

Zoology

Front Cover

This photo of the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara maco*) was taken in the Tambopata-Candamo Reserve of Peru. Scarlet Macaws are native to rain forests from Mexico to Northeastern Argentina. They nest in hollow palm trees, mate for life, and produce a clutch of one to four eggs. Young stay in the nest for over 100 days and remain with the parents for up to a year. In spite of their large size (one meter in length and one kilogram in mass), they are excellent climbers and very strong flyers—reaching speeds of 56 kilometers per hour. Macaws range widely through the forest looking for clumps of their favorite tropical fruits.

This macaw is one of the most magnificent parrots. Its bright red, blue, and yellow markings have attracted the attention of bird, pet, and feather lovers around the world—and that attention has become a problem. Chicks have been poached from nests to supply the exotic bird market, and adult birds have been killed for their feathers. The destruction of tropical rain forests is quickly reducing the bird's habitat. The Scarlet Macaw is listed as an endangered species and conservation efforts, including the establishment of the World Parrot Trust and breeding programs, are now in place. Unfortunately, habitat destruction, now the most imminent threat, continues unchecked over most of its range.

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