

## SAVING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES

### THE MACAW

#### Important People

**Lorin Lindner** – A director of the Earth Angel Parrot Sanctuary in California and a leading advocate for protection of macaws and other birds used as pets.

**Stewart Metz** – Former physician who left medical practice to become an advocate for parrots. Helped organize the World Parrot Welfare Alliance, an international organization dedicated to dealing with the crisis in the welfare of captive parrots.

**Charles Munn** – Ornithologist and conservation zoologist who has been studying the macaws of Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil since 1989.

**Atossa Soltani** – Executive director of Amazon Watch, an organization working to preserve the environment and peoples of the Amazon River.

#### Important Places

**Amazon River** – At 3,900 miles long, the world's second-longest river. It begins in the Andes Mountains of Peru and flows across northern Brazil to the Atlantic Ocean. The riverbed is home to a dazzling variety of plant and animal life; it is estimated that one half of all the species on the Earth are in the Amazon rain forest.

**Andes Mountains** – Mountain range that runs through seven countries over 5,000 miles along the western side of South America.

**Manu National Park and Biosphere Reserve** – Probably the most famous national park in Peru. Established in 1973 and opened to tourism in 1980, it has a great diversity of plant and animal life and serves as a sanctuary for macaws and other animals.

#### Things To Think About

What do you think compels people to adopt endangered species as pets? Do you know anyone who has owned a macaw or other type of parrot? How can people be educated to halt the destructive trade in smuggled macaws?

What can you find out about ecotourism? What are some examples of tours of this kind? How does this new development show promise in protecting endangered species?

The documentary points out that the United States is probably the largest consumer of products of the Amazon River. Can you think of any conservation efforts people in the United States could employ in order to cut down on their use of these products?

This striking bird of the Amazon has been desecrated by mankind for our own enjoyment. One man, Charles Munn, braving constant death threats, has taken on the government and poachers in his effort to save the macaw and the forest of Peru. In the United States, Dr. Loren Lindner and others care for these birds abandoned by careless owners while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fights a losing battle against the rampant smuggling of these endangered animals.

#### A Rainbow of Colors

The striking American parrot known as the macaw proves that it's possible to be too beautiful. This intelligent creature boasts such brilliant plumage that, ever since Christopher Columbus introduced the macaw to Europe, the bird has been avidly sought as a prize pet and a sign of status. Unfortunately, macaws do not take well to captivity—they live long lives, they need constant care and social interaction, and they will mutilate themselves when they are not well tended. Still, the smuggling of macaws goes on as pet lovers covet ownership—even though that very act threatens to render these birds extinct. Once there were some 150 species of macaw in the world; today there are fewer than 30.

#### Vocabulary

**ecotourism** – A recent form of travel designed to allow people to visit natural habitats with minimal impact on the environment. Ecotourism has shown considerable promise as a source of jobs for indigenous populations that might otherwise carry on activities that are harmful to the environment.

**habitat** – The environment in which a particular animal or plant normally lives.

**ornithology** – The branch of zoology that deals with the study of birds.



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### **Internet Resources**

<http://www.amazonwatch.org> -- Home page of Atossa Soltani's Amazon Watch.

<http://quest.classroom.com/about/bios/Amazon2001/AmazonExperts/munn.asp?qargs=176> – A brief autobiography by Charles Munn.

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/parrots/html/body\\_conserve.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/parrots/html/body_conserve.html) – An interesting site on “Parrot Conservation.”

<http://www.parrotchronicles.com/winter2001/parrotpeople.htm> – Profile of Stewart Metz.

<http://users.bestweb.net/~goyzueta/qosqo/manu.htm> –Informative page on Manu National Park, with extensive lists of its wildlife and plants and advice on traveling there.

<http://www.parrot-link.co.uk/macaws.htm> – From a British Web site called “Parrot Link,” a page containing scientific information on macaws.

### **Other Resources**

#### **For students:**

Bailey, Jill. *Save the Macaws*. Steck-Vaughn Library Division, 1992.

Deiters, Jim, and Deiters, Erika. *Macaws (Animals of the Rain Forest)*. Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 2002.

Leon, Vicki. *Parrots, Macaws & Cockatoos (Close Up)*. Silver Burdett Press, 1995.

#### **For adults:**

Alderton, David. *The Atlas of Parrots of the World*. TFH Publications, 1991.

Forshaw, Joseph M. *Parrots of the World*. TFH Publications, 1978.

Hoppe, Dieter. *The World of Macaws*. TFH Publications, 1985.

Juniper, Tony, and Parr, Michael. *Parrots: A Guide to Parrots of the World*. Yale University Press, 1998.



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