Cyanopsitta

The Loro Parque Fundación newsletter

2025
129

18 SPECIES SAVED FROM EXTINCTION

Cyanopsitta # 129 - 2025

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LORO PARQUE FUNDACIÓN WE CARE

Dear friends,

The impact of human activity on nature and the animals that inhabit it continues to be severe and far-reaching. From accredited zoological institutions, we increasingly recognise—supported by growing scientific knowledge—just how challenging the situation has become for wildlife in its natural environment.

In this issue, we are pleased to share a remarkable milestone: the first successful birth in Europe of an Australian Forest red-tailed black cockatoo. While this may appear anecdotal at first glance, it is in fact highly significant. This subspecies is facing serious threats in south-western Australia as a result of mining activities and deforestation. Native eucalyptus trees can take up to 100 years to develop the cavities required for nesting. The reproduction of endangered species under human care, together with a deeper understanding of their biology, provides a vital conservation tool—one that can buy precious time should wild populations reach a critical point.

This year also marked a historic achievement with the endorsement by the IUCN of the Macaronesia Sanctuary initiative during the World Conservation Congress held in Abu Dhabi. The adopted resolution recognises more than four decades of sustained effort and endorses the work of Loro Parque Fundación in the protection of marine wildlife, positioning this project as a potential international reference for the coordinated management of ocean ecosystems.

Persistent pollution remains another major challenge, one that is clearly visible along the coasts of the Canary Islands. In 2025 alone, our teams were able to directly remove more than two tonnes of waste. When considered on a global scale, the magnitude of this problem is daunting, underscoring the importance of continuing to contribute, each in our own way.

Above all, these examples demonstrate that effective action can make a real difference. Through the joint efforts of Loro Parque Fundación and the IUCN Macaronesia Species Survival Centre, six endemic species of Canarian snails have been saved from extinction. This success has been made possible through close collaboration with scientists from the Canary Islands' universities and detailed research into both the species and their habitats.

With this very encouraging news for conservation in our islands, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to each and every one of our collaborators for their continued support of Loro Parque Fundación.

WE CARE

Christoph Kiessling
President of Loro Parque Fundación

IUCN

2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

LPF to Allocate More Than USD 1.5 Million to Conservation

Last October, Loro Parque Fundación held its annual meeting of the Scientific Board, a key forum at which the conservation and research projects to receive the Foundation's financial and technical support at an international level are defined. ***Looking ahead to 2026, Loro Parque Fundación will allocate more than USD 1.5 million to conservation initiatives worldwide, including the continuation of the CanBio project, carried out in collaboration with the Government of the Canary Islands, the University of La Laguna and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.***

LPF Scientific Director Rafael Zamora; Prof. Dr Vincent M. Janik, member of the LPF Scientific Council; LPF President Christoph Kiessling; Juan Villalba-Maclas, member of the LPF Scientific Council; Prof. Dr. Antonio Fernández Rodríguez; Isabell Kiessling, LPF Board of Trustees; Cybell Kiessling, LPF Board of Trustees; Ricardo Fernández de la Puente, LPF Institutional Relations; Prof. Dr. Matthias Reinschmidt, member of the LPF Scientific Council; Dr. Jon Paul Rodríguez, member of the LPF Scientific Council; and LPF Scientific Advisor Dr. Javier Almunia. Photo: LPF

This annual gathering brings together the extensive expertise of the members of Loro Parque Fundación's Scientific Council, along with representatives of the Board of Trustees, to evaluate all proposals received and to prioritise them according to the threats faced by species and the quality of the proposed objectives.

The Foundation reaffirms its support for new proposals, while also maintaining its commitment to long-standing initiatives that provide continuous support to particularly sensitive species still facing significant threats and requiring sustained efforts for their recovery.

Through the more than 280 projects promoted by the Foundation throughout its history, the importance of high-quality scientific research combined with effective conservation action is clearly demonstrated, ensuring protection for the species and habitats most in need. The primary objective is to ensure that ecosystems continue to serve as true refuges of biodiversity, supported by knowledge of species both in the wild and under human care.

To date, more than USD 29 million has been dedicated to the protection of species and their ecosystems, contributing to the recovery from extinction of 18 species.

Martin Böye Appointed as New Scientific Director for Marine Projects

Loro Parque Fundación continues to strengthen its global leadership in conservation with an important step within its scientific structure: the appointment of Martin Böye as the new Scientific Director for Marine Projects. He will be responsible for the ***direction and coordination of the Foundation's marine research and conservation projects*** across oceans worldwide.

New Scientific Director for Marine Projects, Martin Böye. Photo: LPF

Wolfgang Kiessling highlighted "the extraordinary contribution of Javier Almunia, whose legacy has positioned the Foundation as a global reference in marine research and conservation".

This transition follows Javier Almunia's decision to begin a new professional stage at the University of La Laguna, after more than 27 years as part of Loro Parque Fundación. Nevertheless, Almunia will maintain a close scientific connection through a collaboration agreement with the University of La Laguna, joining a scientific advisory committee alongside experts from institutions such as the University of St Andrews and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Böye, currently President of the European Association for Aquatic Mammals (EAAM), has a well-established career in conservation programmes, applied research, scientific education and zoological management. His professional background includes the development of initiatives focused on marine mammals, international cooperation, and the implementation of actions aimed at protecting vulnerable ecosystems and species.

Christoph Kiessling, Vice President of the Loro Parque Group and President of Loro Parque Fundación, stated that "this appointment represents a decisive step in strengthening the international projection of our Foundation. Martin Böye brings a modern, rigorous scientific vision that is fully aligned with the current challenges facing marine conservation".

In this new phase, Böye will lead strategic projects such as the proposal for the creation of a Marine Protected Area in Macaronesia, in addition to several field-based conservation initiatives, including those focused on critically endangered species such as the Atlantic humpback dolphin in Senegal.

With this appointment, Loro Parque Fundación further reinforces its international leadership in applied research, species conservation and the generation of knowledge for the protection of marine life at a critical moment for ocean health. ■

Atlantic humpback dolphin in the wild, critically endangered. LPF collaborates in its monitoring and protection. Photo: LPF

Blue-throated macaws in the wild. LPF works on their conservation. Photo: LPF

Viral: Orcas Caught "Kissing" in the Wild

Video

For the first time, a behaviour known as *"tongue nibbling"* has been documented in wild orcas—a gesture similar to a "kiss" that until now had only been observed under human care. This discovery, resulting from a collaboration between Norwegian researchers and Loro Parque Fundación, represents a significant advance in the study of the species' social behaviour.

The interaction was recorded in the fjords of Kvænangen, in northern Norway, where two adult orcas remained face to face, gently exchanging mouth-to-mouth contact for nearly two minutes. The use of underwater cameras made it possible to observe a behaviour that would otherwise go unnoticed from the surface.

"The fact that this behaviour has now been documented in the wild, almost 50 years after it was first described in a zoological setting, confirms that it forms part of the species' natural social repertoire," explains Dr Javier Almunia, Scientific Advisor to Loro Parque Fundación and co-author of the study published in *Oceans*.

The footage, captured by recreational divers, also highlights the growing value of citizen science in cetacean research.

This discovery reinforces the hypothesis that orcas possess highly complex social bonds, and that observations made under human care—such as those conducted at Loro Parque—can provide valuable insights into their natural behaviour. As seen in belugas, this gesture may serve a social bonding function.

The study opens new opportunities to further uncover the emotional and social lives of these remarkable animals. ■

Orca "tongue nibbling" recorded at Loro Parque. Video still photo: LPF

Canary Islands Government and LPF Strengthen Coastal Protection

Poema del Mar hosted the signing of a new collaboration agreement between the Canary Islands Government and Loro Parque Fundación, a joint commitment aimed at strengthening the protection of the Archipelago's coastline. The event brought together institutional representatives and members of the Loro Parque Group, highlighting the importance of coordinated marine management and environmental education as key tools for preserving coastal biodiversity.

The agreement establishes a framework for cooperation focused on the development of beach clean-up days, educational programmes, scientific activities and public awareness initiatives, with a particular emphasis on the school environment. All these actions are structured around the programme *"La arena de nuestras playas"* ("The Sand of Our Beaches"), promoted by Loro Parque Fundación, which focuses on reducing plastic pollution, fostering environmental education and encouraging active participation in the conservation of the Canary Islands' coastline.

Signing of the agreement at Poema del Mar: Antonio Acosta, General Director for Coastal Affairs, and Christoph Kiessling, President of Loro Parque Fundación. Photo: LPF

Key actions include the organisation of beach and coastal clean-ups; educational and awareness-raising activities for schoolchildren and community groups; the recording and analysis of waste, including microplastics; and the preparation of reports on the results obtained. The agreement also provides for the joint dissemination of activities through institutional communication channels, ensuring mutual recognition of all participating entities.

"This agreement reinforces the Canary Islands Government's commitment to coastal protection and will allow us to make further progress in conservation, environmental education and scientific knowledge. Collaboration with Loro Parque Fundación expands our capacity to act and to raise public awareness in order to protect a heritage that is essential for future generations," said Antonio Acosta, General Director for Coastal Affairs of the Canary Islands Government.

Christoph Kiessling, President of Loro Parque Fundación, noted: ***"This agreement allows us to expand the reach of the work we have been carrying out for years and to reinforce, alongside the public, our shared commitment to protecting the coastline and the marine environment."***

This new protocol adds to the efforts undertaken in recent years by public administrations and partner organisations to move towards an integrated model of coastal management in the Canary Islands. The initiative reinforces an approach based on institutional cooperation, scientific research, public participation and environmental education—essential pillars for ensuring the long-term protection of the Archipelago's coasts. ■

Video

A Milestone Reached: 2,025 Yellow-shouldered Amazon Chicks Fledged

Loro Parque Fundación provides technical and financial support to the conservation programme for the Yellow-shouldered Amazon in Venezuela, in close collaboration with the organisation Provita. To date, 2,025 chicks have successfully fledged from artificial nests on the Macanao Peninsula—an important milestone for the recovery of this endangered species.

The protection of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon, has been made possible through years of sustained monitoring in the areas where the species is most vulnerable. Its population had declined sharply due to progressive habitat loss caused by tourism development, sand extraction for construction and the illegal capture of chicks for the pet trade.

To counter these threats, Loro Parque Fundación has supported a nest-monitoring programme led by trained eco-guards, whose presence helps prevent poaching during the breeding season. Financial support for this initiative has reached USD 666,804, contributing to the species' reclassification from *Vulnerable (VU)* to *Near Threatened (NT)* on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. As a result, the Yellow-shouldered Amazon has become one of the 18 species that Loro Parque Fundación has helped to save from extinction.

At the same time, Loro Parque Fundación's breeding centre has become the world's leading hub for the reproduction of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon, with more than 270 individuals born at its facilities over the past 50 years. Breeding under human care helps reduce pressure on wild populations by offering a sustainable alternative to illegal capture, providing healthy birds raised in controlled environments.

Valued for its gentle temperament and striking plumage—particularly the yellow of its head and shoulders—this parrot has long been targeted for the pet trade. This is why the Foundation works closely with Provita, whose science-based conservation strategies and educational efforts have significantly increased the number of birds in the wild. These actions are reinforced through the installation of artificial nests and the restoration of tree cavities damaged by poachers, ensuring suitable breeding sites remain available.

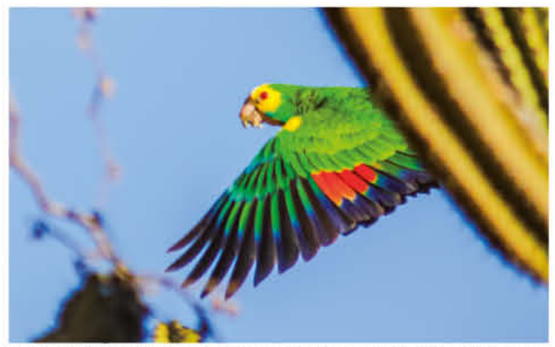
Regular monitoring of nesting areas throughout the breeding season, together with the training of a team of 21 eco-guards in species management, avian biology and biosecurity, has been central to the project's success.

The figure of 2,025 fledged chicks is particularly meaningful—not only because it coincides with the calendar year, but because it substantially improves the species' prospects of regaining its historical presence across the Venezuelan habitats it once occupied. ■

Continuous monitoring of artificial nests is a key factor in the success of this project. Photo: Provita / LPF

Video

Close surveillance of chicks as they leave the nest is carried out by trained eco-guards. Photo: LPF



The Yellow-shouldered Amazon continues to delight observers with its vivid colours as it flies among the cactus vegetation characteristic of its natural habitat. Photo: LPF

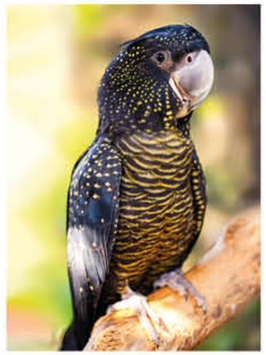
First Successful Breeding in Europe of the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

Years of dedicated work by the biologists and aviculturists of Loro Parque and Loro Parque Fundación have borne fruit with the first successful breeding in Europe of the south-western Australian Forest red-tailed black cockatoo, locally known as the ***Karrak. This thick-billed cockatoo is now confined to a very small area at the extreme south-west of Western Australia,*** making this achievement particularly significant for the conservation of the species.

"We are extremely pleased that, after years of effort, we have succeeded in breeding this rare bird for the first time at Loro Parque. For a period, the situation was delicate, as the chick experienced difficulties hatching. However, with the careful assistance of our highly skilled keepers, it emerged successfully and is now receiving the very best care as a particularly important chick," explains Marcia Weinzettl, biologist and bird curator at Loro Parque Fundación.

In the wild, the species is in decline due to decreasing population numbers and the continued loss of its natural habitat. It faces several threats, including illegal hunting and competition from wild bees, which occupy the vital tree cavities used for nesting in mature eucalyptus forests.

In the same region of Western Australia, Loro Parque Fundación has also supported conservation efforts for the endangered Carnaby's black cockatoo, a species that shares a similar habitat and depends on reforestation initiatives for its long-term survival. ■



Female Forest red-tailed black cockatoo. Photo: A. Azcárate / LPF

First *Karrak* chick born at Loro Parque. Photo: A. Azcárate / LPF

Video

LPF Ambassador Leads Key Veterinary Training Workshop in Rwanda

The University of Rwanda (UR), together with the Veterinary Initiative for Endangered Wildlife (VIEW), ***successfully delivered an intensive Veterinary Clinical Pathology workshop led by Bärbel Köhler, Ambassador of Loro Parque Fundación and a recognised specialist in laboratory diagnostics for wildlife and exotic species.***

The training was designed to strengthen Rwanda's diagnostic capacity following the recent donation of a VETSCAN VS2 haematology analyser by VIEW. Participants received high-level, hands-on training in modern haematology and biochemistry techniques, safe sample handling and clinical interpretation, providing practical tools directly applicable to their professional work.

The workshop brought together 17 carefully selected participants, including university lecturers, veterinary professionals and students with a strong interest in clinical diagnostics. Beyond enhancing individual skills, the initiative also helped to further strengthen collaboration between VIEW and the University of Rwanda.

Support from Loro Parque Fundación was instrumental to the success of the workshop, reinforcing the organisation's role as an international reference in education and conservation and underlining its commitment to advancing scientific training in regions of critical importance for global biodiversity. ■

Advanced diagnostic training workshops are essential for field teams. Certification of students and participants supports the continued professional development of those working directly with wildlife. Photos: LPF

Loro Parque Strengthens Its Conservation Commitment in the UK and Germany

What would the world be like without zoological institutions? This question formed the central theme of a parliamentary evening held in Berlin—an event that, now more relevant than ever, clearly highlighted the vital role modern zoological centres play in supporting animals at all levels.

Joined by guests from the fields of science, politics and modern zoological institutions, the event reaffirmed that accredited zoos are far more than places of leisure. They are centres of knowledge, platforms for research and true refuges for flora and fauna, with an impact that extends well beyond their own boundaries. Today, zoo biologists and veterinarians are highly specialised experts in the health and welfare of wild animals.

Monitoring, disease prevention, diet design and management protocols, combined with modern facilities, make a significant contribution to species conservation. These efforts generate valuable scientific data and support international initiatives to protect endangered species.

The evening was moderated by biologist Wolfgang Rades and opened with introductory remarks by Wolfgang Kiessling, followed by contributions from Dr Alexandra Dörnath. A lively discussion with Michael Miersch, Dr Joachim Scholz and Jeff Schreiner strongly confirmed one key message: without modern zoological institutions, a vital component of global conservation efforts would be missing.

The event was promoted by Member of Parliament Olav Gutting and once again demonstrated that accredited zoological centres are not part of the problem—they are an essential part of the solution.

At the end of November, the Loro Parque Group also hosted a parliamentary reception at the UK Parliament in collaboration with MP Andrew Rosindell, coinciding with World Travel Market 2025.

The event, which brought together numerous British parliamentarians, animal welfare advocates and leaders from the zoological sector, was a resounding success in both organisation and attendance, further consolidating Loro Parque's international reputation as a benchmark for conservation, research and environmental education.

The event took place at the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin. From left to right: Michael Miersch (publicist), Olav Gutting (Member of the Bundestag and host), Joachim Scholz (palaeontologist, Senckenberg Institute and Frankfurt Natural History Museum), Jeff Schreiner (Director of *Haus des Meeres* Aquarium and wildlife veterinarian), Dr Alexandra Dörnath (wildlife veterinarian, senior curator and publicist), Wolfgang Rades (biologist and Loro Parque conservation representative in Germany), Christoph Kiessling and Wolfgang Kiessling (President of Loro Parque Fundación and President of Loro Parque Group). Photo: LP

Christoph Kiessling, as President of Loro Parque Fundación, spoke on the idea that if modern zoos did not exist, humanity would need to reinvent them—for species, for science and for future generations. Photo: LP

The President of the Loro Parque Group, Wolfgang Kiessling, and Vice-President Christoph Kiessling led the company delegation and personally welcomed parliamentary representatives and leading figures from the scientific and conservation communities.

Their presence underscored the institutional and personal commitment of the Kiessling family to biodiversity protection and animal welfare—values that have guided the organisation since its foundation.

Many parliamentarians emphasised the importance of holding more events of this kind to encourage dialogue between institutions, science and politics, and to build an international network of cooperation in support of wildlife conservation.

Wolfgang Kiessling welcomed the success of the event and the strong interest shown by members of the UK Parliament, stating: "We are deeply grateful for the warm reception we received in London. It was an extraordinary evening, marked by excellent participation and an atmosphere of respect, genuine interest and shared commitment."

For his part, Loro Parque's Zoological Director, Mike Jordan, presented the Group's key achievements and strategic priorities, highlighting the importance of maintaining this spirit of cooperation. ***He noted how encouraging it was to see parliamentarians and sector representatives recognise the work carried out from Tenerife and around the world.*** Loro Parque remains firmly committed to protecting endangered species and inspiring people to become ambassadors for nature.

"These meetings are essential for building lasting partnerships. Communication and cooperation are the most powerful tools we have to advance conservation and animal welfare," emphasised Mike Jordan.

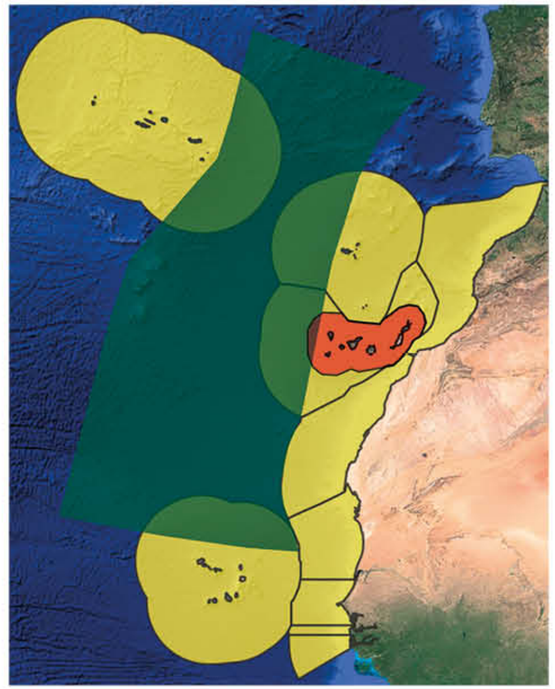
The event left a very positive impression on attendees, who agreed on the importance of holding such meetings regularly and continuing to strengthen communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in animal protection.

Participants committed to continuing to work together along this path, sharing knowledge and experience to help build a more sustainable and respectful future. ■

British parliamentarians highlighted the Group's role as a global benchmark for the sector, while Wolfgang Kiessling reaffirmed his commitment to animal welfare and international collaboration. Photo: LP

IUCN gives the green light to the Macaronesia Sanctuary

Dolphins of Macaronesia



Potential area for the Macaronesia Marine Biodiversity Sanctuary
National jurisdictional waters
MFA sonar moratorium zone

Dr Javier Almunia at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi. Photo: LPF

The IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in Abu Dhabi, has approved by an overwhelming ***96.5% majority*** the motion submitted by ***Loro Parque Fundación*** for the creation of the ***Macaronesia Marine Sanctuary.*** The proposal seeks to establish a protected marine corridor for cetaceans and other marine species inhabiting the waters between the Canary Islands, the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde.

The resolution represents official recognition of more than four decades of sustained conservation work led by Wolfgang Kiessling, President and Founder of the Loro Parque Group, alongside German scientist Petra Deimer, a pioneer in marine mammal protection. Since the 1980s, both have actively promoted the creation of a large Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the region, fully aware of the exceptional ecological and biogeographical importance of the north-eastern Atlantic.

International endorsement of a long-term vision

Approval of the motion not only validates Loro Parque Fundación's long-standing commitment to marine conservation, but also positions the Macaronesia Sanctuary as a future global benchmark for the coordinated management of ocean ecosystems. Backed by this strong scientific and political mandate, the initiative now enters a decisive phase in which close cooperation between the governments of Spain, Portugal and Cape Verde, together with the international scientific community, will be essential.

"The Macaronesia Sanctuary embodies a shared ambition of science, institutions and society," stated Wolfgang Kiessling. "Its approval clearly demonstrates that international cooperation is the most effective path towards safeguarding ocean biodiversity."

According to Javier Almunia, Scientific Adviser to Loro Parque Fundación, the vote represents a major boost to the project:

"The IUCN's strong support reinforces our commitment to ocean conservation and encourages us to continue working closely with the countries involved to turn this protected area into a reality."

A strategic stronghold for Atlantic cetaceans

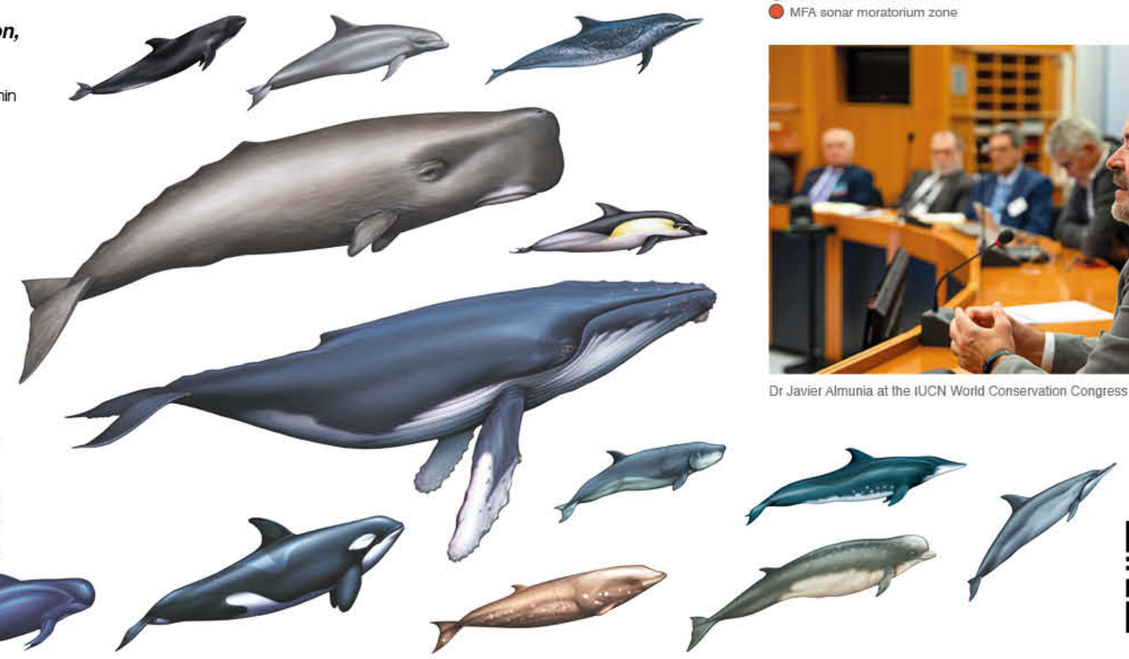
Macaronesia is home to 32 cetacean species, accounting for 84% of all species present in the North Atlantic. Its strategic geographical location and wide range of marine habitats make the region a vital area for migration routes, breeding grounds and population dynamics of numerous marine species.

The future Sanctuary aims to provide a coordinated response to increasing pressures, including rising ***maritime traffic,*** the use of mid-frequency sonar, the expansion of ***industrial fishing,*** and the potential development of ***deep-sea mining.*** Protecting the region, as outlined in the approved motion, would help ensure the integrity of its ecosystems and the continuity of essential ecological processes.

Science and cooperation, the pillars of the future Sanctuary

In 2024, all public universities within the Macaronesian region — in the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde, including the Technical University of the Atlantic — together with the University of La Laguna (ULL) and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), signed the ***Manifesto for Marine Biodiversity,*** promoted by Loro Parque Fundación. This landmark agreement establishes an unprecedented academic collaboration platform, focused on advancing research initiatives and training programmes dedicated to Atlantic marine conservation.

Close coordination between governments, scientific institutions and conservation organisations will be a defining feature of the future Macaronesia Marine Sanctuary, conceived as an ***international model for environmental diplomacy and scientific cooperation.*** ■



Video

18 species saved from extinction

Thanks to the sustained work of Loro Parque Fundación, 2025 marks a historic milestone: 18 species have been pulled back from the brink of imminent extinction.

Protecting biodiversity and restoring species to their natural habitats is one of the greatest challenges of modern conservation — but also one of its most powerful tools for changing the course of history.

This year has delivered encouraging results across several regions of the world, driven by long-term projects and strong international partnerships. One of the most significant advances has been made in the recovery of the ***Great Green Macaw of Guayaquil*** (*Ara ambiguus guayaquilensis*)***. In 2025, Fundación*** forward with determination. To date, 22 individuals have been transferred to the country as part of the project, and 11 have already been successfully reintroduced, leading to an extraordinary achievement: five chicks born in the wild. At the same time, the breeding programme developed by Loro Parque Fundación in Tenerife is set to reach a world record by the end of the year, with 55 chicks hatched under human care, firmly establishing the Foundation as the global leader in the reproductive success of this species.

In collaboration with the WAITA Institute, Loro Parque Fundación supports Project Voar, an initiative bringing renewed hope to the Vinaceous Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*). In 2025, a tri-national census confirmed the presence of approximately 100 individuals in the wild in the Dom Joaquim region (Brazil), a critical refuge for the future of this threatened species. Alongside field monitoring, the installation of nest boxes is creating new breeding opportunities where natural tree cavities are no longer available. Although the first hatchings are still to come, every nest box inspected represents a promise — a real possibility that the species will once again reproduce in the wild.

Lear's Macaws reintroduced into the wild. Photo: LPF

Video

Jocotoco, Jambelí and Loro Parque Fundación carried out the species' fifth reintroduction into the wild.

Since 2017, 24 individuals have been returned to their natural environment, while 37 macaws are now recorded within the protected area of Las Balsas Reserve, a key stronghold for the species' future survival.

In Brazil, the recovery of the Lear's Macaw continues to move forward with determination. To date, 22 individuals have been transferred to the country as part of the project, and 11 have already been successfully reintroduced, leading to an extraordinary achievement: five chicks born in the wild. At the same time, the breeding programme developed by Loro Parque Fundación in Tenerife is set to reach a world record by the end of the year, with 55 chicks hatched under human care, firmly establishing the Foundation as the global leader in the reproductive success of this species.

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Local action: LPF saves six endemic Canary Islands snails from extinction

Through a joint effort led by Loro Parque Fundación, in collaboration with the IUCN, the University of La Laguna, the CanBIO project and the Government of the Canary Islands, the conservation status of six endemic species of terrestrial snails from the Canary Islands has been reassessed, significantly reducing their risk of extinction.

The scientific update of the IUCN Red List confirmed the recovery of populations that had gone undetected for decades and allowed for the reclassification of species such as *Hemicycla mascaensis* (Tenerife), which moved from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened, and *Monilearia arguineguinensis* (Gran Canaria), whose extinction risk was also reduced.

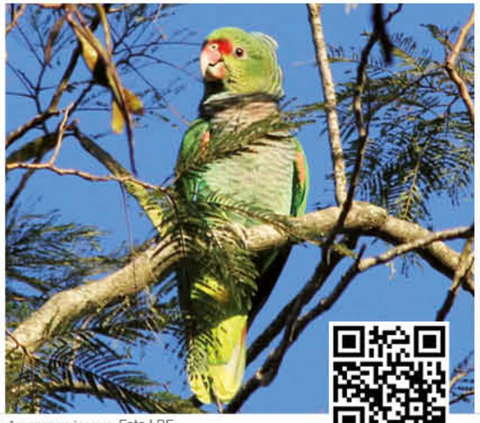
This achievement represents a major milestone for Canarian biodiversity and reinforces the crucial role of Loro Parque Fundación and its scientific partners in safeguarding unique species on the verge of disappearance.

The then Director of Loro Parque Fundación, Javier Almunia, highlighted the importance of the study: ***"The updated information obtained through this joint work is crucial for the effective conservation of these highly vulnerable species."***

This progress marks a scientific milestone for biodiversity in the Canary Islands and further strengthens Loro Parque Fundación's commitment to the conservation of the archipelago's natural heritage. It also underlines the fundamental role of accredited zoological institutions and applied research projects in protecting the world's most fragile ecosystems. ■

Great Green Macaw of Guayaquil / (*Ara ambiguus guayaquilensis*). Photo: M. Moens / Fundación Jocotoco

Video



Amazona vinacea. Foto LPF

Video

Hemicycla plicaria. Foto LPF

Video

Poema del Mar brings together world-leading experts in shark medicine

Experts were able to carry out hands-on work in the state-of-the-art facilities of Poema del Mar. Photo: LPF

The aquarium successfully hosted an international meeting of leading veterinarians and scientists whose research will shape the future of elasmobranch medicine.

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has been the setting for an unprecedented event that places the Canary Islands firmly on the global map of marine science. In Novembre Poema del Mar hosted the European Workshop on Advanced Elasmobranch Medicine and Management, ***a scientific meeting that brought together 40 experts from 18 countries,*** consolidating the aquarium as a world centre for knowledge, innovation and excellence in marine veterinary medicine.

The meeting turned Poema del Mar into a global hub for the study and management of sharks and rays, bringing together professionals from zoological institutions, research centres and international organisations worldwide.

Participants unanimously identified Poema del Mar as a benchmark for scientific progress, highlighting the excellence of the aquarium's team of biologists and veterinarians and recognising it as a global reference in the fields of veterinary and marine biology.

Ángel Curros, Director of Biology at Poema del Mar, emphasised the international impact of the meeting: "Bringing together professionals of such prestige in our facilities reinforces Poema del Mar's role as a world reference centre in elasmobranch medicine. This workshop allows us to move forward together towards a future in which the medicine and conservation of these species are more effective and firmly based on the best scientific evidence."

Over four intensive days, the world's leading elasmobranch specialists conducted practical workshops and shared previously unpublished studies and techniques that will shape the discipline in the coming years. These included advanced imaging, with new ultrasound, CT and MRI protocols adapted to marine species; specialised surgery and anaesthesia, including pioneering techniques for sharks and rays; reproduction and neonatology, with key advances such as artificial insemination in elasmobranchs; and preventive medicine and welfare in sharks and rays, alongside the management of emerging pathologies, all of which are crucial for the conservation of threatened species.

The content generated through this collaborative effort will contribute to establishing new international standards in marine veterinary medicine.

The workshop was endorsed by an organising committee made up of some of the most influential figures worldwide in zoological medicine and elasmobranch management, including Natalie Mylniczenko (Disney's Animal Science, USA), Tania Monreal-Pawlowsky and Mark Stidworthy (IZVG, United Kingdom), Alexis Lécu (Paris Zoo), Nuno Pereira and Hugo David (Oceanário de Lisboa), Carlos Rojo Solís (Oceanogràfic de València), and Ángel Curros (Poema del Mar).

Christoph Kiessling, Vice-President of the Loro Parque Group, highlighted the significance of the event: "The conclusions drawn from this workshop not only reinforce our commitment to animal welfare, but will also help define new global standards in elasmobranch medicine. Poema del Mar is confirmed as a key scientific driver for the protection of the oceans."

The event was sponsored by the Island Council of Gran Canaria and the Veterinary Colleges of Gran Canaria and Tenerife, with the collaboration of Loro Parque, Loro Parque Fundación and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. ■

Video

An Explosion of Life at Loro Parque

The year ***2025*** has been exceptionally fertile for the animals cared for at Loro Parque Animal Embassy. Thanks to the dedication of its teams of biologists, veterinarians and animal keepers, this commitment has translated into what matters most: the birth of new lives.

Among the moments that most delight visitors are the four capybara babies, who have quickly become firm favourites, especially among younger guests. Watching the world's largest rodents grow and interact with their parents is now one of the most memorable experiences in the park.

This year has also seen an extraordinary baby boom among parrots, with more than 1,200 hatchlings recorded — a historic figure that reflects the constant and meticulous work of the technical team. ***Highlights include the birth of five Lear's macaws, five Carnaby's black cockatoo, and a milestone without precedent: the first birth in Europe of the Forest red-tailed black cockatoo, an endangered species native to south-west Australia.***

For the first time, ***two golden lion tamarins*** have also been born at the park. This small Brazilian primate narrowly escaped extinction thanks to coordinated breeding programmes in accredited zoological institutions worldwide. From Tenerife, a breeding pair is now helping to secure the species' future.

Cetaceans have provided some of the most emotional moments of the year. ***Estrella,*** a bottlenose dolphin calf, is developing healthily alongside her mother. And the standout event of 2025 has a name of its own: ***Teno,*** the son of the orca Morgan, who has become a powerful symbol of Loro Parque's commitment to life and conservation.

Other emblematic species have also reproduced successfully this year, including penguins, black swans, crested pigeons, ring-tailed lemurs from Madagascar, grey crowned cranes and African spurred tortoises. Most of these species are threatened in the wild, making every new birth especially significant — not only for conservation, but also for improving scientific knowledge of their biology and care. ■

Births

Parrots (Diferentes especies)	**1200**
King penguins *(Aptenodytes patagonicus)*	**5**
Humboldt penguin *(Spheniscus humboldtii)*	**1**
Grey crowned crane *(Balearica regulorum)*	**3**
Black swan *(Cygnus atratus)*	**3**
Crested pigeon *(Ocyphaps lophotes)*	**4**
Golden lion tamarin *(Leonthopitecus rosalia)*	**2**
Ring-tailed lemur *(Lemur catta)*	**3**
Masked lapwing *(Vanellus miles)*	**2**
Orca - Teno *(Orcinus orca)*	**1**
Sea lion - Ozzy *(Zalophus californuanus)*	**1**
Dolphin - Estrella *(Tursiops truncatus)*	**1**

Estrella swimming alongside her mother. Photo: LPF

Teno with Morgan. Photo: LPF

Several macaw species at the LPF breeding station, the world's largest genetic reserve for parrots. Photo: LPF

Ring-tailed lemur. Photo: LPF

Golden lion tamarin. Photo: LPF

Canarian researchers carry out acoustic analysis of 169 butterfly rays

A multidisciplinary team of scientists from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), Loro Parque Fundación, Loro Parque and Poema del Mar is advancing the study of one of the most threatened marine species in the Canary Islands: the butterfly ray, locally known as *mantelina* (*Gymnura altavela*).

To date, a total of 169 individuals have been tagged with acoustic transmitters between Tenerife and Gran Canaria, making this project one of the most significant monitoring efforts in the eastern Atlantic.

The initiative forms part of the ***CanBIO*** project, co-funded by the Government of the Canary Islands and Loro Parque Fundación, and aims to monitor marine species that are highly sensitive to climate change. In the most recent field campaign alone, 23 new individuals were fitted with acoustic transmitters in the waters around both islands. This technology is essential for tracking movements and identifying critical habitats for the species' survival.

The IUCN classifies the butterfly ray as "critically endangered", underlining the urgency of this work.

Monitoring of the butterfly ray is not new. The University Institute of Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (IU-ECOAQUA) has been studying its biology, ecology and distribution for the past seven years. The incorporation of acoustic technology represents a major step forward, as these transmitters allow individual identification of each ray. Their signals are detected by both fixed stations and receivers installed on conventional or autonomous vessels.

Thanks to the scientific network associated with CanBIO, the data generated significantly expand current knowledge and help strengthen conservation strategies not only for this species, but also for others affected by global warming.

Tagging is carried out following a biological protocol jointly developed by professionals from Poema del Mar, Loro Parque and ULPGC. ***The procedure includes measuring and weighing the animals, ultrasound examinations to assess reproductive status, and biopsies to obtain genetic data*** — all prior to the implantation of the transmitter. The team has succeeded in reducing handling time to less than eight minutes, thereby minimising stress to the animals.

Loro Parque veterinarians performing an ultrasound examination on a butterfly ray (*Gymnura altavela*) in southern Tenerife. Photo: LPF

"We are accustomed to working with this species under human care. Stress and risk are reduced to a minimum, and handling time is significantly shorter," explains Ángel Curros, Director of Biology at Poema del Mar.

Researchers emphasise the importance of conserving this emblematic species and understanding its behaviour in order to ensure its survival.

"We should feel fortunate to have this species in our waters, but also responsible for gaining a thorough understanding of its biology and ecology to guarantee its conservation," says Dr David Jiménez Alvarado, coordinator of the subproject dedicated to butterfly rays and angel sharks.

This work forms part of BioMAR, the branch of the CanBIO project focused on improving knowledge of critically endangered marine species. ***According to Jiménez Alvarado, the transmitters, which operate at 69 kHz, function in a similar way to radio waves and allow animals to be identified at distances of several hundred metres.*** Expanding the receiver network will further refine data on movements, distribution and habitat use.

The most recent tagging sessions took place in Los Cristianos (Tenerife), where 12 individuals were tagged, and Pasito Blanco (Gran Canaria), with 11 individuals. In the coming months, researchers from the University Institute SIANI and technicians from the Integrated Marine Technology Service (SITMA) will carry out new campaigns using autonomous vehicles such as the A-Tirma sailing drone and underwater gliders, further advancing the study of butterfly ray populations in the archipelago. ■

Loro Parque veterinarian Francesco Grande, together with Loro Parque aquarists, performing an ultrasound examination on a butterfly ray (*Gymnura altavela*) in southern Tenerife. Photo: LPF

40,000 Canary Islands schoolchildren at the forefront of environmental education

During the last school year, the educational programmes of the Loro Parque Group reached a major milestone, engaging more ***than 40,000 schoolchildren from the Canary Islands in initiatives aimed at fostering scientific knowledge and environmental awareness.*** Through educational visits to Loro Parque and Poema del Mar, specialised talks, videoconferences, beach clean-ups and the Travelling Exhibition on the Cetaceans of Macaronesia, thousands of students were able to connect with marine biodiversity, gain a deeper understanding of conservation challenges and reflect on the impact of human activities on ecosystems.

Together, these initiatives pursue a fundamental goal: to develop environmental awareness and skills among new generations, while promoting values of respect, responsibility and long-term commitment to nature.

The reach and impact of this educational programme further consolidate Loro Parque Fundación as a leading reference in scientific outreach and environmental awareness in the Canary Islands.

These results clearly demonstrate that education is an essential tool for building a more sustainable future, particularly in a territory as environmentally sensitive as the Canary Islands archipelago. ■

Left photo: Thanks to zoological centres, many children experience seeing a fish underwater for the first time. The educational value of this encounter endures over time, helping to nurture greater sensitivity to environmental challenges. **Right photo:** LPF's travelling exhibition, which showcases the different cetacean species inhabiting the archipelago, raises awareness of their size and unique characteristics, highlighting the need to protect these extraordinary animals. Photos: LPF

Around Twenty Veterinary Students Receive Advanced Training at LPF

The programme provides practical skills applicable to work in rescue centres, veterinary hospitals, clinics and accredited zoological institutions.

Veterinary students from the University of Giessen at Loro Parque, together with Rafael Zamora (Scientific Director, LPF), Prof. Dr Michael Lierz (University of Giessen) and Bärbel Köhler (LPF Ambassador). Photo: LPF

For more than three decades, veterinary students from the University of Giessen have participated in an intensive advanced training programme at Loro Parque Animal Embassy. Over a two-week period, the centre's veterinarians and biologists deliver comprehensive theoretical and practical instruction in animal welfare, ex situ species management, clinical procedures and advanced animal care techniques.

Through Loro Parque Fundación, participants gain first-hand insight into the role of veterinary medicine in field-based conservation projects, allowing them to understand the scientific and practical foundations that support the organisation's work with threatened species.

The theoretical component is complemented by evolutionary and ecological perspectives on biodiversity in the Canary Islands. Students are introduced to island ecosystems and encouraged to apply this knowledge to the management and care of a wide variety of species, including exotic animals.

The second week of the programme focuses on hands-on experience. Students work closely with multidisciplinary teams of veterinarians, biologists and animal caretakers across different departments, applying the concepts previously learned. This practical exchange integrates knowledge of nutrition, hygiene and animal welfare, equipping participants with the professional skills required to ensure the highest standards of care for animals under human care.

Overall, the programme not only enhances the academic development of future veterinarians, but also reinforces the essential link between science, conservation and animal welfare within a real-world professional environment. ■

Video

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