



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION

CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL POUR LA PROTECTION DES OISEAUX
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL PARA LA PRESERVACION DE LAS AVES
INTERNATIONALER RAT FÜR VOGELSCHUTZ
國際鳥類保護會議

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PRESS RELEASE

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WORLD'S RAREST BIRD DOWN TO ONE

A last remaining Spix's Macaw - undoubtedly the world's rarest bird - has been found living in the wild. Attempts are being made by bird trappers to capture it for the black market.

This sad news was brought from the remote north of Brazil by a party of Brazilian and British scientists working on an expedition under the auspices of the International Council for Bird Preservation. All remaining areas of suitable habitat were searched but only a single bird was found in the north-east of Bahia State, very near to where the species was first seen over 170 years ago. The lonely parrot has paired up with a single Blue-winged Macaw, a quite different bird.

The reason for the catastrophic position of Spix's Macaw today is the live bird trade. This species has been held in bird collections for many years, and the astronomical prices paid by rich bird collectors (up to £30,000 for a single bird) has led to all but one of these fabulous blue parrots being trapped.

The International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) is calling for the total protection of the last wild bird, the release into the forest of at least one of the fifteen or so captive birds and the establishment of a species rescue centre in the north of Brazil where the other captive birds could be bred and offspring released into the wild. This, however, will rely on the cooperation of the private collectors who have the birds in their possession. All of the captive birds were caught illegally in Brazil, where they are totally protected, and most were smuggled out from the country in violation of CITES, the international wildlife trade convention.

ICBP publicised the plight of Spix's Macaw four years ago when there were still a few wild birds left. An attempt was made to bring the few captive birds together for a breeding programme, but without result to date. Dr. Christoph Imboden, Director-General of ICBP, says "It is tragic that today, with so much worldwide conservation awareness, it is possible for a unique species like the Spix's Macaw to disappear from right under our noses as a result of illegal actions carried out by well organised dealers. Sadly, this is not the only case, there are a number of other highly prized birds that might soon become extinct for the same reason."

- Ends

Additional information

- The *Spix's Macaw* (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) is a long-tailed blue parrot only known for certain from only a very small area in north-eastern Brazil. Its preference for a unique type of woodland is thought to have accounted for its original rarity but there is no doubt that it was wiped out in the wild as a result of the attentions of bird trappers.
- The *International Council for Bird Preservation* (ICBP), the world's oldest international conservation organisation (est. 1922), is a federation of organisations and representatives in 110 countries. From its global headquarters in Cambridge, U.K., it directs a