

# Captive parrot licensing program

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Just in case anyone is unaware of the captive parrot licensing program run by the Forest department.

All indigenous captive parrots in Belize require a permit. The permitting program will end January 1st 2015.

The permits last from the day of issue until the death of the bird.

From Jan 1st 2015, nobody will be able to apply for a new permit. Anyone found in possession of an indigenous parrot without a permit will have the bird seized and they will face prosecution. Ignorance of the law will in future cease to become a valid excuse.

You can find details of the program at the link below, as well as download a permit application and the standards of minimum care that have to be met before the issuance of a permit. There is no fee for a licence to keep a parrot.

Belize Bird Rescue are not in charge of the permitting process, nor did they instigate it, nor can they issue permits. Belize Bird Rescue personnel will advise on parrot care if requested and will also band your parrot when licensed to allow compliance. The Forestry department may ask Belize Bird Rescue personnel to advise if minimum standards of care are being met.

Should your parrot be seized by the Forestry department, they may decide to transport the bird for care at Belize Bird Rescue, or they may decide to have the bird humanely destroyed.

I would urge anyone who has an unlicensed parrot in their care, to apply for a permit immediately. The Forestry department has a very long list of people keeping parrots and who is not licensed. There is not much time left if you want to have your bird remain as a pet. It is stressful for a parrot to be seized and transported.

# Captive Parrot License Programme Explained

## **Who is in charge of the programme?**

Belize Forest Department Wildlife Programme administrates and governs the licensing programme.

Belize Bird Rescue provides advice, and supplies the resources necessary to carry out the initiative. We have no legal authority within this Government of Belize programme.

## **Why is this suddenly happening?**

The law has always stated that it is illegal to hunt, capture or keep a native parrot. This law is in place to safeguard the wild populations. Unrestricted hunting of wild parrots for the local pet trade is unsustainable and wild populations are now falling to dangerously low levels.

## **Who can apply?**

One person from a household must be the applicant, and therefore the registered keeper of the bird. There can be only one application for a maximum of two birds per household.

**How do I apply?** You need to complete a Captive Wildlife Permit application form, and submit it to the Belize Forest Department by fax, email, mail or in person.

## **Where do I get an application form?**

Forms and minimum standard instructions are available at the following locations

Forest Department Official Stations:

*Belmopan, Orange Walk, San Ignacio, Savannah (Independence)*

Other locations:

*Benque Viejo del Carmen Public Library*  
*Corozal Public Library*  
*Belize Audubon Society, Belize City*  
*Belize Fisheries Department, Princess Margaret Drive, Belize City*  
*Ignacia Cacho Public Library Dangriga*  
*Hopkins Humane Society*  
*Independence Public Library*  
*Southern Environmental Association, Placencia*  
*TIDE Office, Punta Gorda Town*  
*San Pedro Public Library*

**DOWNLOAD:** [application form and minimum standards \(pdf\)](#)

PERMIT as a [Word document](#) for email submission

*You may also return completed applications to the above locations*

### **Can I license any bird?**

The permit applies to indigenous parrots: that is parrots that were taken from the wild in Belize. There are the 9 species of parrots indigenous to Belize. View pictures of these birds (Pdf 282kb)

### **What are the licence conditions?**

1. The bird must have been in captivity for at least 1 year: no baby birds will be licensed
2. Your bird must be hand tame: you must be able to pick him up without harm or distress to you or the bird
3. You may not keep more than 2 birds per household
4. Your bird must not be sick or injured in any way
5. Your enclosure and husbandry must meet minimum standards for that species
6. Your bird should not be a wild-caught scarlet macaw (certain exceptions apply, assessed on a case-by-case basis)

### **My bird is not a parrot, do I still need a licence?**

If the bird was removed from the wild in Belize, it is an indigenous bird and is covered by the Wildlife Protection Act. You need to seek permission from the Forest Department to keep the bird. You should still use the same Captive Wildlife Permit application form, but you may be required to conform to different terms and conditions.

### **If I apply, am I guaranteed to keep my parrot?**

Basic conditions of the indigenous parrot permit are:

- You must conform to the minimum standards of care
- Your bird must be hand-tame
- The bird must be in good health
- Your bird must not be a prohibited species (currently scarlet macaw applications are being reviewed on a case by case basis)
- You must not have more than 2 birds in your household

If you conform to these conditions, then Forest Department are unlikely remove your bird.

### **What happens if I do not conform to minimum standards?**

You will be given a probationary period to bring the enclosure and care of the bird up to standard. If you conform fully within the period of time given then Forest Department will grant a permit. If you do not, then Forest Department may confiscate your bird(s)

### **I have submitted my application but I haven't heard anything**

The Wildlife Programme Officers already have hundreds of inspections to carry out. Please be patient and they will come into your area in due course. Once you have submitted your application, you are advised to bring your conditions up to minimum standards as soon as possible: you are more likely to be granted a permit on first inspection if you conform.

### **I was given permission to keep my bird in the past. Do I still need to apply?**

Yes. There have been very few official permits given. It is unlikely that the permit you have is still valid, and minimum standards have now been implemented so you will need to conform. Verbal permission is not an official permit under the new license conditions. You must apply for one of the new permits.

### **When does the license period end?**

Forest Department has set a deadline for applications of December 31st 2014. There is a possibility that this may be extended, but this is not guaranteed and we would not advise that you wait to submit your application.

### **What happens after December 31st 2014**

All captive birds that have not had a permit application submitted for them will be confiscated. The owner may face charges or a fine. In exceptional circumstances owners may be granted extra time to apply, but we strongly recommend that you comply with regulations before December 31st.

### **What happens when I get my licence?**

You will be issued with an official permit. Full permit conditions can be seen at the bottom of the page.

You bird will be fitted with a permanent leg band. This does not hurt the bird at all. The band has a unique number which applies to that bird and corresponds to his official permit. The band cannot be removed for refitting as it will break. If you need to remove the band for medical reasons, you should visit a veterinarian or contact Forest Department immediately.

### **How long does the permit last**

It is valid for the lifetime of the bird, provided you maintain standards of care.

If you move house, you must inform the Forest Department: the bird is registered to you at that address, you cannot transfer to another address or to another keeper without a reissue of the permit.

### **What happens to my bird if it is confiscated?**

The bird will be taken to the Government sanctioned rehabilitation centre where it will undergo a long rehabilitation process to return it to the wild.

### **Can I appeal if my bird is confiscated?**

Yes. You may contact the Forest Department stating the reasons why you believe your bird should be returned. In certain circumstances, the bird will have been removed for its own immediate safety until conditions can be improved, or to seek expert/medical advice. You have 7 days to appeal. If your appeal is successful, you will be required to conform to minimum standards and conditions before the bird can be returned.

### **I heard some people had their bird confiscated without warning. Why?**

FD will confiscate the following birds:

- Obviously baby birds
- Very sick birds
- Birds in immediate danger due to exceptionally poor living conditions
- Birds that are not hand tame
- Birds that exceed the maximum allowed 2 per household
- They may also confiscate wild-caught scarlet macaws which are the prohibited species (reviewed on a case-by-case basis)

# Indigenous Parrots of Belize

If you have any of these birds in captivity,  
you must apply for a licence from the Forest Department

See [www.belizebirdrescue.org](http://www.belizebirdrescue.org) for further information



Aztec Parakeet  
(*Aratinga nana*)  
up to 30 years



Brown Hooded Parrot  
(*Pyrilia haematotis*)  
up to 35 years



Yellow Lored Parrot  
(*Amazona xanthalora*)  
up to 50 years



Red Lored Parrot  
(*Amazona autumnalis*)  
up to 80 years



White Capped Parrot  
(*Pionus senilis*)  
Lifespan up to 25 years



White Fronted Parrot  
(*Amazona albifrons*)  
up to 50 years



Yellow Head Parrot  
(*Amazona oratrix belizensis*)  
Lifespan up to 80 years



Mealy (Blue Head) Parrot  
(*Amazona farinosa*)  
up to 80 years



Scarlet Macaw  
(*Ara macao*)  
Lifespan 70-90 years

### **My parrot is not listed on the indigenous parrot poster. What does that mean?**

The bird has been brought into Belize from outside the country. Imported parrots must have 3 permits:

1. CITES papers, which are issued in the country of origin. Birds that have been taken from the wild will not have CITES papers. Hybrid birds will not have CITES papers. Birds that have been bred in captivity and have not been registered with CITES will not have CITES papers. All CITES registered birds will have a solid leg band (it has no gap or join in it). It is illegal under international law to transport a CITES registered species without a CITES permit
2. BAHA import papers, issued in Belize. Birds coming into Belize must first be tested for several diseases, and then registered with BAHA as free from disease before importation. BAHA must grant permission for the bird to enter the country and will have a record of all legally imported birds. It is illegal to bring any bird or animal into the country without a BAHA permit. Violators risk having their animal destroyed
3. Forest Department import permits: birds coming into Belize also require import permits from the Forest Department. The Department will have a record of all birds imported legally into the country

### **I imported a bird and I have all of my paperwork. Do I still need this licence?**

No. But you should conform to minimum standards. Forest Department have jurisdiction over the standard of care of the bird.

### **I want a parrot but I don't want to break the law**

Following this licensing period, Belize Bird Rescue hope to begin a foster programme for birds that cannot be rehabilitated and require good homes.

There is nothing official in place, and it may be considerable time before there is, but if you would like to register your interest in becoming a foster home, please [email](#) us.

As an alternative, you may want to consider budgerigars (parakeets) as pets. They are better suited to living in cages, especially larger aviaries. They live well with multiple birds and are comfortable with less space, time or attention as a large parrot, particularly if there are several of them in one enclosure. They are being captive-bred in Belize and are available for sale. As of this moment they do not require a Forest Department permit, although you must conform to minimum standards of care.

### **How do I encourage wild parrots into my garden/property?**

Planting appropriate food-sources and providing a safe and natural environment is by far the best way. See here for some ideas.



### **Can I surrender my bird for rehabilitation?**

Yes, contact Forest Department or Belize Bird Rescue to arrange this

### **You have not answered my question!**

Please feel free to [email](#) us with any questions or suggestions

Below are the full conditions for the Captive Wildlife Permit with respect to indigenous parrots

- This permit provides for only the Parrot(s) listed above and is not transferrable
- This permit is granted only to the person named above and is not transferable
- The Parrot(s) shall only be kept at the address above: Forest Department must be notified immediately of any address change in order to re-inspect the conditions
- This permit does not allow the sale, exchange or gifting of the licensed Parrot
- The Parrot must be treated humanely and should always be kept in proper living conditions in accordance with Forest Department minimum standards
- This permit does not allow public exhibition of the licensed Parrot(s)
- The authorized person on this permit is required to consult a licensed veterinarian in the case of illness or injury. Veterinary records should be kept and presented to the Forest Department upon request
- The Wildlife Officer or any other person or agent authorized by him may on his behalf periodically inspect and examine the licensed Parrot(s) and make recommendations for improved care and management
- The numbered leg band fitted by the Wildlife Officer or agent authorized by him must not be removed. Unauthorized removal of the band may invalidate this permit
- The person named on this licence is required to inform the Forest Department of the death or loss of the licensed parrot(s)
- The Parrot(s) remain the property of the Government of Belize at all times

Any contravention of the above conditions will result in confiscation of the Parrot(s) and the permit holder will be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00) on the first count

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