

More than Just a Pretty Bird

Parrots are smart and sometimes very colorful birds. They are popular as pets and can often be seen in zoos. Unfortunately, about one-third of parrot species in the wild are in danger of dying out. Examples include hyacinth macaws and Lear's macaws. Each year, some of these birds are caught and sold illegally as pets. (24), many are dying because the forests where they live are being cleared to create farmland and to get wood. This has reduced the size of the areas in which they can build nests and collect food.

A study published in the journal *Diversity* revealed that hyacinth macaws and Lear's macaws play an important role in the forests. Researchers studying these parrots in Brazil and Bolivia found that they spread the seeds of 18 kinds of trees. They observed the birds taking fruits and nuts from trees and carrying them over long distances. The birds do this so that they can eat the fruits and nuts later. However, they (25). When this happens in areas cleared by humans, the seeds inside the fruits and nuts grow into trees, helping the forests to recover.

Today, conservation groups are working hard to protect hyacinth macaws and Lear's macaws. One difficulty is that these parrots (26). An important reason for this is that their eggs are often eaten by other birds. To prevent this, macaw eggs are sometimes removed from their nests by scientists and replaced with chicken eggs. The scientists keep the eggs safe. After the macaw chicks come out of their eggs, they are returned to their parents.

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| (24) | 1 On the contrary | 2 Under this |
| | 3 What is worse | 4 Like before |
| (25) | 1 often go back for more | 2 sometimes drop them |
| | 3 also eat leaves and flowers | 4 bring them to their nests |
| (26) | 1 do not build nests | 2 are not easy to catch |
| | 3 have poor hearing | 4 lose many babies |

on the contrary 逆に、それどころか

what is worse さらに悪いことに