

Putting More Parrots on the Endangered Species Act

...What does it mean?

Fish & Wildlife is Evaluating More Parrots for the ESA

Fish & Wildlife recently found 4 species of macaws, 3 species of cockatoos, and 2 species of amazon parrots to be warranted to be included in the Endangered Species Act. Also under review is the Blue Throated Macaw.

Species	Finding	Federal Register Cite
Scarlet macaw	Endangered (Southern)	77 Fed. Reg. 40222
Military macaw	Endangered	77 Fed. Reg. 40172
Great green macaw	Endangered	77 Fed. Reg. 40172
Hyacinth macaw	Endangered	77 Fed. Reg. 39965
Philippine cockatoo (Red Vented)	Endangered	76 Fed. Reg. 49202
Yellow-crested cockatoo (Lesser Sulphur Crested)	Endangered	76 Fed. Reg. 49202
White cockatoo (Umbrella)	Threatened - Special Rule	76 Fed. Reg. 49202, Id. at 49233-34
Yellow billed parrot (Jamaican Yellow Bill)	Threatened - Special Rule	76 Fed. Reg. 62740 76 Fed. Reg. 62752-53
Red crowned parrot (Green Cheeked or Mexican Red Headed)	Warranted but precluded	76 Fed. Reg. 62016
Blue-headed macaw	Not warranted	76 Fed. Reg. 63480
Crimson shining parrot	Not warranted	76 Fed. Reg. 49202
Grey-cheeked parakeet	Not warranted	76 Fed. Reg. 63480

If a species is considered endangered, when the ruling takes effect (at this point, July 2013 is the target date) interstate commerce will be prohibited in those species except between approved conservation breeders with Captive Bred Wildlife permits. This means that they can no longer be sold or bought as pets except within the state where they are bred or already reside. It also means that rescues will not be able to place birds across state lines except to a CBW permit holder (meaning a breeding situation) or to an educational outreach with the bird remaining the property of the rescue or sanctuary. Some states, including Virginia, Rhode Island and Illinois, immediately adopt the ESA and make it tougher; in those states it will be immediately illegal to even possess one of these species without a permit.

Threatened species can have a special rule applied which allows continued interstate commerce.

What does this mean?

- For pet parrot owners, finding a friend or mate for an existing bird, or acquiring a new bird of these species from another state will be impossible. When the time comes and a family can no longer care for their birds, finding the best home possible for an existing bird may have to be compromised, unless they are donated to a sanctuary. At the individual state level, within the states that automatically adopt stricter ESA regulations (including Virginia, Illinois and Rhode Island) well-loved and cared-for pets will be illegal and their families will be put at legal risk for possessing them.

- For shelters and rescues, it certainly will be more difficult to place these birds as they will be limited to being placed within the state where the shelter or rescue is located, or be sent to another state to a person with a CBW permit, or sent as an educational outreach bird and remain property of the sanctuary. Within states with stricter laws, it could be illegal for these organizations to possess these birds, depending on the specific state's laws. Plus, there could be an in pouring of suddenly illegal-to-possess birds into already over-crowded facilities.

- For breeders, the market will dramatically shrink and the numbers bred will significantly decline. Few breeders have Captive Bred Wildlife permits, so they will not be able to sell or buy these birds from other states. These permits are expensive and difficult to obtain, and must be renewed annually. If their markets are limited to just within their state, those markets become saturated, and eventually breeders stop breeding and the US loses the genetic ark that

responsible aviculturists have maintained. If the breeder lives in a state with stricter laws, it will be illegal for them to possess these birds without a permit.

- For the parrots in the wild, with demand continuing in the US despite the illegality of interstate commerce, these birds will face increasing pressure by poachers and smugglers. Currently, domestic aviculture meets the very vast majority of demand in the US; there is very little smuggling any longer.
- For avian veterinarians, toy manufacturers, food manufacturers, cage manufacturers, play stand manufacturers, retail stores, groomers, boarding facilities, behavior and training experts and others who make products or provide services for parrots, the population for their business will slowly shrink. How does this help the US economy or birds in the wild?

Why has this occurred?

Friends of Animals and WildEarth Guardians sued the US Fish & Wildlife Service to pursue putting these parrots on the ESA. It is their stated goal to eliminate the captive bred bird trade in the United States.

If they are endangered, shouldn't they be protected by the ESA?

Putting foreign species on the ESA does NOTHING to help the species in the wild. There is no program in place and no funding available for Fish & Wildlife to support or manage programs in other countries, where they have no jurisdiction. All it does is reduce the breeding in the US and reduce the gene pool in this country. Examples are the Golden Conure, the Vinaceous Amazon and the Bali Mynah, which are disappearing from aviculture. What HAS helped the species in the wild are the in-country conservation programs and eco-tourism, many of which are financially supported by aviculturists and their customers. Many of these species are recovering in their native habitats thanks to these programs. What good does it do for the birds in the wild to limit aviculture in the US and increase the demand for smuggled birds? And this is the tip of the iceberg, as most parrot species are either threatened or endangered, according to CITES, more such petitions will follow this one. The opportunities for people to appreciate and enjoy these species will decline. Without visibility, conservation funding will suffer.

What can you do?

- **Like and broadly share** "*Fight to Keep Parrots In Our Homes*" on Facebook, where ongoing postings with news and potential actions are being posted.
 - o If you don't use facebook, download the summary and action plan .pdf document from <http://avalonaviary.com/ESA/UrgentESA.pdf>
 - o BROADLY SHARE this document and the Facebook page
- **SPEAK UP!**
 - o Write your representatives in Washington, the Fish & Wildlife Service, PIJAC (lobbyists for the pet industry)
 - o Put your comments in the F&W request for feedback open until April 22nd for the Great Green, Military and Hyacinth
 - o Download the UrgentESA .pdf document for links and sample letters
 - o Sign the petition from Fight to Keep Parrots In Our Homes! Please join this campaign: http://www.change.org/petitions/fish-wildlife-service-stop-putting-parrots-on-the-us-endangered-species-act-3?share_id=OpsgrblwPS&utm_campaign=mailto_link&utm_medium=email&utm_source=share_petition
- **Financially support** PIJAC and Fight to Keep Parrots In Our Homes. Stay informed. We will need lobbying and legal representation and may have to file a petition to "delist" some species, and maybe a class action suit. No funding, not much happens except we sit by and watch our birds, one by one, disappear from US aviculture. <http://fundrazr.com/campaigns/2TbT9?activity=92wJb1&psid=6802417fa3d340daab0933f8e535cbad>