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## Animal welfare at Crete (II): A private animal collection point/station for parrots and parakeets The parrots park “Amazonas” in Kourounes, Lassithi

An article from our NLUK animal welfare commissary at Crete, *Stephanie Krips*, Gournes.



How you come on Crete to the “Amazonas”? No insane question since winter 2010/11 and easy to find!

Coming from Iraklion on the National road towards East (Agios Nikolaos), after approx 31 miles you get to the turn off towards Neapoli. Coming from Agios Nikolaos (the opposite way) on the National road towards West you reach the turn off towards Neapoli after already 9 miles.

The nice Episcopal city Neapoli and the impressive bishop’s see “Megali Panagia”, thus sacred to the Mother of God, is most certainly worth an inspection and can therefore easily accompanied with the visit of the “Amazon park”.



From the turn off towards Neapoli the way to Kourounes, located 530 m above sea level, is well signposted. Just follow the green-white signs towards the Amazonas-Park (see fig.). After not even 5 minutes you see the park on the left und on the right is a gravel parking lot; you reached the “Amazonas”

The park is a animal collection station for big and small parrots from all over the world. They are animals which have been confiscated by customs; e.g. because of illegal import, animals from poor or even agonising keeping as well as animals from people which are unable to keep them because of age or financial issues. A parrot can reach a age of 80 years and older! Anyway, “siga-siga” (slowly-slowly in Greek), one step at the time.

The founders of the park are 3 persons (see fig.): *Fabienne* (former Sales Manager in Luxembourg), *Patrick*, left in the picture (Journalist at the “Luxemburger Woche”) and *Patricio*, right (Journalist at the “Luxemburger Woche” and native Portuguese).



Patricio took over his love for cockatiels and budgies as well as for parrots from his father, and likewise infected both friends. He already espouse himself in Luxembourg very much for these birds and then was asked by the customs authority, whether he could help and look after confiscated parrots. He reached call from customs, police and private people at increasing intervals, so one thing leads to another.

Meanwhile the three developed the “Amazon Park” here on Crete, although this name does not please them so much because it is not a park, but a collecting point/station. However “the child must have a name” and because the Greek authorities do not understand the word “collecting station” they agreed on the designation “Park”.

The trio self-financed the entire plant (see fig.) and personally developed 29 aviaries (further 30 come up in addition to the end of the year 2011) during the past winter. Therefore e.g. 15.000 screws have been handled! Likewise they put on the entire area, set plants etc.

Particularly to emphasize is, the admission fees go as donation to the “Amazon Ibama animal protection authority” in Brazil. These funds are used particularly for threatened parrots in the Amazon, in addition for the Amazon area generally.



Each visitor of the park is led and everything is explained in detail. Started with the different kinds of the parrots, as they live, where they come from, their history, their life expectancy ... and all this in German, English, French, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and naturally of Luxembourg.

For the moment there are approx. 90 animals there and it become more and more each day. Not only because of nearly daily incoming emergency calls, but also in completely natural way – there are juniors! Parrot baby’s! Currently 12 juniors. Here too not everything is just sunshine and roses – a parrot lady is not in the mood of taking care about her new generation. Thus *Patricio* took the 4 babies home and feeds them with a pipette. For the moment it is still uncertain if all 4 will survive because also with the birds the immune system is strengthened over feeding bird parents.

Probably it is also not well-known that parrots should need special grain fodder and in addition eats daily 5 sort’s fruit and 2 kinds of vegetable.

However in the “Amazonas Park” they not only make the healthy nutrition sure but also that the animals are “lucky”. And what belongs to be lucky? A fellow! It is very important that the birds do not grow lonely and as it is seen by the juniors, the support by *Patricio*, *Fabienne* and *Patrick* is very successful.

Last but not least one of many bird stories which concerned me personally at most. “Petito”: A very shy parrot male was held 14 years (!) in a cellar and came to the station in early May 2011. Meanwhile he place confidence in *Patricio* and even started to speak. It happens more frequent here on the station that you are welcomed by parrots with a “Kalimera” in different languages. The picture below left shows *Patricio*, here with a macaw; for detailed information’s about the true parrots (and the macaw) see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True\\_parrots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_parrots)

During winter the aviaries are protected from rain with acrylic glass. It is improved continuously, extended, and developed.

Starting from September 2011 also schools come to visit the park and it is *Fabienne*, *Patrick* and *Patricio* a large concern that already children understand that these animals are not simply a colour-glad piece of jewellery or toy, but also have needs and much responsibility for the owner, mean expenditure and work, as with every other animal too.

If you like to do good work except the entrance to pay (€ 10 per person, children € 8), then bring along a bag of fruit or vegetables which is welcome at any time. By the way, the entrance ticket is valid all year long (you can visit the park whenever you like). The Park is open all year long (between 09:00 a.m. and 07:00 p.m.)



**Center fig.:** a parrot couple in its aviary in the “Amazonas Park”; **fig. right:** the info board belonging to it (like attached to every single aviary) supplies in addition the most important information to the respective kind.