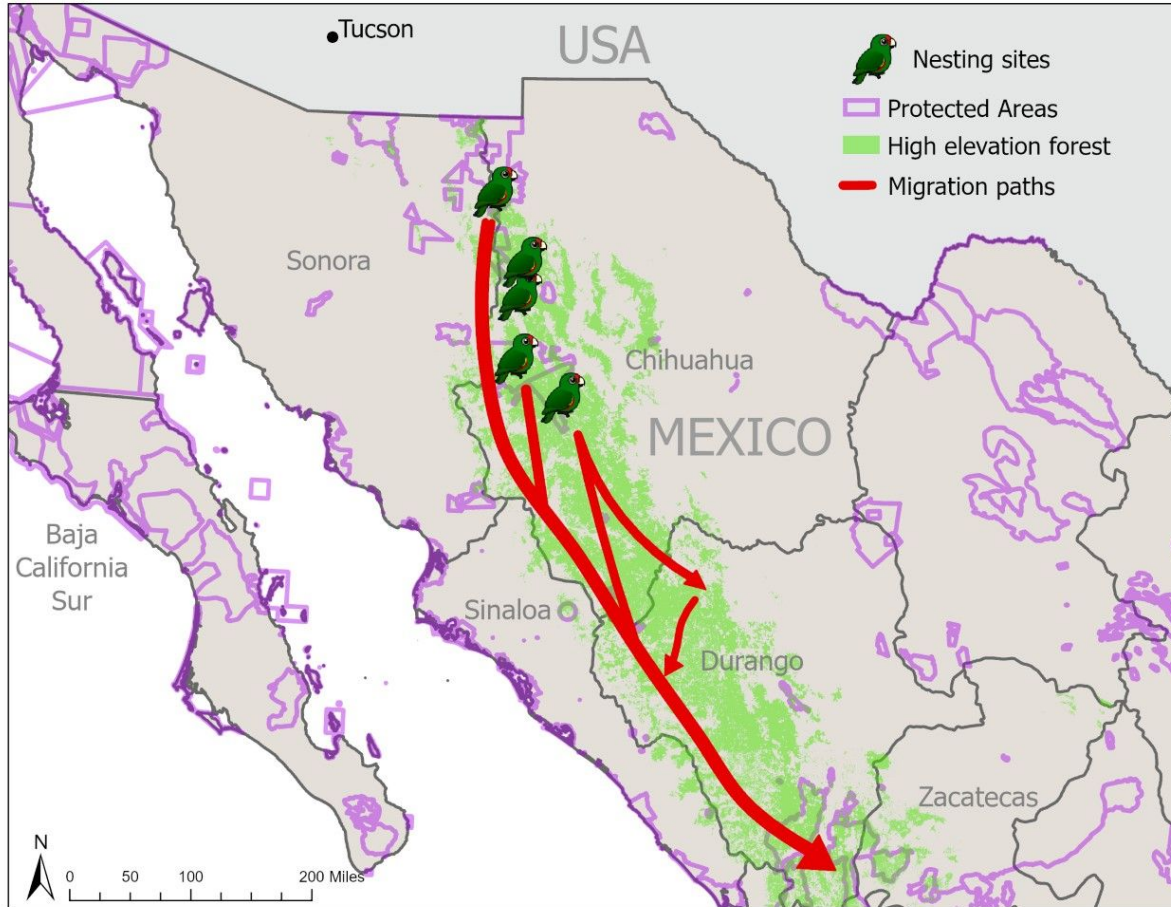
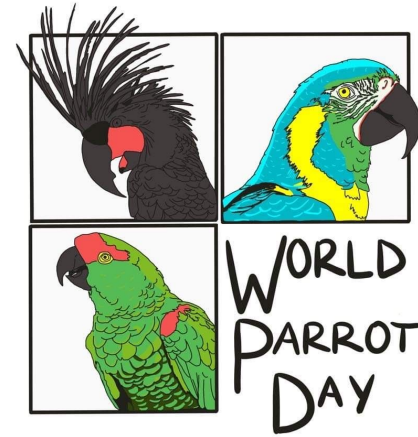


Species Fast Facts

- The species once ranged from southern areas of Arizona and New Mexico all the way to Venezuela in South America,
- They are now found mostly in the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains of northern Mexico
- Thick-billed Parrots prefer to live at higher elevation forests, not in tropical climates like many other parrots
- They mainly eat pine seeds (piñon nuts), using their powerful beak to crack the outer shell
- Like many other parrots, Thick-billed Parrots tend to fly in flocks of 12-1,000 birds
- They build their nests in the cavities of dead trees and often prefer to use old hollows made by woodpeckers or flickers
- Their nesting range tends to be at higher elevations, possibly due to their preference for eating pine nuts



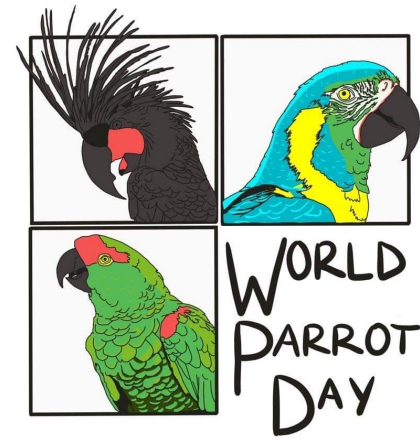
Species Migration



Thanks to recent research efforts, the migration pattern of the Thick-billed Parrot has now been documented for the first time

Species Conservation

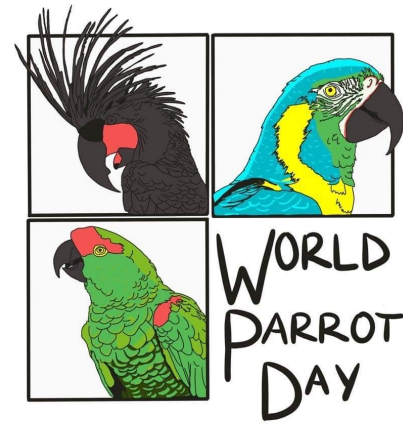
The Thick-billed Parrot conservation program is a collaboration partners at San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, Organización Vida Silvestre A.C. (OVIS), Arizona Fish & Wildlife Department, and World Parrot Trust. They have recently begun deploying song meters to record the vocalizations of the parrots around their key breeding sites.



Species Conservation

Thus far the program has successfully deployed 20 transmitters on wild parrots to track their migrations and habitat use. An additional 10 transmitters are planned for deployment this breeding season.

Use of these transmitters allowed tracking of the species movement patterns for the first time as they undertook their southerly migrations to their wintering sites, which were previously undefined.



A young Thick-billed Parrot fit with a lightweight solar-powered transmitter courtesy of James Sheppard

Species Conservation

The current binational partnership is achieving some great successes in Mexico with the protection and restoration of their wild populations. However, the species is still listed as endangered by IUCN and their numbers continue to decline.

Thick-billed Parrots are at a critical juncture in terms of preventing the species from slipping into Critically Endangered status.

All donations from the AZA Parrot TAG's World Parrot Day celebration will be used to help with conservation field efforts and the acquisition of tracking equipment

<https://secure3.convio.net/sdzoo/site/Donation>

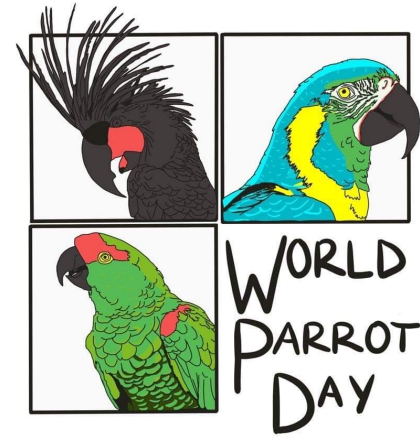


Photo courtesy of San Diego Zoo wildlife Alliance

