The red-bellied (Ara manilata) is a distinctive small macaw about 20in (50cm) in length. Most macaws have part of the lores feathered but the totally bare lores and yellow facial skin distinguishes manilata from all others. This species is mainly green, with blue on head and wings and a maroon patch on the lower abdomen. Undersides of tail and flight feathers are olive yellow. The bill is black and the iris is dark brown.

It occurs throughout most of the Amazon basin, its distribution coinciding with that of Mauritia palms on which it feeds. Common in the wild, it is rare in captivity, although quite a few have been exported from Guyana in recent years.

I believe that the most suitable environment for captive birds is an outdoor aviary in a warm climate and a spacious indoor aviary in a cooler climate. A small cage should not be considered.

At Loro Parque the red-bellied macaw was represented by a pair in the off-exhibit breeding centre and by two males on exhibit, when I became curator in February 1987. The pair had been in residence at least four years without attempting to breed. This is not an easy subject in captivity, being extremely susceptible to stress, also to obesity. Few of the wild caught birds which aviculturists obtain survive more than two years, unlike other Ara species which adapt very well to captivity.

I know of only two breeding successes prior to 1987, that of Florida veterinarian Greg Harrison and, in the UK, that of the pair belonging to Mrs. P. Vahman. Her breeding of this species was the result of careful thought and of knowledge of manilata in Guyana where she formerly resided. I have the greatest admiration for the way in which she set up a planted house and made her pair search for their food.

The pair at Loro Parque is housed in an aviary of traditional type, measuring about 13ft (4m) long, 3½ ft (1m) wide and 7ft (2.1m) high. The nest-box is attached to the outside of the aviary, thus inspection presents no problems. Not that these birds are aggressive like other macaws when breeding; they remained quite shy. The nest-box measures 12in (31cm) x 13in (33cm) x 30in (76cm) high; there is a 5in (10cm) square inspection door near the bottom.

The female laid a clutch of four eggs in April; there were two eggs on April 7. On the 22nd one was placed in an incubator as a precaution against some catastrophe in the nest. Assuming it was the first egg laid (the third was infertile), the incubation period was 25 days. It hatched in the incubator at 5pm on April 30, and was transferred at 7pm to the nest of a pair of Illiger's macaws (Ara maracana) which were known to be excellent parents. They had two chicks, about two and three days old, and immediately accepted the manilata chick.

The next day, May 1, there was a pip mark on another manilata egg which was removed to the incubator. The chick hatched on May 3 and it, too, was transferred to the Illiger's nest. Their eldest chick was taken for hand-rearing, also an egg which hatched later that day. Both these were successfully hand-reared. The third manilata piped and hatched in the incubator on May 7. It weighed 13.2g.

I made the wrong decision and decided that this one should be hand-reared. It appeared to be progressing well and I was shocked to find it dead at 6:30am on the fifth day. Autopsy did not reveal the cause of death; its liver was normal but its kidneys appeared abnormal.

The two chicks with the Illiger's macaws thrived; their crops were always well filled. They were ringed at 19 and 21 days of age with 10mm rings. The eldest left the nest on July 17, aged 78 days, and the second on July 19, aged 77 days. They then differed from the adults in the generally slightly duller plumage, very pale yellowish skin on the face (ochre-yellow in adults) and in having the beak only partly black, there being a broad light stripe down the centre of the upper mandible.

Development of the chicks was as follows: Day 1-fairly long yellowish down on upperparts and head; down shorter and more whitish on underparts. The beak was whitish and the nails white. Day 19-eyes open; ears just open; beak pinkish-white. Head bare, almost wrinkled skin. No feathers erupted but prominent dark lines under the skin, especially on the back (second down). A little short whitish down remained on the back and nape. Tail quills present; wing feathers in quills 1.2cm to 2.5cm long. Day 26-soft pads on sides of beak.

Red-bellied Macaws Reared at Loro Parque

by Rosemary Low
Tenerife, Spain
When You Care for Birds, Choose Mardel.

A complete selection of products for complete bird care.

Rx: Healthier Birds

Ornacyn®
Handy, safe, non-toxic broad spectrum antibiotic for respiratory infections in cage birds.

Ornacyn-Plus™
Treatment for respiratory diseases of pet birds. Controls diarrhea, corrects vitamin deficiencies, relieves stress.

Ornacycline™
Treatment for respiratory and intestinal diseases of pet birds. Fruit flavored, fast dissolving tablets.

Furazite™
Nitrofurazone for birds; broad spectrum Gram-negative antibiotic for treatment of intestinal disorders.

Ornalyte™
Special electrolytes-trace mineral formula (fortified with high potency vitamin complex), for birds under stress.

Quell™
Anesthetic spray relieves skin irritation. Bitter taste discourages picking, promotes healing.

Preventive Care and Appearance

OrnaMite™
Safe, fast-acting formula controls stress-causing mite infestations. Handy tube applicator; contains no hydrocarbons.

VitaFlight®
13 essential vitamins for pet birds. Fruit flavored powder to add to the drinking water.

Ornabac™
Natural food additive for pet birds. Keeps digestive tract healthy, controls diarrhea, relieves stress.

Stay™
Non-stinging, non-toxic coagulant cream stops bleeding fast after clipping bird nails or beak.

Brite N' Shine™
Spray sheen for dull plumage; relieves dry skin. Purcellin oil encourages preening.

WaterGuard™
Safe, non-toxic ingestible disinfectant for the bird’s water supply. Effective against bacteria, fungi and yeast growth.

CageGuard™
Controls growth of bacteria, viruses and fungi on cages and perches, including wood and plastic.
The young will be retained for breeding purposes. Fewer problems should be experienced with captive-breeding birds, which may be the main hope of establishing the red-bellied macaw in aviculture.
Arizona's scenic desert and ideal climate provide the perfect environment for trail riding. Our convention site, The Pointe, has adjacent stables and access to the largest municipal mountain park in the world. A breakfast trail ride is offered on Sunday mornings.

Come join the fun; plan your vacation in Phoenix, Arizona in August of 1989. This will be one you will not want to miss. Come early or stay late as tours will be available to Grand Canyon, Red Rock Country of Sedona, Nogales Old Mexico and other fascinating places of interest at unbelievable prices.

See center insert for registration information.

Stolen Birds Alert

Sad news to report — on December 11th, '88, during the late hours of night, valuable birds were stolen from Val Cooper, Kissimmee, Florida. Please be alert to the following species and notify Val, (407) 847-3281 business, or (813) 421-2661 residence, if you have any information.

Yellow crowned Amazon, s/s male, untamed
Double yellow-headed Amazon, 12 years old, named “Cadillac”
Yellow naped Amazon, '88 import
Red fronted macaw, s/s 4 year old female
Congo African grey, speaks English and Japanese, named “Ahmey”
Orange-winged Amazon, domestic raised, 5 months old, still being hand fed
Timneh African grey pair, s/s, female is import banded
Blue fronted Amazon, mature
Moluccan cockatoo

Stolen Birds Alert

Sad news to report — on December 11th, '88, during the late hours of night, valuable birds were stolen from Val Cooper, Kissimmee, Florida. Please be alert to the following species and notify Val, (407) 847-3281 business, or (813) 421-2661 residence, if you have any information.

Yellow crowned Amazon, s/s male, untamed
Double yellow-headed Amazon, 12 years old, named “Cadillac”
Yellow naped Amazon, '88 import
Red fronted macaw, s/s 4 year old female
Congo African grey, speaks English and Japanese, named “Ahmey”
Orange-winged Amazon, domestic raised, 5 months old, still being hand fed
Timneh African grey pair, s/s, female is import banded
Blue fronted Amazon, mature
Moluccan cockatoo