

Arizona Thick-billed Parrot

Scientific Name: *Rhynchopsitta Pachyrhyncha*

Range: Historically as far north as Arizona. Now primarily Sierra Madre Occidental, Mexico.

Habitat: Highland pine & oak forests. The only living parrot that naturally ranged in the continental U.S.

Size: Length: 38 cm; Weight: 350-400 grams

Young: 2-4 eggs

Incubation: 28 days

Diet (wild): Thick-billed parrots primarily eat pine seeds. They are also known to eat some acorns, juniper berries, conifer buds, agave nectar and insect larvae.

Lifespan (wild): Unknown

Threats: Thick-billed parrots were likely hunted to extinction in Arizona. In their current range in Mexico, they are threatened primarily by logging, and to a lesser degree by trapping for the pet trade.

The thick-billed parrots' preference for mature pine forests and mountainous Sky Island habitats make it vulnerable to climate change as the forested area shrinks reducing the food supply.

Social/Family units: Flocks of 7 or 8 (historically up to 1000 birds).

Habits: Fly off in small groups in early mornings to forage. May fly up to 250 miles per day.

Communication: Very noisy with many different vocals. One call can be heard up to 2 miles.

Predators: Red-Tailed Hawk, Northern Goshawk, the Peregrine Falcon, and the ring-tailed cat.

Status: Thick-billed parrots are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). **IUCN Red List:** Endangered. **CITES:** listed in Appendix I.



Update July 2011

The Arizona Parrot Project

Summary: Bird Recovery International uses its Bird Recovery Initial Nurturing Kernel (BRINK)[™] system to increase a Thick-billed parrot population in captivity and to prepare the captive population for release and sustainable breeding in the wild within their previous natural habitat range in Arizona and New Mexico.

Significance: The success of this project will result in re-establishing back into their native habitat, the only species of parrot native within US borders. The project will also provide a road map for doing similar projects with other endangered species of parrots.

Goals/Objectives: 1) Establish an effective domestic breeding program to increase population strength and provide birds for BRINK[™] management. 2) Demonstrate in the natural habitat on a pilot scale with Thick-billed parrots that domestically bred birds, if prepared using the BRINK[™] system, can acquire and effectively utilize advanced survival skills including flocking and predator evasion skills. 3) Apply pilot results to design a full release project.

Description: There are six stages to the BRINK[™] system:

- 1) Captive Breeding Program – maximize baby production to increase population, supply birds for survival preparation and expansion of captive breeding stock.
- 2) Flight Skill Development – raise and prepare baby birds to have peak fitness and advanced flight skills.
- 3) Practice, Exercise & Protection – expand and refine survival skills in carefully selected locations as the birds mature. Provide food and secure indoor roosting site.
- 4) Transition Site Pair Bonding – facilitate mate selection within the group, provide exposure to nesting opportunities similar to those in the release location.
- 5) In Situ Release and at Liberty Breeding – perform soft release of “survival savvy” mature pairs at target location and continue to monitor health and breeding activity. Assist with supplemental feeding, security and nest boxes as needed.
- 6) New Wild Chick Monitoring – monitor nest and support parents.

Status/Update: BRI currently has one pair of healthy mature Thick-billed parrots placed with an experienced Thick-billed parrot breeder. BRI continues to seek additional birds and/or partners for the breeding phase of the project.

How You Can Help: Please make a financial donation to support this project by visiting www.arizonaparrot.com Ask your local zoo to participate.

By supporting this project you are helping save an important species of parrot as well as helping bring back the only remaining parrot native to the United States. Pulling together to save the American Parrot!