

From wildlifeextra.com

Parrot smuggling in the USA

149 exotic parrots protected by U.S. and international law and confiscated from smugglers at the U.S. border with Mexico have been returned to Mexico, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced. The parrots, Amazon and Conure species taken from the wild in Mexico, were turned over to Mexican wildlife authorities.

Read more about the [US Wildlife Trade 7 smuggling.](#)



More than 300 species of parrot are found throughout the world, primarily in countries with tropical and semi-tropical climates. Because of their beauty and intelligence, parrots are prized as pets throughout the United States. The high demand for parrots as pets, combined with loss of habitat in many countries, has jeopardized many wild populations. According to the World Wildlife Fund, 94 parrot species are threatened with extinction. The high demand provides an irresistible incentive for smugglers to profit at the birds' expense.

The Service's San Diego Law Enforcement Office has documented over 30 arrests of individuals transporting commercial quantities of smuggled birds from Mexico over the past eight years. During this same period, Service special agents and wildlife inspectors seized 641 birds valued at over \$222,000 in Southern California alone. One individual from California is estimated to have illegally transported between 6,000 and 10,000 exotic birds valued at more than \$1.5 million before he was arrested and charged under federal customs and wildlife protection laws.

The birds being returned to Mexico today represent only a handful of the untold thousands of threatened and endangered wildlife that end up in the illegal trade each year.

Parrots and other birds smuggled into the United States avoid health screenings or other tests that typically assure pet owners they are buying a healthy bird. This trafficking not only places species in the wild at risk, but also represents a potential threat to the health of poultry and people with Exotic Newcastle's Disease and potentially the H5N1 bird flu.

Parrot species are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and U.S. and Mexican law. The Wild Bird Conservation Act (WBCA) was enacted in 1992 in an effort to encourage captive breeding of the more popular bird species by placing a moratorium on the importation of many wild birds like parrots. Nearly all parrots sold in U.S. pet stores are captive bred birds.