

*Section 15.32(b)(3) Whether the Country of Export Has Developed a Scientifically Based Management Plan for the Species That Considers Factors Relating to the Multi-National Distribution of the Species*

The Division of Scientific Authority sent letters to the Scientific Authorities of the range countries for this species (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay) and asked them to address this criterion. Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay responded in support of Argentina's sustainable-use management plan. We did not receive a response from Brazil. However, the predominant subspecies in Brazil, *Amazona aestiva aestiva*, is not found in Argentina (Collar 1997). The Bolivian Scientific Authority said that Bolivia's blue-fronted amazon populations are non-migratory and would not be affected by the sustainable-use program in Argentina (Marianela Subieta Frias, Executive Director of the National Museum of Natural History in La Paz, Bolivia, email to DSA, September 2000). Bolivia expressed its support for Argentina's program, but noted concern over the possibility of illegally harvested Bolivian birds entering Argentina and being exported through this program. Studies of this species in Paraguay indicate that breeding populations are non-migratory and are distinct from populations in Argentina. Thus, the program in Argentina would not affect the populations in Paraguay (Braulio Román Solís, Director, CITES Office, Paraguay, letter to DSA, August 2000). According to Mr. Solís, Paraguay developed a similar program in 1999 based on the Argentine program and has regulations to ensure sustainable management of the species. Although Paraguay reported that its population of blue-fronted amazons is robust and that the species is locally common, the European Commission has asked Member States not to allow imports of blue-fronted amazons from Paraguay until further notice. This decision was made in response to information received that called into question the scientific basis of Paraguay's export quotas for this species. (E-mail to A. St. John, May 8, 2003). Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay have held roundtable discussions to develop a regional study plan in order to determine optimal population management for this species. They have also discussed the need for local educational outreach.

The application and additional information received from Argentina outline the safeguards in place to prevent illegally harvested birds from entering this program. As discussed

above, most of the oversight for the project is done by project staff members. Only program staff affix legbands (open metal bands that once closed can only be removed by breaking) with the code AR or ARG and a unique identification number, and only birds with official bands are permitted for export. See earlier sections for discussion of additional safeguards. This program is the only legal source of birds for export from Argentina, and all exports are through Buenos Aires.

Complete population biology information is lacking for the specific effects of this program on breeding and recruitment of this species in other range countries, but we are unaware of any possible detrimental effects of this program on conservation programs or enforcement efforts throughout the range of this species. The program coordinators have been in contact with biologists from the other range countries who have expressed interest in developing similar programs (Pers. comm. with DSA and DMA biologists, Jan. 2003). The export of blue-fronted amazon parrots from each range country is regulated by CITES, and imports into the United States would also be subject to the provisions of the WBCA.

We believe that the proposed level of harvest will maintain the species throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystem and that it is unlikely that the proposed harvest will significantly reduce the wild population during the 3 years for which the program would be approved. Critical research on the species' population biology as a result of this program in comparison to non-harvested areas will provide insight into the long- and short-term effects of the program on the species' survival. Any problems that arise during the 3 years could be addressed prior to renewing the program. Furthermore, because the program protects nests, creates nesting habitat, and reduces habitat loss, a population increase is expected.

### Conclusion

We reviewed the proposal by the Management Authority of Argentina for the approval of a sustainable-use management plan for blue-fronted amazon parrots (*Amazona aestiva*), based on the criteria in 50 CFR 15.32. We propose to add blue-fronted amazon parrots from Argentina to the list of non-captive-bred species under the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992, with the following condition:

1. The Management Authority of Argentina must provide an annual report at the end of each collection season during the period covered by this

approval. The report must include the following information: the number and size of the properties participating in the program, results of population censuses in the collection areas, and short- and long-term impacts of collection on the population, including recruitment, nestling mortality, and the effects of artificially opening and resealing nest cavities. The report must also include the number of birds that became sick or injured during capture, housing, and transport. Causes of mortality, illness, and injury should be reported, if known. Such data will be considered at the time of a request for program renewal.

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