From Forest to Cage: Parrot Trafficking in Argentina

Pedrozo, C. A.[1]; Perez, M. E.[1]; Pirez, Thiago M.[1]; Velazquez A., Milca T.[1]; Visconti, P.[1]; Zambón, V.[1]; López Romero, M. A.[1]; Martínez, E. V.[1]; Pared, V. E.[1]; Sussini, A. P.[1,2]; Aguilar, N. M. A.[1,2] [1] National University of the Northeast, Argentina. [2] National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), Argentina.

ONE WELFARE MOMENTS

Framework Sc. 1/5 | Type: Practical experience | 12/07/26 | OWM No. 11

SUMMARY

In northern Argentina, keeping wild animals as pets remains widespread, with serious consequences. One of the most affected species is the blue-fronted amazon (Amazona aestiva), a native South American parrot valued for its sociable nature and ability to imitate speech. Each year, thousands are captured and sold as companion animals.

Capture, transport and sale expose these parrots to severe stress, dehydration and injury, and many die before reaching their destination. Survivors are often confined to small cages without suitable diets or environmental enrichment, severely harming their physical and mental health.

The trade also affects people. It often occurs in socially vulnerable communities where limited economic opportunities encourage wildlife exploitation. Buyers may also be unaware that parrots can transmit zoonotic diseases such as psittacosis, creating public-health risks.

Removing parrots from the wild weakens populations and disrupts ecosystems, as they play important roles in seed dispersal and insect control. From a One Welfare perspective, animal welfare, human well-being and environmental health are closely connected. Stronger trade controls, environmental education and sustainable economic alternatives are essential, making protection of the blue-fronted amazon a matter of conservation, public health and social justice.

Case study impacts

- The illegal trade and keeping of blue-fronted amazons as pets have significant social impacts, as they normalise illegal possession of wild animals and reinforce cultural practices that prioritise human entertainment over animal welfare and biodiversity conservation. These practices perpetuate animal suffering and weaken public recognition that wildlife is a shared natural heritage.
- This issue also highlights limited environmental education and few sustainable economic opportunities in some rural communities, where capturing and selling parrots provides a source of income. Addressing these impacts is essential to promote cultural change, strengthen awareness of animal welfare and develop strategies that integrate conservation, social justice and local development.

Image: Pirez T. Maximiliano

From Forest to Cage: Parrot Trafficking in Argentina

Pedrozo, C. A.[1]; Perez, M. E.[1]; Pirez, Thiago M.[1]; Velazquez A., Milca T.[1]; Visconti, P.[1]; Zambón, V.[1]; López Romero, M. A.[1]; Martínez, E. V.[1]; Pared, V. E.[1]; Sussini, A. P.[1,2]; Aguilar, N. M. A.[1,2] [1] National University of the Northeast, Argentina. [2] National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), Argentina.

ONE WELFARE MOMENTS

Framework Sc. 1/5 | Type: Practical experience | 12/07/26 | OWM No. 11

One Welfare Pillars

ANIMAL WELFARE

Image: Pirez T. Maximiliano

- Capture and transport cause severe stress, injuries and high mortality.
- Confinement, inadequate housing and poor diets restrict natural behaviours and damage physical and mental health.
- Forced domestication causes fear, frustration and abnormal behaviours, severely reducing quality of life.

HUMAN WELLBEING

Image: Pirez T. Maximiliano

- Parrot trafficking and uncontrolled wildlife keeping expose people to zoonotic diseases such as psittacosis and other unknown health risks.
- The normalisation of these practices reflects limited awareness of the health risks associated with illegal wildlife trade.
- Limited access to reliable information restricts informed and responsible decision-making.

ENVIRONMENT

Image: Pirez T. Maximiliano

Physical

- Removing parrots from the wild reduces population sizes, threatens long-term conservation and contributes to biodiversity loss.
- Their decline disrupts seed dispersal, weakens ecosystem balance and reduces environmental resilience.

Social environment

- Parrot trafficking is often linked to social and economic vulnerability, particularly where sustainable employment opportunities are limited.
- Wildlife pet keeping reflects cultural attitudes that minimise animal welfare, requiring education, social inclusion and local development strategies.

Multidisciplinary relevant areas

Veterinary medicine, wildlife conservation, law enforcement, customs and border control, public health, environmental education, social sciences, legal studies and community development.

References / Source

- Berkunsky, I., Ruggera, R.A., Aramburú, R. and Reboreda, J.C. Principales amenazas para la conservación del Loro Hablador (Amazona aestiva) en la Región del Impenetrable, Argentina. El Hornero, Volume 27, Issue 1, 2012, Pages 39–49. https://www.scielo.org.ar/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0073-34072012000100005
- Ibáñez, H. and Grisolia, M.J. Reformulando estrategias para el control del tráfico ilegal del loro hablador en Argentina. Biodiversidad Neotropical, First Series, Issue 2, 2019, ISSN 2591-5916. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363319937_Reformulando_estrategias_para_el_control_del_trafico_ilegal_del_loro_hablador_en_Argentina
- La Política Ambiental. Santiago del Estero: rescatan 250 loros habladores del tráfico ilegal. 2025. https://lapoliticambiental.com.ar/contenido/5665/santiago-del-estero-rescatan-250-loros-habladores-del-trafico-ilegal