February 2023 - Monthly Report

César Sánchez

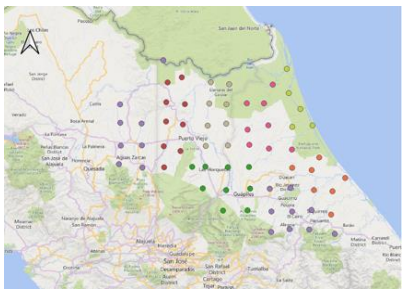
February has been a busy across the program. And I'm largely satisfied by the achievements, hence big thanks to everyone both on the Islita Breeding Center, and the Sarapiquí crew, including our amazing volunteers. After lots of work to get the permits and with the great help of Sandy Salas we finally got the ok from the ACT authorities to do a reintroduction of 12 Scarlet Macaws (*Ara macao*). This is the first reintroduction we do in years, and the results are quite promising. The birds have been doing great, most of them have found their way in and out of site and getting more and more comfortable at moving around. Great kudos to Ted and everyone involved directly or indirectly with this major achievement.

The breeding center has been quite busy as well, and as of today the Great-green Macaw pairs have produced 10 eggs, two of which already hatched.

Also, the Scarlet Macaws pairs have laid ten eggs, and we have 4 young but healthy chicks so far. Major congrats to Sol, Amy, and their crew!

In Sarapiquí, Noelia has left us for a few months, but Mario is back. And one of the major results has been the setting up of a large ranging set of audiomoths across 5500 km2 in Northeastern

Costa Rica (see map). This recording units will be in place for at least a year, in order to obtain information on presence and density of macaws across the sampled area. Kudos to Mario and the vols that set them up.



Also, this year we have the presence of Alexander Alison, a master's student from University of New Mexico under the tutelage of Tim Wright (https://wrightbehaviorlab.org). Alexander will be looking into survival, dispersal, movement, and vocalizations of Great Green Macaws.

Finally, the team in Sarapiquí, has being searching for nesting activity. We already know of 3 active nests with 5 chicks in a single tree, and a totally new nest. More to come… next month.

Sol Delechuk

As Bird Manager this last month I have been working especially with the already started breeding season, controlling nests with the presence of eggs and chicks, as well as reproductive behaviors to have a correct follow-up of breeding pairs and their productivity.
At this moment we have 4 SCM chicks in perfect condition, and a newborn GGM chick. We have the presence of 6 more GGM eggs, but half of which have already been found to be infertile.

I have positive thoughts about this season, since there are many mating behaviors in the new GGM couples.

Also, together with the assistant bird manager, Amy, we are working on the educational internship program, in which we have 6 interns who helps us a lot, we also reward their collaboration with classes and educational activities to give them the necessary tools for their future in conservation work. I was collaborating with the Site Manager in pre-release checks of the SCM group that was already released, as well as collaborating with my interns to monitor individuals in the wild.

I have also been in contact with other centers and institutions to search and coordinate the possibility of transferring non-reproductive and non-releasable scarlet macaws to other centers. Lastly, I attended the Leon Veterinary Congress in San Jose, where I was able to continue my education as a veterinarian and gain new perspectives for my work at Islita, always seeking to improve and teach the interns and volunteers during their stay here.

Amy Clark

February was an exciting and eventful month for the Islita Bird Team; along with our daily parrot husbandry tasks, we assisted in the Scarlet Macaw release and post-release monitoring and our SCM and GGM breeding pairs had six chicks. Four of the six chicks are Scarlets, the parents are Harry and Cooper and Paul and Rio. The other two chicks are from Moni and Doni, a Great Green pair! The interns and I have been assisting Sol in observing the breeding bird aviaries and monitoring the chicks' progress, it's incredible how fast they grow up! The interns and I also did a lot of foraging this month for Caimito and Carambola (star fruit); with these fruits, we created some really cool enrichment projects (pictures below). I am looking forward to another exciting month full of chicks!

Ted Tremain

February was an exciting month for the team here in Islita. On the first of the month Myself and the team of field biologists Camron and Gary released 12 captive bred scarlet macaws into the wild. We are monitoring and supporting them as they transition into the wild, with 4 supplementary feeds a day and them coming back to roost at night we are able to keep a close eye on them and collect data on behaviour. The release has gone incredibly well, and they are transitioning into the wild population of previously released macaws very quickly with most of the flock having been seen foraging with and being fed by wild birds.

It is also the start of the breeding season for our wild population of macaws, and we have confirmed 6 nest sites that have activity from a pair with 4 more being explored regularly. On the 22nd we confirmed 2 chicks in a dead palm tree in Samara estimated to be 3-4 weeks old and 2-3 eggs in a dead palm tree in Corozalito with many more expected!

The maintenance team has been steadily working on the container kitchen, painting and installing gutters. Ruperto and Javier are also working on the new tour route that will include showing visitors another aspect of our work, the non-releasable birds. These works include creating a new path, fencing, gates and plants. When they are not busy doing all of that they help forage some of the more difficult to reach treats for our captive birds to snack on.

Mario Jiménez

This is Mario reporting from the field station in Sarapiquí:

Audiomots

Finally, the 63 Audiomots could be installed throughout the northern zone of Costa Rica, covering more than 5,000 km2 and covering more than 4,000 km. It is expected to review them in mid-July, in order to carry out a complete one-year study where we will be able to see the spatial distribution of the Great Green Macaw in northern Costa Rica during the reproductive and non-reproductive season. nest monitoring In the second week of February, the annual monitoring of the nesting season of the Great Green Macaw began, this year we had the participation of Alexander, a master's student from the University of New Mexico in the United States, and together with them We will be monitoring the nests, checking the chicks, collecting genetic material and installing radio collars. This will be the second consecutive year that we have installed radio collars on Green Macaw chicks.

Farm Peninsula Nursery

There has not been much work in the nursery, so far neither seeds nor seedlings have been collected. The nursery currently has: 750 mountain almond trees, 250 Caobillas, 7 Titors and 12 Golden Fruit trees. It is planned to use these trees in future reforestation.

Pamela Herrera

We are already two months into the 2023 - time flies!

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We have a new member in our team, her name is Fiorella R. Durán and she is the new Community Integration officer.

Fio is a tropical biologist and has worked on ecological restoration projects with a focus on community outreach. She will be working in Sarapiquí, leading the group of women rangers. If you want to contact her, her official email is fio@macawrecoverynetwork.org

Continuing with the news from Sarapiquí, the Women Community Forest Rangers have managed to germinate Titor seeds. This is great news as germinating Titor is not easy! Imagine! From 600 seeds placed to germinate, they only managed to obtain 11 seedlings in 4 months. They are working hard to improve the technique and increase the number of seedlings. In the following link, Mario talks more about how difficult it is to germinate the Titor tree:

https://macawrecoverynetwork.org/titor-the-long-journey-from-the-forest-floor/

The nursery is still in operation, we currently have 4,000 seedlings of 41 different tree species.

This month I also visited Punta Islita for the macaw reintroduction, it was very nice to see all the team. In Punta Islita we work with a local group formed by young people who have a digital magazine called "Pueblo Activo". They were interviewing several people from our team and they will be launching a special edition of their magazine dedicated to Scarlet Macaws and MNR, in the following months.

Here you can see one of its previous editions:

https://sites.google.com/view/puebloactivo-org/p%C3%A1gina-principal/pueblo-activo-n3

Fiorella Durán

My name is Fiorella Durán and I am the new Community Integration Officer at the Macaw Recovery Network. I am very excited because parrots are my favorite family of birds and because I believe that no ecological conservation or restoration process can be complete without the active participation of local communities.

I am a tropical biologist and I have specialized in ecological restoration; from this area I have been working in Sarapiquí for 5 years. I learned about the work of the MRN and the Women Rangers in the Network of Restaurateurs of the Northern Zone (https://ojoalclima.com/el-esmero-de-restaurar-sarapiqui-para-conectarlo-y-hacerlo-resiliente/), through which I feel very grateful to be able to continue adding to the recovery of ecosystems in the North Zone, now thinking even more about green macaws.

I am currently getting to know each of the work areas and providing technical support to the Woman Rangers in the nursery. They and I are very excited about their visit at the In-Person Board Meeting.

Luis Wachong

Legal

We have obtained the permits with MINSA for the Islita Tour, we have already accomplished with all documentation.
Now, we will proceed with the ICT (Costa Rican Institute of Tourism) recognition by submitting forms and all the necessary documentation to obtain the “Interés Turístico” batch.

Operations

So far this year we have already acquired two new vehicles for the programs, both Jimnys, one is for the field work in Sarapiquí. The other one will be used for outreach, mainly in Boca Tapada.
At the same time, we give support to the ED in all necessary preparation for Board of Directors visit in March.
Finally, we got the first **in-person meeting** and work in both OKR (yearly and quarterly) and planning.

Human Resources

Brandon does an extraordinary work and now we have 3 GGM interns in Islita, 3 GCM interns in Islita, 2 Field Biologist in Islita and 3 Biologist in Sarapiqui.
Now we are working in order to find a volunteer specific for the tour and for the sites for the rest of the year. We already have some potential applicants for this role.

A new member is part of the MRN team in the Outreach program (Fiorela). This is the first time that we completed all the document process for a newcoming member.

Financial

We are working (mainly Mauro and Carmen) with the new budget creating the new accounts and the new systems of financial information.

We are working with an external expert in the redesign of the fiscal policies. Right now, we expect to define and start using a new accounting software.

Sarah de Groot

Lots has happened since our last update, and I'm excited to read all the things you've been up to. I never know what to share because my daily work isn't as exciting or interesting as what the program teams are doing. Since last time, my focus has shifted more and more to cultivating individual donors. After making a gift, we're aiming to thank everyone several times, through different channels, and by different people. That all helps make each donor feel connected to and feel inspired by what we do, targeted as what their specific interested may be. In doing so, we create a life-long connection which sparks continued and increased support. This source of funding has proved to work well for MRN.

And of course, I must share a house-update! Going to Costa Rica still feels a little like abandoning my young-born baby but I'm in a good place. The timing couldn't be better because my earth-rammed floor (see picture) needs a few weeks to dry before adding the finish layers, so living inside isn't possible anyways. And although I still have to tile the bathroom walls, build a reed-bed-filter (I'm not connected to sewage) and build the kitchen, most of the big work is done. I'm enjoying making time for more creative projects too, such as a glass-bottle-wall, a mosaic arch,

and a reclaimed wooden ceiling. The rough goal to build my house within 1 year seems pretty realistic! :)

Carey Wentz

This month has been a continuation of getting us set up for a successful year. Sarah and I have been working on OKR's, setting up the analytics that we want to track this year, and solidifying the team in the comms department. My role in communications has grown quite large, so we have welcomed back Alberto to help me some social media management. For those of you who don't know Alberto, he used to do my role so he knows our audience and our mission well. We are also working with a video editor, Mariana, who is currently working on putting together a Scarlet Macaw reintroduction video. And last but certainly not least, I'm in contact with James about helping us out with our media archive. He just can't get rid of us!

For grants, I have been focused on getting organized and up to speed with current grants, potential grants, and projects that we still need some funding for this year. Becca from WCN has shared her grant database with us and all grants that we qualify for from that database are being added into a schedule.

Marta Figueroa

It has been a busy month. I have already had 332 people on the tour, 60 of them were kids (7 to 16 years old) from **Mareas Academy** in Sámara.

When it’s a busy time, like this past month, it’s also a great sale of local products, t -shirts and more.
The biggest highlight of this month was the macaw release I was able to experience. This is a great plus to the presentation I do for the visitors.
I also took advantage of this month at Valentine’s Day and the macaw breeding season, to get people more interested in to support MRN.

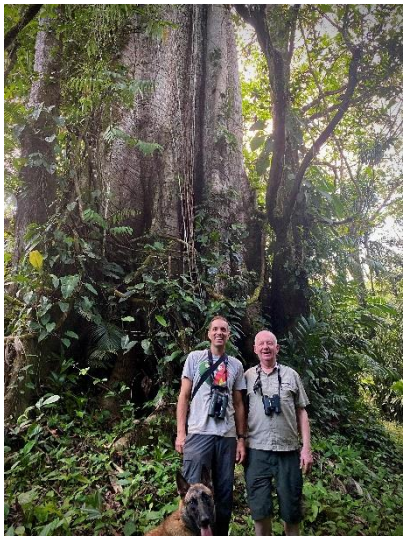
Sam Williams

Wow there's already been so much going on. We started with a fantastic end of year for fundraising that kept going into January. Lots of wonderful people to thank. Then my Dad was here so i took a break, sort of, well I did properly for two days. I realized I simply must turn my phone off to get away. This is so important and something I want you all to make sure you do at times through the year. This helps us all to sustain the energy needed to do this crazy thing called conservation.

There's been various bits of admin to secure the funds to buy the Finca woo-hoo, and get the bank set up for that. We had our first in person office day/leaders meeting which I thought was great. So nice to see some of the team in person. And then there's this little board meeting coming up. I normally have one board meeting for each organization every three months and for this one we are having 7 meeting in one day and two days of travel so there's a lot to organize but what I really love is that it is pushing us to get lots of things in order. And so excited to show them some of the amazing work you do. I have no doubt this is going to get them all fired up.

I find these meeting pretty intense, so I expect I'll be a bit frazzled afterwards. So, I'm going to take off to Canada. Some of it will be holiday (with my phone turned off!) but it will mostly be with me working part time. So, I'll still be checking emails and trying to keep up.

Thanks for everything you all do!



Me and Dad on the Finca.