

Yellow Naped Parrot Population Recovery Project

Three Year Summary

2018- 2021



Yellow Naped Parrot Population Recovery Project

Parrots have been the subject of various studies and conservation efforts due to the intense stressors on their populations in Honduras. As in other countries of the Neotropic, the main pressures facing this group of birds are the destruction of habitat (both by deforestation and climate change), and the looting of nests to supply the exotic pet market. Spring is known as "harvest-time" for parrots, and before the GIC, the majority of baby parrots were poached from their nests to be sold illegally.

The scientific community affirms the decline in population of the yellow naped parrot (*Amazona auropalliata caribaea*) which in 2018 went from being "vulnerable" to "endangered" on the IUCN red list. Given their endangered status both globally and on the island of Guanaja, the GIC developed a population recovery strategy called to encourage parrot reproduction, and eliminate at root poaching.

The project has three phases and is carried out yearly from December to August.

1. The first stage involves manufacturing supplemental nests (boxes) and installing them in specific places where yellow nape parrots are known to nest.
2. The second stage includes surveillance of natural and supplemental nests to prevent theft by poachers, a survey documenting current parrots in captivity, and an environmental education program in schools across the island.
3. The third stage involves a parrot count at the end of August to compare this year's population with the previous year's.

Objectives

Recover, stabilize and protect the wild populations of the yellow naped parrot on the island of Guanaja.

Specific:

1. Encourage the local population to protect the yellow naped parrot.
2. Establish an environmental education program to deter young folks from looting nests.
3. Provide poachers with alternative livelihoods.
4. Conduct wellbeing brigades to address the needs of yellow-naped parrots in captivity
5. Discourage their capture as pets and for trafficking.

2018 Summary:

As part of the Green Island Challenge's preparation to launch the Parrot Population Recovery Project, baseline data had to be gathered and scientific method and mentorship sought. Only 323 individual Yellow Naped Parrots were documented.

Following the guidance of Dr. LoraKim Joyner and One Earth Conservation, the first set of 30 supplemental nests were also installed as a means to encourage Yellow Naped Parrot reproduction.

2019 Summary:

With the generous support of One Earth Conservation, 36 nests were located and patrolled from January- June 2019. The GIC also conducted a baseline count of parrots kept as pets, and launched its island-wide educational program: Wild & Free to discourage the capture and trafficking of parrots.

Four former poachers were recruited and trained to protect parrots. Only 2 nests were looted and after the hatching season, we were able to recuperate 4 recently captured parrots and were able to ensure their safety. All have since flown free.

The final parrot count totaled 498.

2020 Summary:

Despite Covid's expansion, the GIC received its first grant from the Neotropical Bird Club, along with the consistent support of One Earth Conservation, allowing for an incredibly successful year for the Yellow Naped Parrot Population Recovery Program.

Before starting the patrols, we relocated several boxes to preferred nesting areas based on the maps and data generated in 2019.

The number of active nests increased from the year before (12 supplemental and 28 natural) and though two nests were poached, thanks to our work with the community, we were able to rescue the chicks before they were trafficked. Environmental conservation is a collective work and as an organization we are proud to have the trust and support from the Guanaja community.

In addition to community support, the Green Island Challenge has the support of the local municipality who accompany our patrols once a week and work together to rescue parrots in danger of being trafficked.

The final parrot count totaled 875 individuals.

2021 Summary:

Hurricanes Eta and Iota (November 2020), collapsed 8 trees that served as home to several natural parrot nests. This has had a significant impact on parrots and their reproductive abilities, since they have historically had these trees identified in their nesting habits.

The project has had to rethink specific alternatives to mitigate this decrease in nesting through the emergency installation of more supplemental nests as close as possible to the trees felled by hurricanes. One Earth Conservation's support allowed the GIC to address these emergencies immediately and ensure the project's continuation.

Covid has continued to have a negative impact on the local economy, and unfortunately 3 nests were lost due to theft by regular civilians (not professional poachers) who needed to satisfy economic needs. However, like last year, given our strong community relations, we were able to recuperate the chicks with no issue, and foster them until they joined their wild flock.

Nest attacks by the species *Ctenosaura simillis* commonly known as garrobo, impacted 3 natural nests by eating chicks and eggs. In another case, a species of bird called *Buteo plagiatus*, common name gray hawk, attacked 2 natural nests and ate 2 chicks.

Additionally, 10 supplemental nests were turned into colonies by white bees. The presence of this keystone species was respected, and the bees have been allowed to continue to use the boxes. Despite this unforeseen reduction of available nesting, September's final count yielded a **grand total of 1,060 individual Yellow Naped Parrots** (map pending).

As another success of 2021, the GIC was able to expand the Yellow Naped Parrot Population Stabilization Program to the island of Roatan, where the risk of extinction is even greater: no more than 50 parrots were counted. With the support of Seacology, boxes are currently being installed on Roatan, and the GIC is training park rangers in best practices regarding parrot nest monitoring.

Reflections:

The incredible results after only three years of the Parrot Population Recovery Program reflects the dedication of the Green Island Challenge, and the effectiveness of its three pronged approach: consistent field-work, all-ages environmental education, and leadership development.

By complimenting poachers' organic knowledge of parrots with careers in conservation, the Green Island Challenge has been able to address the issue of poaching at its root as an economic issue.

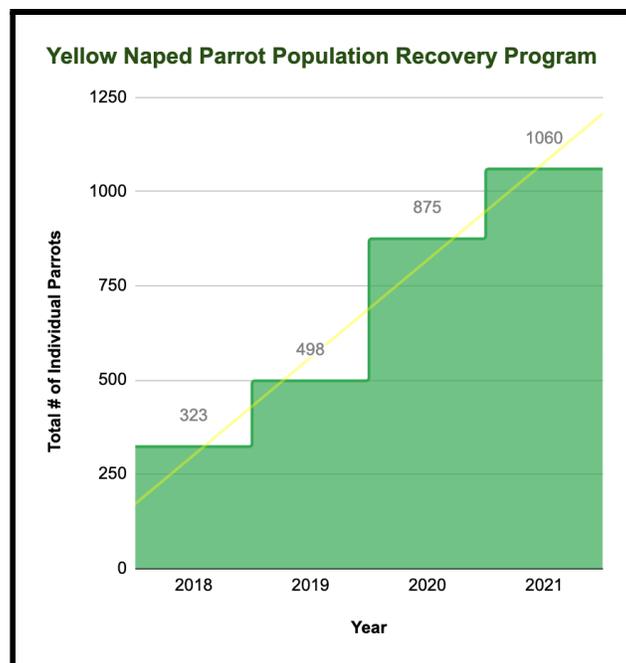
Our island-wide educational programming focuses on four areas of conservation: Deforestation, Plastics, Climate Change, and Endangered Species. By offering a wide-scope and in-depth understanding of the environmental crisis in constant development to youth and adults alike, the Green Island Challenge is witnessing the growth in interest in conservation activities across all sectors on the island.

Finally, the daily patrols offer adults the ability to develop into professional birders and parrot caretakers, while ensuring long-term, sustainable employment. The field-work also offers youth a chance to participate with internships, school-credit, and gain exposure to careers in conservation.

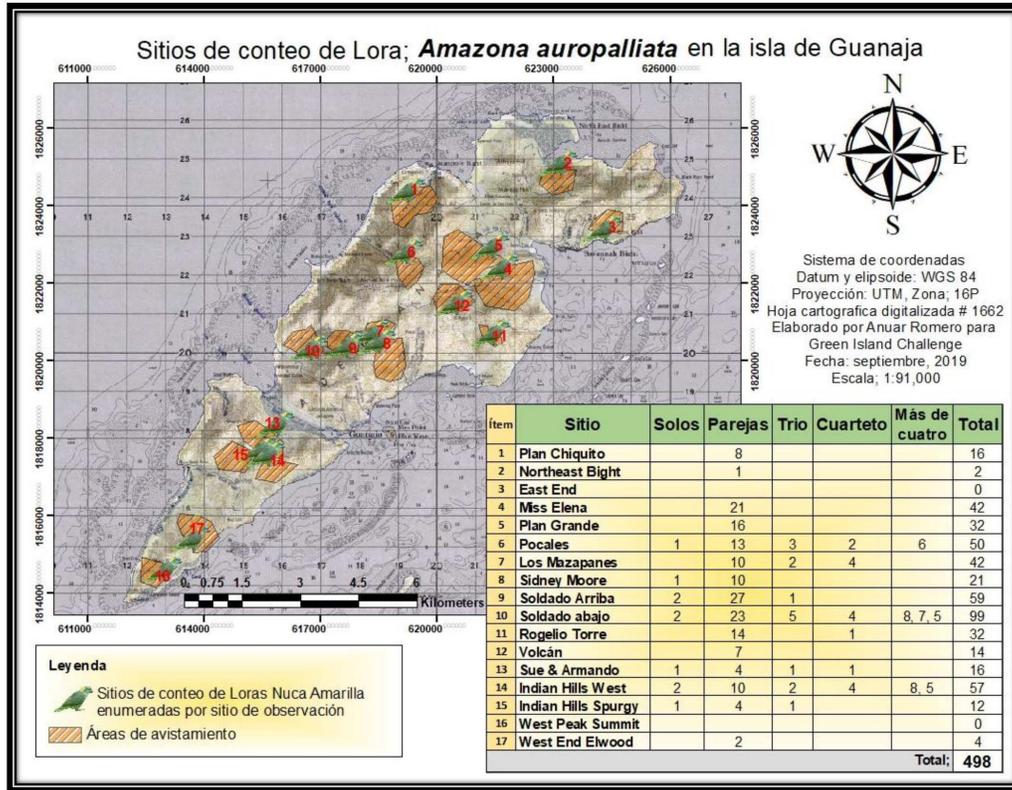
Climate change will continue to negatively impact ideal parrot nesting trees, thus increasing the need for the supplemental nests installed by the Green Island Challenge, and the need for more parrot nest monitoring.

Thanks to the support of One Earth Conservation, the Neotropical Bird Club, Seacology, and individual donors, we reached our 5 year goal early, and have set a new goal of 1,500 parrots by 2023.

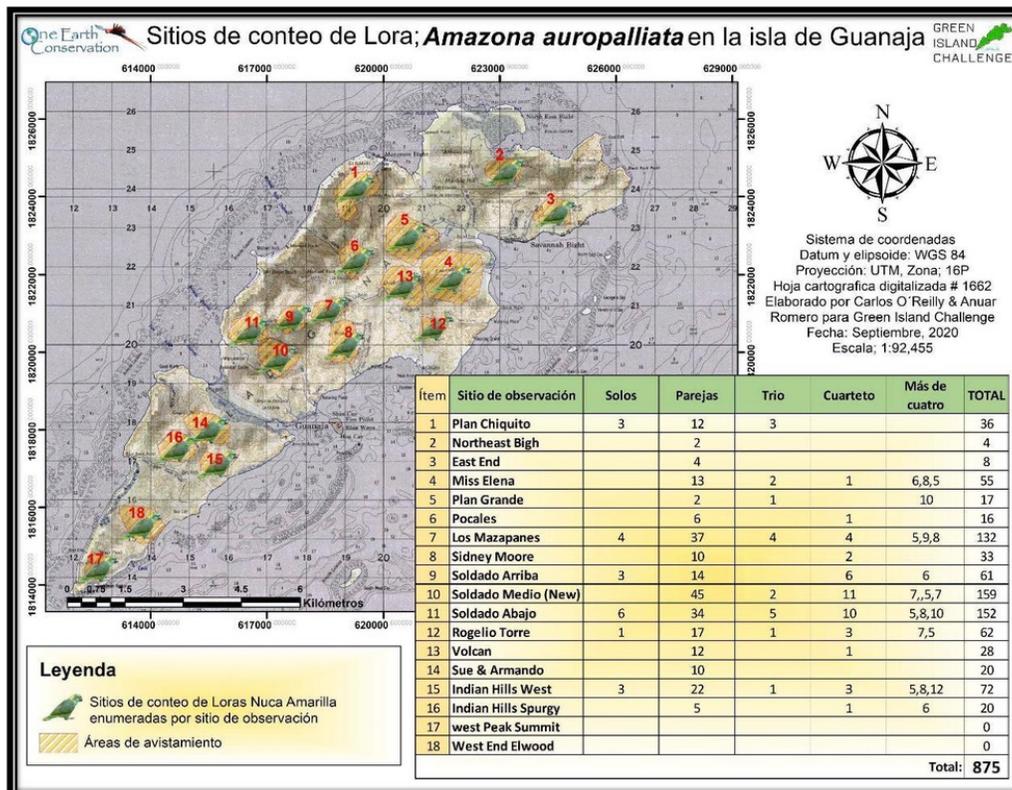
As we enter the fourth year of this project, the GIC is humbled by these achievements, and motivated to keep doing the intensive field-work of walking Guanaja's tropical mountains daily to ensure that all Yellow Naped Parrots are able to live wild and free.



Final Parrot Count 2019



Final Parrot Count 2020



Photos





