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PRESS RELEASE FROM BIRDLIFE JAMAICA

#### RED PARROT DISCOVERED IN JAMAICA

A research team from BirdLife Jamaica, the University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow working in the upper Rio Grande Valley of Portland (Jamaica) has discovered a red Jamaican Parrot. Jamaica has two endemic parrot species, the Black-billed and Yellow-billed parrot, both of which are almost totally green in color.

The report which was recently published in the 2000 Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club, noted that the bird observed was "strikingly red – similar in intensity to that of the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*)" of South America. The individual which was fortunately photographed, also had distinct patches of yellow and green in the wings and tail. Investigations by the research team led to the conclusion that the individual observed was a color morph (or variant) of the Jamaican Yellow-billed Parrot (*Amazona collaria*), which is relatively common in that area of the island. This was the first color morph of a Jamaican parrot ever recorded, and in reference to its combination of colors the photographed individual has been nicknamed "the Reggee Parrot."

Local citrus farmers in the Mill Bank area of Portland informed the team that they had from time to time seen red parrots flying around the area but that they were not common. Despite the fact that Jamai-

can parrots have been studied for the past four years by the Jamaican Parrot Project, the largest biodiversity project ever funded by the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica, there have never been any other encounters with parrots of this kind. The Yellow-billed Parrot population of eastern Jamaica therefore appears to have a rare color variant of which this has been the first record by the local and international scientific community. Further investigations are to be conducted to determine how pervasive is the color variation within the yellow-bills of Portland. Both of Jamaica's endemic parrots are globally threatened species.

BirdLife Jamaica would be interested hearing from other territories that have had any similar reports among Amazona parrots. Our e-mail address is <mailto:birdlifeja@yahoo.com>birdlifeja@yahoo.com. Mailing address: 2 Starlight Ave, Kingston 6, Jamaica W.I. Tel & fax (876) 927-8444 (home) (Catherine Levy, President) or (Leo Douglas, Media Relations Officer) e-mail: [leodouglas@cwjamaica.com](mailto:leodouglas@cwjamaica.com). Mailing address: 11A Lounsbury Avenue, Kingston 10, Jamaica, W.I. Tel: (876) 924-4203 (home).

*For more details, see:*

Davis, H., and B. Zonfrillo. 2000. An erythristic Yellow-billed Parrot *Amazona collaria*. Bulletin of the British Ornithological Club 120(1). — *Ed.*