

Final Report
Community-led Hispaniolan Parrot conservation at Jaragua National
Park, Dominican Republic

Date of report:	10 August, 2009
REPORT AGAINST PROPOSED ACTIVITIES	
1.1 Educational materials related to parrot conservation for local community designed, printed and disseminated.	<p>Parrot Trail information flyer</p> <p>A two-sided color brochure was designed to provide information to visitors on the parrot trail (see Annex I). It includes a trail map, with directions and description, a short writing on why parrots should not be in captivity as well as information on common plants and animals that can also be seen on the trail. The second page of the brochure (containing the map) was designed so it can be reproduced as a flyer and used on its own.</p>
1.2. "Parrot Trail" developed to see and learn about parrots in the wild	<p>Program of Parrot Trail visit for school children, youth groups, other visitors, etc.</p> <p>With the help of Serge Aucoin, wildlife biologist and member of Grupo Jaragua, we have designed a circuit trail in the area of Cacos, near Oviedo, where parrots could be easily seen in the wild.</p> <p>Serge lived in Oviedo from 23 March-30 April of 2009 to gather data on parrot observations near Oviedo to decide on the best trail placement. He carefully registered all parrots seen, times and their GPS positions. More details are on Serge's report, presented on Annex II. Views of part of the trail are on Figs. 1 and 2.</p>



Figure 1. View of part of the Parrot Trail.



Figure 2. View of another part of the trail.

Pilot test of “Parrot Trail” with local children and youth groups to improve program.

We tested the parrot trail with children (various grade levels) from Oviedo during the endemic bird Festival of in 22 May of 2009 and also with ninth grade level children from Santo Domingo that came on May 1st 2009 (see Figs. 3 – 5).



Figure 3. Esteban Garrido guiding local children of Oviedo on a test visit to the the parrot trail.



Figure 4. Esteban Garrido and Serge Aucoin guiding schoolchildren from Santo Domingo in the Parrot Trail. Here they are looking at a tarantula (cacata).



Figure 5. Children observing parrots at the Parrot Trail.

Parrot Trail field activity data sheet

A short , one page activity sheet, based on parrots and other plants and animals seen on the trail was designed to be completed by schoolchildren from 6th grade and up (see Annex III)

2.1 Increased capacity of the Jaragua National Park IBA-LCG on use of the “Parrot Trail” and related educational materials

Training meetings of LCG to guide Parrot Trail walks

Serge Aucoin, Yolanda León and Esteban Garrido (from Oviedo) have trained members of the main local community group of Oviedo, Voluntarios Comunitarios de Jaragua on the characteristics and use of the so they can guide visits there. A training meeting was conducted on July 10th at Grupo Jaragua’s headquarters in Oviedo (see Figs. 6 and 7). Also, on-site training was done throughout trail design by S. Aucoin in the field with VCJ members Gerson Feliz and Rubio during March-May.



Figure 6. Yolanda León and Esteban Garrido during a training session on the parrot educational material and trail with local community group in Oviedo.



Figure 7. Training session on the parrot educational material and trail with local community group in Oviedo.

Test visits with LCG for training of Parrot Trail walks

The parrot trail was visited with 6 groups of 15 to 20 children from the Grupo Jaragua Summer camp during 24 and 25 July 2009 (see Figures ??). On all visits children saw parrots (up to 30 individuals) and enjoyed their visit thoroughly. Kids from Oviedo, Tres Charcos, La Colonia, El Cajuil, and even the Haitian town of Anse à Pitres participated.



Figure 8. Parrot trail visit led by Dawaira Méndez and Esteban Garrido.



Figure 9. One of the groups of Jaragua Summer Camp 09 during a visit to parrot trail



Figure 10. One of the groups of Jaragua Summer Camp 09 during a visit to parrot trail

Exchange visit with Parque del Este IBA-LCG to visit parrot area

On January 2009 we did a two day visit to Saona island, del Este National Park, with members and collaborators of Grupo Jaragua from Oviedo. These included: Yolanda León, Dawaira Méndez, Pablo Féliz and park ranger Bienvenido Pérez Turbí.

There, we worked with Pelagio Paulino, a local leader and resident of the town of Mano Juan, Saona Island, already collaborating with sea turtle conservation in collaboration with Grupo Jaragua. Mr. Paulino took us to the cacheo palm (*Pseudophoenix sargentii* sub *saonae*) forest nearby Mano Juan, where he says parrots are known to nest (Figs 11 -13).

The cacheo palm from Saona is a regionally endemic palm, closely related to the cacheo de Oviedo palm found in Jaragua (*Pseudophoenix ekmanii*), where parrots more frequently nest. In Jaragua, we have been surveying nests in the cacheo forest since 2006. The Saona palms have a much thinner trunk, so it would be interesting to see if less chicks are laid there. It is possible, that Sabal palm (*Sabal umbraculifera*) is also used in Saona by parrots, given its abundance and also local reports.

Mr. Paulino also told us that people come from the

mainland to take the parrot chicks for the pet trade, but that he hasn't been following up closely this in recent years. We found one cacheo palm cut in the typical way poachers do to extract parrot chicks in Jaragua (Fig. 13). However, we could not re-visit the area during the nesting season (April-June) because of the need to be in Oviedo for parrot nest conservation activities there. Since then, we have discussed with an environmental group called ECOPARQUE from La Romana, the nearest city to Saona the possibility of starting a similar survey effort Saona for the next year, but funding is still not secured.



Figure 11. On the road to the cacheo palm area near Mano Juan, Saona Island, del Este National Park.



Figure 12. Cacheo de la Saona, Saona island, del Este National Park.



Figure 13. Destroyed cacheo palm in Saona island, presumably for parrot nest poaching on previous year or more.



Figure 14. Bienvenido Pérez Turbí (from Oviedo) and Pelagio Paulino (from Saona) on boat going to Saona island.



Figure 15. Dawaira Méndez from Oviedo and kids from Saona island.

Other activities carried out

On July 31, we collaborated with a team from US-Fish and Wildlife Service Puerto Rico to install Parrot observation platforms nearby the trail area (Fondo Paradí) park station. These tree platforms can be used by trained personnel to count parrots seasonally and learn more about them in Jaragua National Park.

REPORT AGAINST EXPECTED RESULTS

Educational materials related to parrot conservation for local community designed, printed and disseminated.

90% Design and preliminary printing are done. Final print outs are underway (s).

“Parrot Trail” developed to see and learn about parrots in the wild

100% achieved

Increased capacity of the Jaragua National Park IBA-LCG on use of the "Parrot Trail" and related educational materials	100% achieved
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ANNEX I. Parrot trail brochure (pages 1 and 2)

Algunas de las plantas que puedes ver en el sendero:



almacigo



cotinilla



guao



caimito

Otros animales que puedes ver en el sendero:



barrancoli



Ligus



cacata



julian chivi




Para más información www.grupojaragua.org.do

Sendero de la Cotorra

Oviedo, República Dominicana




Grupo Jaragua

La cotorra de La Española (Amazona ventralis) está amenazada de extinción debido a la destrucción del monte y sobre todo al robo de sus pichones usados como mascotas.

En este sendero podrás ver las cotorras y aprender sobre ellas en su estado libre, escuchar su alegre y silbado canto, y quizás también verlas comer.

Además de ser muy inteligentes, las cotorras tienen un papel importante en el ecosistema, ya que ayudan a dispersar semillas y a reforestar. Por esto, no deben estar cautivas.

Después de visitar el sendero, esperamos que nunca más quieras ver una cotorra cautiva.



Ubicación: Zona de Cacosa/Fondo Paradi, Municipio de Oviedo, Provincia Pedernales. Está en la zona de amortiguamiento del Parque Nacional Jaragua. Toma aproximadamente 20 minutos en vehículo desde Oviedo.

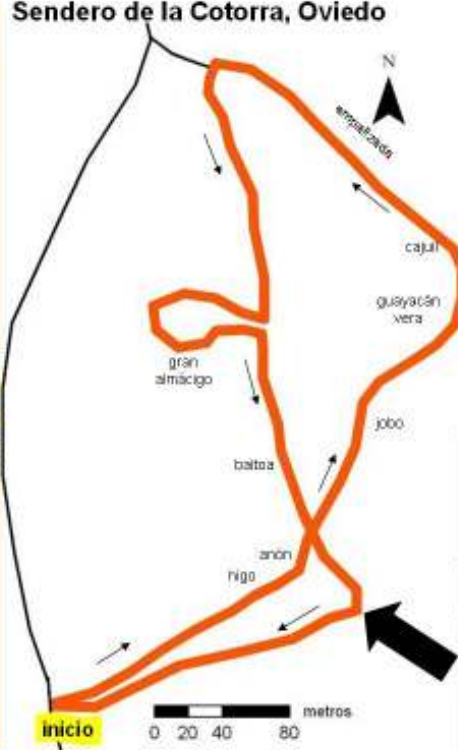
Longitud: 1.25 km

Duración: 1 hora aproximadamente


Grado de dificultad: bajo

¿Que llevar? Gama o sombrero, zapatos deportivos cerrados, cámara y binoculares, si tienes) y... ¡mucho ánimo!

Sendero de la Cotorra, Oviedo



0 20 40 80 metros

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Annex II

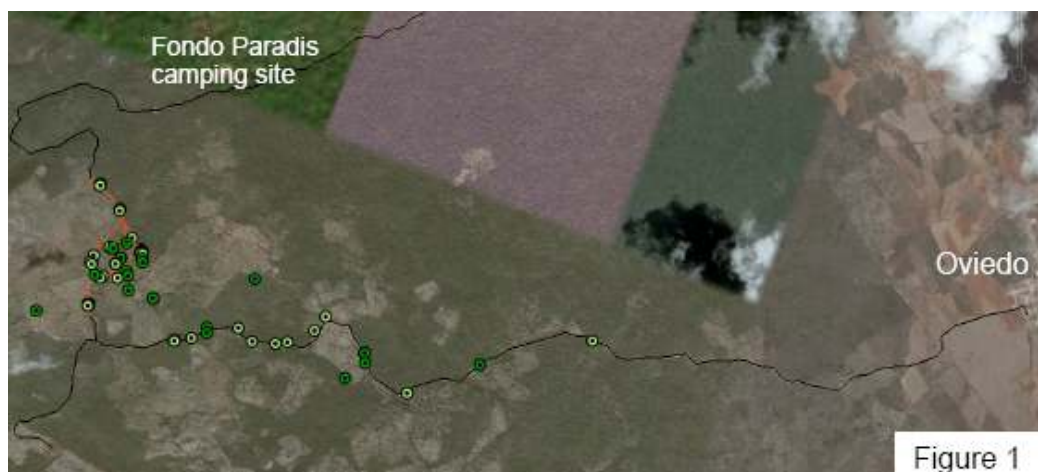
Parrot Trail Report

Serge Aucoin, May 31, 2009

Parrot trail preparations (in Oviedo) and all observations were conducted from 23 March to 30 April 2009. Yolanda, Esteban, and I decided on the following criteria prior to establishing the trail:

1. The trail would favor observations of parrots and other wildlife in Medina's farming area and be near to at least one of three parrot nest boxes currently in place.
2. The trail would have surrounding trees and flora upon which parrots are known to feed (e.g., amalcigo, guau).
3. The trail would be made readily accessible to most people (i.e. including the elderly, obese, etc.).
4. The trail would offer a short route and a long route (with access to Fondo Paradis if feasible).

To establish appropriate trail routes, I scouted much of the enclosed farming area at various times for 9 d and some of the area in Fondo Paradis for 3 d. During this period, all trees that were seen to harbor parrots were noted (Fig. 1: dark green circles).



To further justify the chosen placement of the trail, trees that harbored parrots while working on the trail (short route in red) and opportune observations of parrots elsewhere were also noted (Fig. 1: light green circles). Parrots were frequently seen flying overhead, feeding (mostly in small groups but up to >40 individuals), and as near as ~0.5 km from Oviedo (not indicated on Figure 1).

The parrot trail was completed on 25 April (fulfilling the four above criteria, including an established route to Fondo Paradis). Esteban, Denise, Yolanda and I successfully led a 1st guided tour of 20 students from Santo Domingo on 29 April.

Noteworthy observations:

1. Parrot sightings appear to be more pronounced in the trail area (short route) in the late morning (~8:00 -11:00) and early afternoon (~14:00 -16:00). Esteban and I speculate that the frequency of parrot sightings in this area may have been on the decline during the last week of April (possibly because of brooding and recent hatchlings).

2. Many appropriate tree cavities were found in the area, but none of the ones examined indicated evidence of nesting. Parrots would appear to be conservative (or traditional) in choosing their nesting sites (such as documented for the Puerto Rican Parrot). Further, parrots were observed to fly away from the area in the late afternoon (westbound, possibly towards the nesting area of Sabana de Algodón) and there were generally few parrot sightings after 18:00 and none beyond 19:00.

3. Seven trees that parrots fed on (observed by Esteban, Yolanda and myself) were: almacigo, bayaonda, cotinilla, guau and three others that I did not identify. Of these three, two were new 'parrot feeding' information to Esteban (i.e., fruit from an unidentified tree with whitish prickly bark by the trail's cashew tree, and an identified tree near the farm - noticed by Esteban at the end of the 1st guided tour).

4. Up to 5 bird species in a single almacigo could be found together and all appeared to feed on its fruit (observed by Esteban and myself).

5. Twenty-five other bird species seen around the trail (by Esteban, Gerson, Yolanda and myself) were: barancoli, carpintero, carpintero de sierra, cigua canaria, cigua canaria Americana, ciguita de hierba, ciguita parula, ciguita saltarina, ciguita tigrina, cuatro ojos, cuervo, cuyaya, garza ganadera, guaraguao, judio, julian chivi, lechuza cara ceniza, manuelito, pajaro bobo, paloma ceniza, petigre, rolita, rolon turco, ruisinor, zumbador sp.

Other relevant work conducted:

1. Lids on three nest boxes in the area were removed to allow access (19 March) and three nest boxes were removed from the area because of honeybee colonies inside. These were overhauled and sheet metal was placed on the under-part of each roof to impede further honeybee settlement.

2. Gerson was trained in climbing technique and safety using proper gear. He went on to give an afternoon training session to other volunteers on 27 April.

3. Over 1 kg of almacigo seeds was picked, shelled, and dried. Perin began almacigo-growing trials in the nursery on 23 April.

4. On the initiative of Esteban, nine nest boxes (originating from a single cut palm) now await completion.

5. The water pipe at the vehicle gate entrance was lengthened to the inside of the compound to facilitate pumping and to signal the arrival of water from the mainline.

6. The water pipe between the guesthouse and Ernst's residence that was under the sidewalk was replaced and fastened with a faucet and hose.
7. Leaking reservoirs and barrels were repaired, as well as broken faucets and water pipes leading to the well and office reservoirs.
8. A 2nd reservoir (with an installed shut-off valve to conserve water) was placed on the guesthouse's roof.

A preliminary map of the parrot trail and a KML GoogleEarth file of the trail (ready for web hosting) was sent on 8 May, a CD of ~200 parrot pictures was sent to Yolanda on 29 May, and an informative map/pamphlet of the parrot trail (11" x 8" sheet to be folded in three) is submitted with this report. A Spanish translation is needed.

Recommendations for the parrot trail:

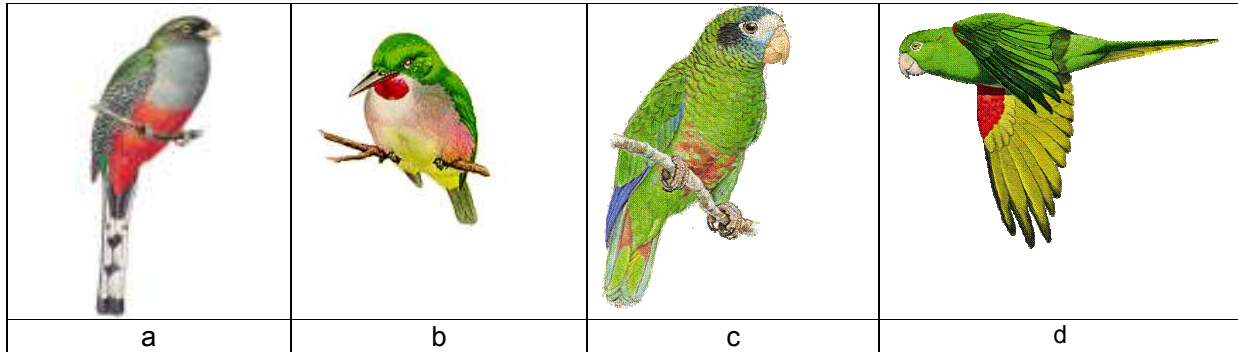
1. The establishment of a formal agreement between Medina and Grupo Jaragua permitting us the official right to enter his claimed property, and the exclusive right to manage visitor access to the trail and guided tours, including any potential access by other parties and organizations (e.g., AGUINAPE, Doña Chava).
2. Weekly cotorra surveillance of the trail to determine probabilities of observing cotorras over time.
3. The placing of three more nesting boxes in the area around Medina's farm, each mounted in a different species of tree and away from the trail. Chained carabineers (see Gerson) should be put on branches above nest boxes to facilitate long-term access and provide security when climbing.
4. The training in the handling of tarantulas for Grupo Jaragua guides. Tarantulas are often found under rocks along the trail and were of interest to all students during the 1st guided tour.
5. The making of a parrot-trail sign (see Josey) to be put at the entrance of the farm (i.e., 1st gate from Cacos Rd.).
6. The removal of garbage at the entry of the Cascos Rd. when leaving Oviedo.
7. The hosting of the trail map with GoogleEarth (i.e., KML file) on the Grupo Jaragua website.
8. The purchasing of recent satellite imagery of the trail area (~10 km² covering the mapped area on the KML file) to determine the rate of farming encroachment (relative to GoogleEarth images available from 2004).

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ANNEX II.
Parrot Trail Activity Sheet

Hoja de actividades: Sendero de la Cotorra

1. ¿Cuál de estas aves es la cotorra de La Española? Escribe su nombre debajo, también de las otras aves, si las conoces.



2. Pudiste ver cotorras en este sendero? SI NO ¿cuántas viste? _____
3. ¿Qué estaban haciendo? a) comiendo b) volando c) cantando d) posadas e) _____
4. ¿Por qué crees que podemos ver cotorras en este sendero? _____
- _____
5. ¿Cuáles plantas pudiste ver en el sendero que comen las cotorras? _____
- _____
6. Dibuja algún animal o planta que conociste hoy y que te gustó y marca con una cruz dónde lo viste en el mapa del sendero. Si te gustó más de uno, utiliza la parte de atrás de la hoja.

<p>Dibuja animal o planta que te gustó</p>	<p>inicio</p>  <p>Mapa del Sendero</p>
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Annex IV. Hispaniolan Parrot presentation for binder / MSPowerpoint

 <p>¡mi casa es el monte!</p> <p>¡Que no te den cotorra!</p> <p>MACARTHUR Intec BirdLife</p>	 <h3>Nuestra cotorra</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • En la República Dominicana tenemos un ave muy especial: La cotorra de La Hispaniola. • Es una especie endémica, solo se encuentra en nuestra isla. • Algunas de las otras islas del Caribe tienen su propia especie pero la nuestra solo está aquí.
<h3>Antes...</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Las cotorras en libertad hasta hace poco. • Se veían fácilmente volando sobre nuestros campos y bosques. • Cruzaban en hermosas bandadas verdes, al tiempo que se escuchaba su alborotado y alegre canto... 	<h3>Pero ya no...</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemos destruido el monte, que es su hogar...
<h3>Amores que matan...</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Para su mala suerte, a la gente le hacen mucha gracia porque aprenden a repetir palabras. • ...y las hemos atrapado para tenerlas como mascotas. • A veces las tenemos enjauladas o sueltas con las alas cortadas. 	<h3>¡ Es ilegal !</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La captura, tráfico y/o posesión de cotorras está prohibida por la Ley General sobre Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales No. 64-00. • Como la ley no se aplica siempre, el tráfico ilegal de cotorras continúa. • Así, todos los años, la mayor parte de los nidos de las cotorras en el monte son saqueados y los pichones distribuidos. 
<h3>Pobres bebés...</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muchos de los pichones robados de los nidos no sobreviven. • La mayoría muere en los primeros días o durante el transporte hasta su destino. • Cada vez se sacan más recién nacidos, sin apenas haber emplumado y con los ojos cerrados. • Y en nuestras casas, otros animales les pueden matar.  	<h3>No hay sitio para criar hijos</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Las cavidades pueden ser troncos de árboles vivos o ya secos, o incluso abrigos rocosos. • Para robar los pichones, se destruyen estas cavidades que utilizan cada año. • Al haber menos cavidades, hay menos cotorras que pueden andar. 

¿Desaparecerán nuestras cotorras?

- Como cada año se roban la mayoría de los pichones que nacen, las cotorras no pueden mantener su población silvestre.
- Es como si a una población humana le matáramos todos sus hijos recién nacidos todos los años durante mucho tiempo.



¡ Es un secuestro !

- Cuando tenemos una cotorra en nuestra casa ella no podrá tener hijos en toda vida.
- Aún si la soltamos, no podría acostumbrarse de nuevo al monte.
- Sus padres no pudieron enseñarle como defenderse ni cuáles eran los alimentos en el monte, dónde estaban, ni cómo comerlos.



¡ Ayúdanos !

- Si continua este saqueo, en unos pocos años desaparecerán nuestras cotorras.
- NO compres ni aceptes cotorras como regalo, porque estarás contribuyendo a su extinción.
- Corre la voz: ayuda a nuestra cotorra difundiendo esta información, explicando a la gente el daño que causa tenerlas como mascotas.

