# Cyanopsitta

The **Loro Parque Fundación** newsletter

2026
# 130

## WOLFGANG KIESSLING VISITS LPF'S CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN BRAZIL

## XI INTERNATIONAL PARROT CONVENTION IN TENERIFE CELEBRATES OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

## SOFIANET: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY ENHANCING CETACEAN PROTECTION



Poema del Mar AQUARIUM

LORO PARQUE FUNDACIÓN WE CARE

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*Cyanopsitta # 130 - 2026*

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Wolfgang Kiessling visits projects in Brazil.
Fotos: R. Zamora / LPF

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LORO PARQUE FUNDACIÓN WE CARE

*Dear Friends,*

*Earlier this year, Her Majesty Queen Sofía of Spain was honoured with the Gorilla Award at Poema del Mar in recognition of her longstanding commitment to biodiversity, animal welfare, and the protection of our natural heritage. Her lifelong dedication to wildlife was reflected in this distinction, inspired by the majesty and strength of the gorilla, a symbol of the determination needed to encourage society to value and protect nature and all those who depend on it. For us as a foundation, it is a great honour that this award was presented to Her Majesty here in the Canary Islands.*

*In tribute to Queen Sofía's longstanding support for environmental causes, we unveiled SofiaNET, an ambitious new research programme focused on the Strait of Gibraltar, at both the Biodiversity Summit in Madrid and the World Oceans Day Gala Dinner. SofiaNET is a pioneering acoustic monitoring network designed to enhance our understanding and safeguarding of cetaceans in one of the world's most important marine corridors. By continuously analysing underwater soundscapes, the system will provide invaluable insights into the presence, movements, and behaviour of whales and dolphins, helping researchers better understand the challenges these animals face and informing future management strategies.*

*Recent months have also provided us with the opportunity to come together with many valued partners, supporters, and advocates for nature at Poema del Mar. There, we celebrated the beauty of the oceans that surround us while reaffirming our shared responsibility for their future. The success of this gathering demonstrated the remarkable strength of our conservation community, and we are immensely grateful to everyone whose enthusiasm and dedication continue to make a tangible difference.*

*This year was further distinguished by the XI International Parrot Convention in Tenerife, an event that every four years reaffirms the island's status as a global meeting point for parrot research, breeding, and species recovery. Once again, the convention brought together many of the world's leading specialists, offering a programme of exceptional presentations alongside innovative formats designed to encourage more meaningful dialogue. Among the most appreciated additions were the 'Leaders' Breakfasts', small-group conversations that created unique opportunities for the exchange of ideas, expertise, and experience.*

*Another highlight of the year was the opportunity to visit five Loro Parque Fundación field projects in Brazil. It was a journey that took us far beyond urban centres and deep into remote regions where dedicated conservation action remains essential for the survival of many species. Together with my father, Wolfgang Kiessling, and Rafael Zamora, I witnessed first-hand the remarkable progress achieved through decades of perseverance and collaboration. Seeing the results of long-term conservation efforts in these extraordinary landscapes was both inspiring and deeply rewarding, and we are delighted to share that experience with you in this issue.*

*At the same time, the environmental disasters witnessed around the world this year, particularly in recent months, remind us of the growing pressures facing ecosystems everywhere. Torrential rainfall, severe weather events, and other climate-related extremes are further destabilising already fragile habitats and increasing the vulnerability of many threatened species. Added to these challenges are the impacts of the current warm phase of "El Niño", which affects vast areas of the Pacific and South America and raises the likelihood of devastating floods and other far-reaching disruptions. The repercussions extend well beyond the regions directly affected, underscoring the interconnected nature of our planet.*

*In this context, scientific research has become more essential than ever. Accredited conservation centres play a crucial role in advancing our understanding of wildlife and the environments on which it depends. Equally important is ensuring that this expertise reaches the places where it can have the greatest impact, supported by the resources needed for researchers and local organisations to translate scientific findings into practical action. At Loro Parque Fundación, this approach strengthens our mission to improve animal welfare, protect biodiversity, and secure a future for threatened species worldwide.*

*Science built upon a profound understanding of wildlife. Research developed through accredited conservation institutions. Knowledge generated in the Canary Islands, in partnership with local universities, and producing results whose influence extends far beyond our shores.*

***WE CARE***



Christoph Kiessling
President of Loro Parque Fundación

IUCN

2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity



# H.M. Queen Sofía Receives the Gorilla Award for Her Environmental Legacy



From left to right: Fernando Clavijo (President of the Canary Islands Government), Her Majesty Queen Sofía of Spain, Wolfgang Kiessling (President of the Loro Parque Group), Brigitte Kiessling, and Christoph Kiessling (President of Loro Parque Fundación). Photo: PDM

The Gorilla Award, one of the most distinguished international honours in the field of environmental stewardship, was presented to Her Majesty Queen Sofía of Spain in recognition of her exemplary dedication to biodiversity conservation, animal welfare, and the protection of our natural heritage.

The award ceremony took place on 14 February at Poema del Mar in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, where Her Majesty personally accepted the distinction.

Established by Wolfgang Kiessling, President of the Loro Parque Group, the Gorilla Award honours individuals and institutions whose achievements have made an outstanding contribution to environmental protection and the advancement of sustainable development.

***A lifetime devoted to nature deserved a tribute worthy of its legacy.***

Through this award, Loro Parque and Loro Parque Fundación recognised Her Majesty's enduring role as an international advocate for wildlife conservation and her unwavering support for initiatives dedicated to safeguarding threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems.

The ceremony brought together distinguished guests from across the regional, national, and international conservation community, including institutional representatives, scientists, and environmental organisations. The event further reinforced Poema del Mar's position as a leading venue for scientific outreach and ocean conservation.

During the gathering, Loro Parque also presented updates on its principal programmes in species conservation, scientific research, and environmental education, highlighting the Gorilla Award's growing importance as a platform for showcasing initiatives that deliver meaningful benefits for biodiversity. ■

Video








The Gorilla Award recognises individuals and institutions whose outstanding commitment to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation has made a lasting impact. Photos: PDM

# Poema del Mar at the Forefront of Seahorse Conservation

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria became an international meeting point for marine conservation with the hosting of SyngCo 2026, the International Conference on Syngnathid Conservation. Held on 19 and 20 February, the event brought together leading marine biologists and conservation specialists at Poema del Mar and the Marine and Maritime Innovation Centre to advance efforts to protect some of the ocean's most vulnerable species.

Organised by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and Loro Parque Fundación, the conference welcomed around thirty experts dedicated to addressing the challenges facing syngnathids, a group that includes seahorses, seadragons, and pipefishes, whose populations are increasingly threatened by habitat degradation and environmental change.

***At a time when climate change, industrial fishing, bycatch, and illegal wildlife trade continue to place mounting pressure on marine ecosystems, SyngCo 2026 provided a vital platform for coordinated scientific action.*** The collaboration between the ULPGC, through the ECOAQUA Institute, and the Loro Parque Fundación reinforces the role of both institutions in marine research and conservation.

The opening session featured prominent representatives from the scientific and academic communities, while the programme explored a wide range of topics, including the application of genomic tools in conservation, updates to the IUCN Red List, and advances in aquaculture techniques for future reintroduction programmes.

***Among the speakers were internationally renowned researchers whose work is helping to deepen our understanding of the global status of syngnathid species*** and shape effective strategies for their long-term survival.

Beyond the plenary sessions, the conference included workshops, scientific presentations, and poster sessions, creating an important forum for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and strategic planning.

In the words of Dr. José Juan Castro, the meeting served as a "strategic working forum" for defining global priorities and future actions, further strengthening the Canary Islands' position as a leading centre for marine conservation. ■



Seadragons and seahorses are close relatives within the family *Syngnathidae*, renowned for their extraordinary forms, remarkable camouflage abilities, and the unique role of males, which carry and incubate the eggs. Photo: LPF




From left to right: Dr. José Juan Castro (ECOAQUA Institute, ULPGC), Luis Serra (Rector of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), Martin Böye (Marine Science Director, Loro Parque Fundación), and Ángel Curros (Director of Biology, Poema del Mar). Photo: LPF

+ Info



# From 100 to More Than 1,000: Saving the Grey-breasted Conure

The Brazilian Grey-breasted Conure (*Pyrrhura griseipectus*), one of Brazil's most threatened bird species, stands at the heart of one of the country's most remarkable conservation success stories. ***Thanks to the tireless work of biologist Fabio Nunes, supported by Loro Parque Fundación from the outset, the population in the Baturité Mountains has grown from fewer than 100 individuals in 2010 to more than 1,000 birds today.***

This extraordinary recovery has been driven by habitat restoration, strong engagement from local communities and, above all, the strategic use of artificial nest boxes.

***During the most recent breeding season alone, more than 1,400 eggs were recorded, resulting in over 800 fledglings successfully taking flight.***

The project was launched more than 30 years ago, following devastating wildfires that ravaged the species' last stronghold. Only a handful of birds survived, taking refuge in the hollow of a small tree. Working alongside local landowners, Fabio Nunes and his team established a network of artificial nest boxes that would prove pivotal to the species' recovery. With the sustained support of Loro Parque Fundación, this effort has developed into a remarkable conservation success story.

These achievements have been further strengthened through innovative management measures, including the transfer of chicks between populations to increase genetic diversity and enhance the species' long-term resilience.

Not every area presents the same opportunities for recovery, however, in ***regions such as Serra das Almas and Ubajara National Park, conservation efforts face additional challenges due to predator pressure and the complexity of the surrounding environment.*** Even so, reintroduced populations are showing encouraging signs of adaptation, supported by increasingly refined management protocols.

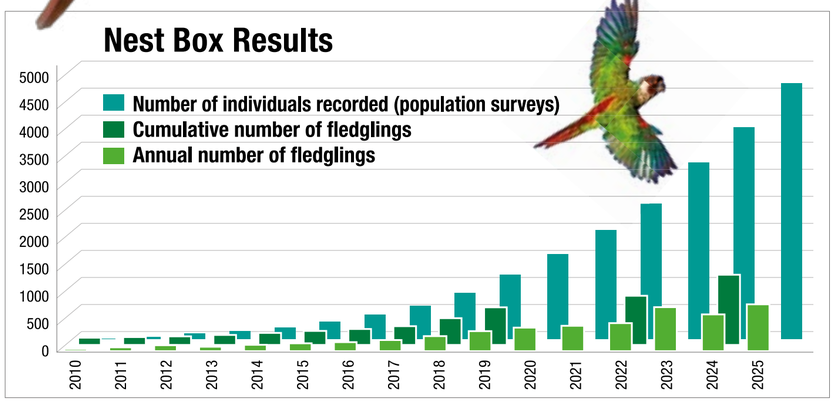
***The project also has a strong community focus, with environmental education and outreach initiatives*** that have engaged thousands of people, reinforcing local support as a fundamental pillar of conservation

***Despite the progress achieved, some populations continue to decline, underlining the need to strengthen protection measures for this unique parrot. The story of the Grey-breasted Conure*** demonstrates that dedication, long-term vision and international cooperation can reverse even the most critical situations and give a species a second chance in the wild. ■

Video: Discover the story behind this conservation success



Biologist Fabio Nunes closely monitors Grey-breasted Conures in areas where the species had disappeared and is now being successfully reintroduced. Photo: Aquasis / LPF




Positive results achieved through artificial nest boxes installed and monitored over the past 15 years. Photo: Aquasis / LPF



The development and use of artificial nest boxes has been one of the key factors behind the recovery of the Grey-breasted Conure. Photo: Aquasis / LPF

# JANTO Project: Conserving Seahorses in the Canary Islands

The JANTO Project, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), brings together Loro Parque Fundación and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) in a collaborative effort to better understand the genetics and conservation status of seahorse populations across the Canary Islands and lay the foundations for their recovery.

The Short-snouted Seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*), one of the most distinctive and vulnerable species inhabiting Europe's coastal waters, may soon have a brighter future in the Canary Islands. Combining genetic research, conservation breeding, population-restoration measures and community engagement, JANTO seeks to safeguard both the species and the marine ecosystems on which it depends.

***JANTO is supported by Fundación Biodiversidad of Spain's Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge (MITECO) through co-funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).*** Its purpose is to generate the scientific evidence needed to guide the long-term conservation and recovery of seahorses throughout the archipelago.

***One of the main challenges facing conservation efforts today is the lack of up-to-date information on seahorse populations in Canary Islands waters.*** To address this knowledge gap, JANTO adopts a multidisciplinary approach that combines genetic analysis, conservation breeding, population reinforcement and public participation.

***A central component of the programme is the first comprehensive genetic assessment of seahorse populations across the archipelago. Through field surveys conducted on several islands, researchers will analyse genetic diversity and population structure,*** providing crucial information for future management decisions. The findings will help preserve the species' genetic variability not only in the Canary Islands but across its wider distribution range.

At the same time, specialised breeding protocols will be developed at Poema del Mar. ***The goal is to establish a sustainable conservation-breeding programme capable of producing genetically suitable individuals for future reinforcement efforts.*** Based on the results obtained, a pilot release programme is planned for Gran Canaria, where selected animals will be introduced into suitable habitats and monitored through underwater surveys and other scientific tracking methods.

Beyond its research objectives, JANTO places a strong emphasis on public engagement. Through workshops, educational resources and outreach activities aimed at fishers, divers, schools and the wider community, the programme seeks to foster a greater sense of shared responsibility for the protection of the Canary Islands' marine environment. ■

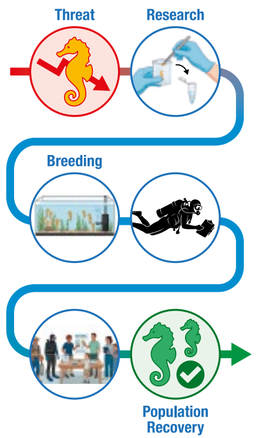





Researcher Jorge Falcón Hoyos presented the project at FIMAR, the International Sea Fair, held on 22 May in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Photo: Jorge Falcón Hoyos




Populations of *Hippocampus hippocampus* have declined dramatically in the Canary Islands due to habitat loss, human pressures, unsustainable fishing practices and a lack of sufficient scientific data. Graphic: PDM



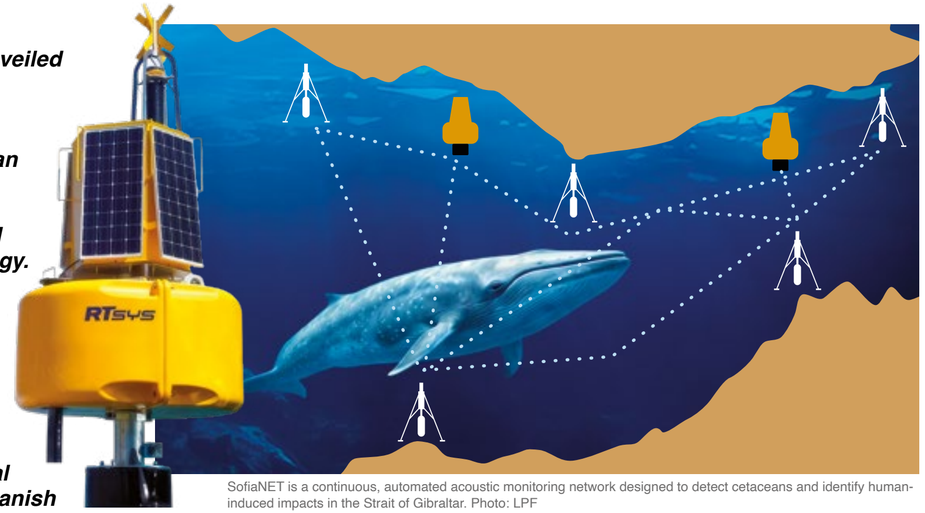

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# SofiaNET: Cutting-Edge Technology for Cetacean Conservation

***Loro Parque Fundación has unveiled Project SofiaNET, a pioneering new initiative aimed at improving cetacean protection in the Strait of Gibraltar through advanced acoustic technology.***

The project was presented at two major events dedicated to biodiversity and ocean conservation: ***the Biodiversity Summit held in Madrid and the presentation of Spain's National Red List at the Spanish Congress of Deputies, on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity.***




SofiaNET is a continuous, automated acoustic monitoring network designed to detect cetaceans and identify human-induced impacts in the Strait of Gibraltar. Photo: LPF

Christoph Kiessling, President of Loro Parque Fundación, presented the project in Madrid. ***SofiaNET will develop a continuous, automated acoustic monitoring system capable of detecting cetaceans in a particularly sensitive marine area.***

The network will provide high-quality data on the animals' activity, distribution and acoustic behaviour, offering valuable information to support more effective management and conservation of the marine environment.

***The initiative builds on Canarian technology developed through the CanBIO project and is being carried out in collaboration with Fundación Reina Sofía, the University of La Laguna and CIRCE.***

Its implementation in the Strait of Gibraltar will help deepen our understanding of the threats facing cetaceans, particularly those resulting from human activity, such as underwater noise and increasing pressure on their habitats.

During his presentation, Professor Antonio Fernández highlighted the importance of science at every stage, including after an animal has died. He explained: "Veterinarians are becoming increasingly specialised. In our case, if you see me or my team somewhere, the news is usually not good, because we are veterinary pathologists. We are the ones who investigate the causes of death. We speak with death to help life. Understanding these causes is essential because animals still have a great deal to tell us when they die."

Ángel Curros, Biological Director of Poema del Mar Aquarium, also took part in the event, presenting advances in the protection of critically endangered species such as the angelshark and the butterfly ray. This connection between research, institutions and practical conservation projects once again highlighted the importance of a scientific, collaborative and results-driven approach to protecting biodiversity.

One of the highlights was the presentation by Vivek Menon, Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, who stressed the need to focus conservation efforts on protecting each individual species.

***Menon recalled the remarkable recovery of Lear's macaw in Brazil, a species that went from the brink of extinction to a wild population of more than 2,600 individuals, thanks in part to collaboration with Loro Parque Fundación. "Nature is very resilient and grateful; if you do something for it, it will give something back,"*** he said. He also offered the support of the 15,000 experts who make up his commission to further advance joint conservation projects. ■




From left to right: Dr Javier Almunia (Scientific Advisor to LPF), Prof. Dr Antonio Fernández (IUSA), Wolfgang Kiessling (President of Loro Parque Group), Christoph Kiessling (President of Loro Parque Fundación), Vivek Menon (IUCN), Dr Renaud Stephanis (CIRCE) and Cybell Kiessling (Secretary of the Board of Directors of Loro Parque). Photo: LPF

Video

# Wolfgang Kiessling Visits LPF Projects in Brazil

Wolfgang Kiessling, President of Loro Parque and Founder of Loro Parque Fundación, together with Christoph Kiessling, President of the Foundation, Vivek Menon, Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and Rafael Zamora, Scientific Director of Loro Parque Fundación, recently travelled through Brazil to visit a number of field conservation programmes that have benefited from the Foundation's technical and financial support over the past three decades.

The journey began at São Paulo Zoo, where the delegation met with its director, Kiko Buerger, and his team. Loro Parque Fundación works closely with the institution on ex situ conservation programmes for some of the world's rarest parrots, including the Lear's Macaw, Spix's Macaw, Hyacinth Macaw, and Red-tailed Amazon. The exchange of expertise between the two organisations continues to play a valuable role in advancing conservation efforts for these highly threatened species.

The group also visited the recipient of the Wolfgang Kiessling Conservation Award, a project in Mato Grosso do Sul that received funding of US$80,000 to support the conservation of the Giant Anteater and Giant Armadillo.

Monitoring these animals involves travelling vast distances across a remarkable landscape where Blue-and-yellow Macaws, Toco Toucans and a wealth of native wildlife share their habitat with the Giant Anteater. Once affected by habitat fragmentation, road mortality and recurring wildfires, the species now benefits from the outstanding work of the team led by biologist Arnaud Desbiez of the Institute for Conservation of Wild Animals (ICAS). Witnessing these efforts first-hand offered a powerful insight into the realities of field conservation in Brazil.

Given the immense scale of the country, travelling by four-wheel-drive vehicle is not always enough. The delegation therefore continued its journey by light aircraft into the heart of the Pantanal, where they met field teams led by Neiva Guedes. Surrounded by one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth, they were able to observe the world's largest parrot, the magnificent Hyacinth Macaw.

Although the Pantanal faces increasing threats from drought and severe wildfires, conditions were favourable during the visit. Abundant water revealed the ecosystem at its most spectacular, showcasing a landscape rich in wildlife and extraordinary natural beauty.

High in a large tree, the team observed a natural Hyacinth Macaw nest containing two chicks, carefully monitored and protected by Neiva Guedes and her colleagues.

***The dedication displayed by the biologists and veterinarians of the Instituto Arara Azul was truly exceptional. Supported over many years by Loro Parque Fundación, the project has not only contributed to the recovery of the species but has also played an important role in preventing poaching,*** despite the considerable challenges posed by remote access, high humidity and relentless swarms of mosquitoes.







Wolfgang Kiessling and Christoph Kiessling observe Lear's Macaws at the spectacular cliffs of Toca Velha in north-eastern Brazil. Photos: C. Kiessling / LPF

Encouraged by the success achieved in the Pantanal, Wolfgang Kiessling and his team travelled onwards from Campo Grande to Petrolina in northern Brazil to visit one of the most emblematic conservation programmes supported by the Foundation: the recovery of the Lear's Macaw.

Accompanied by biologist Erica Pacífico, the group undertook a long journey by four-wheel-drive vehicle into the remote landscapes of Boqueirão da Onça. Their destination was a field station located beside a large reintroduction aviary, the heart of a programme dedicated to restoring a species that numbered little more than a hundred individuals in the 1980s. Today, thanks in part to decades of support from Loro Parque Fundación and its Brazilian partners, the wild population exceeds 2,600 birds. Eleven of those macaws were bred in Tenerife and subsequently prepared for release into the demanding conditions of Brazil's semi-arid Caatinga.



W. Kiessling (Loro Parque), N. Guedes (Instituto Arara Azul), C. Kiessling (Loro Parque Fundación), Maria Eduarda Monteiro (Instituto Arara Azul) and Vivek Menon (IUCN SSC) during the inspection of a natural Hyacinth Macaw nest in the southern Pantanal. Photo: LPF



Meeting with the team at São Paulo Zoo. Photo: LPF





Locating individual Giant Anteaters is no easy task, as they roam across vast open landscapes. Photo: C. Kiessling / LPF



Hyacinth Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*). Photo: LPF



The LPF and SPVS teams: Rafael Zamora, Vilmar Bueno Junior, Rafaela Martini, Wolfgang Kiessling, Elenise Sipinski, Christoph Kiessling, Aaron Ramathan and Lucas Mendes. Photos: LPF

***As the team observed the aviary towards sunset, the unmistakable calls of a group of Lear's Macaws echoed across the landscape.***

It was an unforgettable moment. Flying powerfully overhead, these birds, hatched and raised in their own, several kilometres from the release site.

After a demanding trek through dense thorn scrub, with Wolfgang Kiessling leading the way, the group reached a dramatic escarpment overlooking a vast valley. From below, pairs of Lear's Macaws emerged and soared in wide circles above the observers. These were breeding pairs established in recent years, already raising young on the same cliffs.

The sight offered compelling evidence of the programme's success. Since the first breeding efforts at Loro Parque Fundación in 2006, eleven reintroduced birds have established themselves in the wild and have already produced five offspring born entirely under natural conditions.

***The next stage of the journey took the delegation to the Canudos Biological Station and the Toca Velha region, where Erica Pacífico and her research team were actively monitoring nesting macaws.*** Their work includes scaling cliffs to inspect nests, ringing chicks, monitoring breeding success, identifying pairs and helping protect the birds from illegal capture.

Access to Toca Velha is carefully controlled and overseen by local wardens with extensive knowledge of the area and its wildlife. In a year blessed with more rainfall than usual, the semi-arid landscape revealed unexpected patches of green. As dusk approached, Wolfgang Kiessling watched with emotion as numerous pairs of Lear's Macaws returned to the towering red sandstone cliffs, disappearing into cavities that serve as both roosts and nesting sites.

For someone who remembers a time when fewer than eighty Lear's Macaws remained in the wild, witnessing such numbers thriving in their natural habitat represents a powerful reward for decades of dedication. The continued support provided by LPF, alongside Brazilian conservation organisations, remains vital to securing the future of this remarkable species.

The expedition then continued south to Curitiba.

There, the organisation SPVS (Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem e Educação Ambiental) has spent more than twenty years working to protect threatened parrots of the Atlantic Forest, achieving notable results with both the Red-tailed Amazon (*Amazona brasiliensis*) and the Vinaceous Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*).

The recovery of the Red-tailed Amazon has required decades of sustained effort. Although its population is now considered stable, it continues to face pressures from poaching and increasing human activity within its range.

The visit included an excursion to the cooler upland forests inhabited by the Vinaceous Amazon, where tree ferns, mosses and epiphytes create a striking contrast with the coastal habitats of the Red-tailed Amazon. Reaching the latter required a boat journey from the mainland to Ilha Rasa.

Here, dense Atlantic rainforest, abundant wildlife and humid tropical conditions provide a haven for this colourful parrot, which remains closely associated with the coastal islands of southern Brazil.

It was especially rewarding to see how local island communities recognise the long-standing work carried out by Loro Parque Fundación and SPVS. Their collaboration with local residents over many years has been fundamental to safeguarding this unique species.

These visits underline the importance of maintaining close contact with field conservation programmes. Beyond monitoring progress, they provide valuable opportunities to exchange knowledge, strengthen partnerships and gain a deeper understanding of both the species and the ecosystems involved.

Ultimately, successful conservation depends not only on science and resources, but also on the dedicated field professionals and local communities who serve as the true custodians of the natural world. ■

Video



Red-tailed Amazon (*Amazona brasiliensis*). Photo: LPF



The islands inhabited by *Amazona brasiliensis* are accessible only by boat. Photos: LPF

# Tenerife: The Global Capital of Parrot Conservation

## 800 Specialists • 57 Countries • One Week Dedicated to Science




The XI International Parrot Convention was held from 14 to 17 September and brought together 800 scientists, aviculturists and conservation professionals from 57 countries. Photo: LPF

For four days, the XI International Parrot Convention in Tenerife brought together 800 participants from 57 countries, united by a common goal: advancing our understanding of parrots and transforming that knowledge into practical tools to improve their welfare and strengthen their conservation.

Organised by Loro Parque and Loro Parque Fundación, with the support of the Government of the Canary Islands, the Island Council of Tenerife and the City Council of Puerto de la Cruz, the convention also celebrated the 40th anniversary of an event that first took place in 1986. Four decades on, Tenerife continues to serve as an international hub for scientific exchange and collaboration dedicated to parrots.

Forty years ago, much of what was known about these birds came from the observations and experience of aviculturists. While that expertise remains invaluable today, it is now complemented by advances in genetics, veterinary medicine, reproduction, nutrition, behaviour and animal welfare, all of which have transformed the way parrots are studied, managed and conserved.

The high scientific calibre of this year's programme was reflected in the participants' voting for the most outstanding speakers. ***The highest-rated presentation was delivered by Prof. Dr Michael Lierz*** of the Justus Liebig University Giessen, whose lecture on cutting-edge reproductive technologies captivated the audience and highlighted new opportunities for applying these techniques to parrot conservation. ***Prof. Dr Matthias Reinschmidt*** was also recognised for his presentation on innovative approaches to environmental enrichment and parrot welfare, while ***Dr Erica Pacífico*** shared the challenges and achievements of one of Loro Parque Fundación's most ambitious and rewarding conservation programmes: the recovery of the Lear's Macaw and the protection of its natural habitat in Brazil.



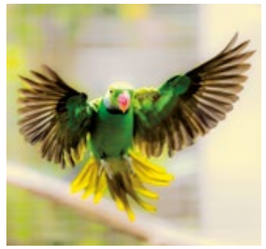

Prof. Dr Michael Lierz was named "Best Speaker" of the convention for his presentation on modern reproductive technologies in species conservation. Photo: LPF

As noted by the Convention's Scientific Committee, this year's gathering provided a clear illustration of how dramatically scientific knowledge of parrots has evolved since 1986.

The scientific programme was further enriched by the 'Leaders' Breakfasts', small-group sessions that encouraged meaningful discussion and the exchange of expertise among specialists from around the world.

### *Loro Parque Fundación Breeding Centre: The World's Largest Living Genetic Reserve of Parrots.*

Each day of the convention included a visit to the Loro Parque Fundación Breeding Centre, home to the world's largest living genetic reserve of parrots.





Individuals of *Psittacula calthrapae* and *Anodorhynchus leari* at the Loro Parque Fundación Breeding Centre. Photo: LPF



Delegates were guided through the facilities by Rafael Zamora, Scientific Director of Loro Parque Fundación, together with bird curators Marcia Weinzettl and Domingo Panizo. Photo: LPF

For many delegates, touring the facility offered a unique opportunity to observe first-hand the management techniques and husbandry protocols used across a wide variety of species, exchange experiences with the centre's professionals, and explore new opportunities for collaboration in research and conservation.

The convention also delivered a tangible conservation outcome. Thailand agreed to transfer a pair of Palm Cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus stenolophus*), one of the rarest cockatoo subspecies in the world, to Loro Parque Fundación. Their addition will further strengthen the global safety net for the species through inclusion in the world's largest living genetic reserve of parrots.

### *Science Beyond the Lecture Hall.*

The exchange of knowledge continued well beyond the official close of the convention. Between 18 and 20 September, Loro Parque hosted a series of specialist workshops covering hand-rearing and management, nutrition, disease prevention, diagnostics and treatment, led by internationally recognised experts.

With a strong practical focus, these sessions allowed participants to explore real-world case studies and share professional experience, ensuring that scientific advances could be translated directly into improved husbandry, welfare and conservation outcomes.

The XI International Parrot Convention represented both a celebration of four decades of progress and a look towards the future. As environmental challenges become increasingly complex, collaboration between scientists, veterinarians, aviculturists and conservationists has never been more important.

Forty years after its inception, Tenerife remains the place where the global parrot conservation community comes together to share knowledge, inspire new ideas and advance the protection of these extraordinary birds. ■

Video

## Convention Highlights






The convention officially opened on 14 September. Photo: LPF





This year's edition welcomed leading figures such as renowned ornithologist Rosemary Low and conservationist Vivek Menon. Photo: LPF






Prof. Dr Matthias Reinschmidt was recognised for his work on environmental enrichment, while Dr Erica Pacífico shared insights into the conservation of the Lear's Macaw in Brazil. Photos: LPF






Mr Wolfgang Kiessling thanked the 800 participants of the XI International Parrot Convention for their attendance and commitment to conservation. Photo: LPF





Delegates also enjoyed social events at Siam Park and Lago Martiánez, as well as a gala dinner at the Hotel Botánico featuring entertainment and special recognitions. Photo: LPF



The Parrot Convention has become a unique networking forum for biologists, aviculturists and conservationists, fostering new collaborations and lasting friendships in support of parrot conservation worldwide. Photo: LPF

# A Gala for the Future of Our Oceans

Video



SofiaNET, a pioneering initiative designed to improve the protection of cetaceans and the marine environment in the Strait of Gibraltar, was presented during the gala. Photo: LPF

To mark World Oceans Day, established by the United Nations, Loro Parque Fundación hosted another edition of its annual Ocean Gala Dinner at Poema del Mar on 4 June. The charity event brought together guests from across the conservation, scientific and business communities for an evening dedicated to marine biodiversity, research and environmental stewardship.

***This year's fundraising efforts were devoted to the SofiaNET Project, strengthening support for an innovative initiative designed to enhance the protection of cetaceans in the Strait of Gibraltar through advanced acoustic technology.***

Through a network of continuous, automated monitoring stations, SofiaNET will enable researchers to detect the presence of whales and dolphins while gathering vital information about their distribution, behaviour and activity in one of Europe's most important and environmentally sensitive marine corridors.

Once again, the Ocean Gala Dinner served as a meeting point for science, conservation and civic engagement. Funds raised during the evening will contribute directly to the development of SofiaNET, helping to generate the scientific insights needed to support effective marine conservation and informed management of our oceans.

***Through projects such as SofiaNET, Loro Parque Fundación continues to build on more than three decades of commitment to biodiversity conservation. To date, the Foundation has invested over US$30 million in programmes dedicated to protecting threatened species and ecosystems around the world.***

Loro Parque Fundación extends its sincere thanks to all guests, partners and sponsors whose support made this event possible and whose commitment helps safeguard the future of our oceans. ■





Christoph Kiessling, President of Loro Parque Fundación, and Dr Javier Almunia, Scientific Advisor to LPF and Director of the CanBIO Project. Photo: LPF





Björn Dunkerbeck, Windsurfing World Champion and Ambassador for Loro Parque Fundación. Photo: LPF



The gala highlighted the importance of initiatives such as SofiaNET for the conservation of marine ecosystems across Macaronesia. Photo: LPF



As a centre for conservation and research, Poema del Mar brought together representatives from diverse fields united by a common purpose: protecting our oceans. Photo: LPF



Rosi Curbelo, Director of Institutional Relations at Poema del Mar, with Fernando de la Rosa, researcher with the CanBIO Project. Photo: LPF.



Scientists, supporters and ambassadors of Loro Parque Fundación gathered to celebrate World Oceans Day and show their support for SofiaNET. Photo: LPF



The Ocean Gala Dinner raised funds to support the development of the SofiaNET Project. Photo: LPF



Guests also had the opportunity to explore the aquarium and discover the extraordinary marine species in its care. Photo: LPF

# CanBio: 7 Years of Pioneering Research in the Canary Islands

More than 70 people gathered at the University of La Laguna for the sixth scientific outreach conference of the CanBio Project, where researchers from the Canary Islands' universities presented some of the most significant findings to date on the impact of climate change on the Archipelago's biodiversity.

The event, held within the framework of the CanBio Programme, jointly funded by the Government of the Canary Islands and Loro Parque Fundación, highlighted the urgent need for action in response to challenges such as ocean acidification, underwater noise pollution, and the loss of habitats for endemic species.

***Throughout the conference, the various sub-projects showcased important advances. From the development of acoustic monitoring systems to track underwater noise to the use of artificial intelligence for analysing environmental data,*** researchers emphasised the importance of creating home-grown tools capable of providing a deeper understanding of how human activities affect marine ecosystems.

Thanks to the support of Loro Parque Fundación and the Government of the Canary Islands, together with the work of researchers from the University of La Laguna and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, advanced studies have been carried out to measure the consequences of climate change and assess the impacts of human presence on the natural environment.

***The project has also achieved major milestones, including the tagging of the first thresher shark in Canary Islands and the collection of more than 33,000 hours of underwater recordings to study marine soundscapes,*** revealing that current indicators fail to adequately reflect the impact of maritime traffic in tourist destinations.

Beyond the scientific results, the conference also addressed the communication of climate change. Data presented during the event showed that more than 88% of the population actively avoids information on the subject, underlining the need for new approaches that bring science closer to the wider public.

***Through initiatives such as CanBio, the Canary Islands are becoming established as one of the world's most important natural laboratories for climate change research,*** demonstrating that collaboration between universities, public institutions and organisations such as Loro Parque Fundación is essential for safeguarding biodiversity in the face of global challenges. The project offers a unique model that could be replicated in other archipelagos around the world, including Hawaii, the Balearic Islands, the Azores, and Cape Verde. ■



Dr Aridane González (Director of Scientific Infrastructure, ULPGC), Dr María del Mar Afonso (Dean of Science, ULL), Ángel Montañés (Director General for Environmental Quality, Government of the Canary Islands), Christoph Kiessling (President of Loro Parque Fundación) and Dr Javier Almunia (Scientific Advisor, Loro Parque Fundación). Photo: CanBIO




Smart buoy: Morgan. BuoyPam Project.

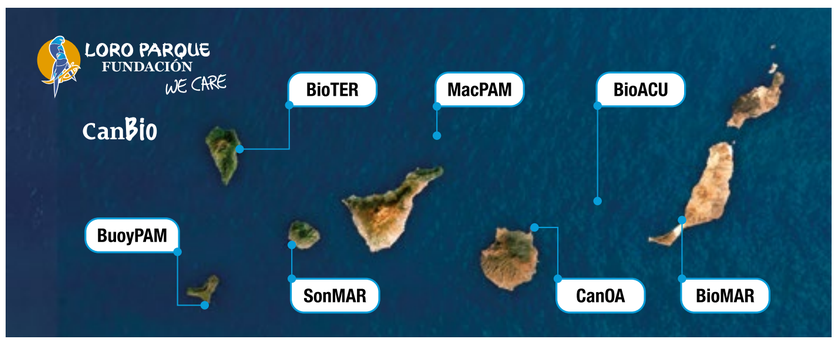
Video



Tagged angelshark (*Squatina squatina*). Photo: Angel Shark Project.



Canarian endemic land snail, *Hemicycla plicaria*. Photo: CanBIO




CanBIO sub-projects. Photo: CanBIO



# Taking Our Veterinary Expertise to China

Loro Parque and Loro Parque Fundación, together with the international nutrition specialist Versele, participated in TOPS: The One Pet Show, held in Shanghai from 6 to 9 May. The event brought together professionals keen to explore the latest developments in animal welfare, health management, and advanced veterinary care.

***Representing the organisation was veterinarian Richard Heidrich, who delivered a presentation to an audience of professionals with a strong interest in the animal care standards applied at Loro Parque.*** Simultaneous translation into Mandarin ensured a dynamic exchange with attendees and enabled the park's veterinary expertise to be shared with a rapidly growing sector in China.

***Animal health is built day by day through robust protocols, purpose-designed facilities, and preventive medicine.*** During his presentation, Heidrich focused on three key areas: health management protocols, welfare-oriented aviary design, and advanced avian medicine. Among the case studies presented, endoscopy featured prominently as a vital tool for preventive healthcare and clinical diagnosis within a veterinary system supported by state-of-the-art technology and in-house laboratory facilities.

***The participation in TOPS was exceptionally well received by industry professionals and further strengthened Loro Parque's reputation as one of Spain's leading international references in animal welfare and veterinary medicine.*** Events of this kind provide valuable opportunities to share expertise, foster scientific collaboration, and continue raising standards of animal care on a global scale. ■

+ Info







Guy Kusters (EBB), Erik Lambrecht (Versele) and Richard Heidrich (Loro Parque Fundación) during the event. Photo: TOPS International China




Canarian veterinarian Richard Heidrich, representing Loro Parque Fundación Spain, delivered one of the keynote lectures at the event in China. Photos: LPF

# The Secret Microbiome of Killer Whales

***Every killer whale harbours a unique microscopic ecosystem that can reveal valuable insights into its diet, health, and relationship with its environment.*** When we think of a killer whale, we usually picture a powerful marine predator. Yet inside each animal exists an invisible world: the gut microbiome, a community of bacteria that plays a vital role in digestion, immune function, and metabolism. A study led by scientist ***Broos Van de Moorte*** examined the intestinal bacterial communities of three adult killer whales under human care at Loro Parque - Morgan, Adán and Tekoa - using full-length 16S gene sequencing with PacBio technology.

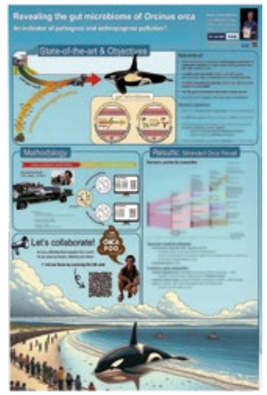
The study's central finding was clear: there is no single, standard microbiome shared by all killer whales. Each individual displayed its own distinct microbial "fingerprint". Only around one in ten bacterial strains was found in all three animals, while the remainder were unique to a single whale. This mirrors what is seen in humans, where each person hosts a unique microbiota despite sharing a common functional foundation.

***Morgan, Adán and Tekoa did not share a single microbiome; each whale possessed its own distinctive microbial signature.***

Some of the bacteria identified may prove valuable from a health-monitoring perspective. However, the aim of the study was not to classify microorganisms as "good" or "bad", but to understand the balance of the microbiome as a whole. The presence of an individual bacterium is not, in itself, a diagnosis; rather, it is the overall microbial profile that can provide meaningful information about an animal's health and wellbeing.

***The support of Loro Parque and Loro Parque Fundación has opened a new window into the biology of killer whales, offering insights from a perspective that has remained largely unexplored until now.*** The research began following the unusual stranding of a killer whale on the Belgian coast in October 2023. Supported by the Brilliant Marine Research Idea grant from the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), samples from that individual were analysed before the study was expanded to include Morgan, Adán and Tekoa at Loro Parque. ***These samples have provided a rare scientific opportunity to begin characterising the gut microbiome of killer whales*** and to explore whether factors such as diet, habitat, or exposure to pollutants leave identifiable signatures within these invisible microbial communities. ■

Video






Broos Van de Moorte analysed samples from the stranded killer whale in Belgium and was able to continue his research thanks to the killer whales at Loro Parque. Photo: Van de Moorte



LORO PARQUE
FUNDACIÓN
WE CARE

WE HAVE SAVED
**18 SPECIES**
FROM EXTINCTION

WE HAVE CARRIED OUT
**MORE THAN 300**
CONSERVATION PROJECTS

WE COLLABORATE WITH
**88 SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS**
WORLDWIDE

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## CAN GO MUCH FURTHER

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- **Get closer to our work** and receive the latest updates on conservation initiatives, scientific research, and projects in the field.
- **Discover Cyanopsitta,** our flagship conservation magazine, featuring inspiring stories on wildlife conservation, science, and biodiversity, available in digital or printed format according to your membership level.
- **Enjoy exclusive Loro Parque Fundación merchandise,** tailored to your chosen membership category.
- **Access exclusive advantages for visits to Loro Parque and Poema del Mar.**
- **Enjoy unique experiences,** such as an Exclusive Tour or a guided visit to the La Vera Breeding Centre, available according to your membership category.
- **Choose How You Support Conservation:** Five membership options are available, from €120 per year to a lifetime contribution, allowing you to make a lasting difference for wildlife and the natural world.