



Esperancita- Blue-throated Macaw Preserve

In 2017, GCBO helped fund the purchase of 1,682 acres in the Beni region of Bolivia, creating the first protected area for the southern subpopulation of Blue-throated Macaw, a critically endangered species. The area also protects habitat for three other globally threatened bird species, the Maned Wolf, Giant Anteater, and Jaguar.

Project title: Esperancita: Blue-throated Macaw Preserve

Location: Trinidad, Bolivia

Size: 1,682 acres

Grant Amount: \$25,000

Date: 2017

Partner Organizations: American Bird Conservancy and Asociación Armonía

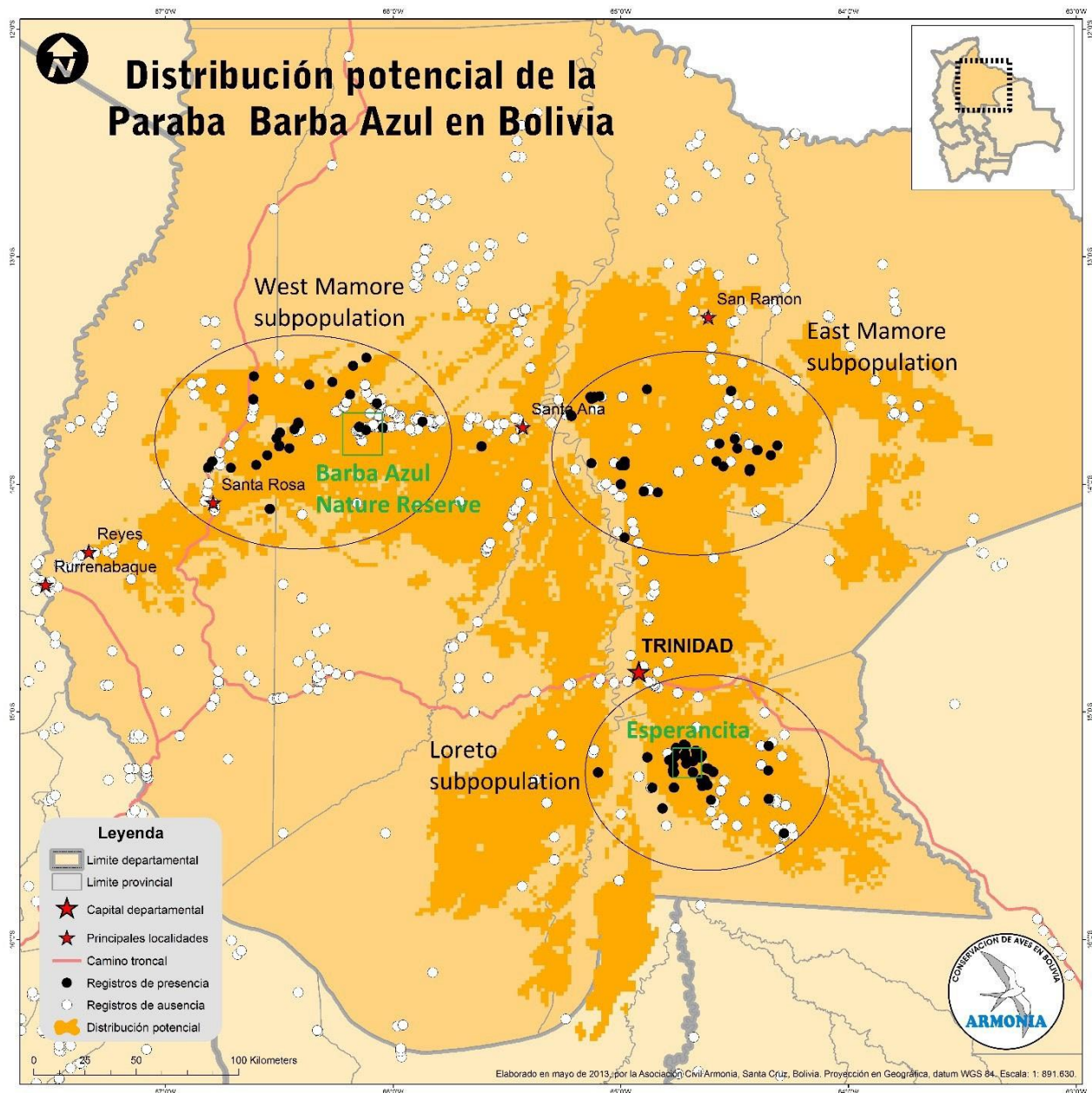
Summary and Background

The Blue-throated Macaw is a Critically Endangered species endemic to the Beni region of Bolivia; approximately 250 Blue-throated Macaws exist in the wild. Within its range, the continuous growth of the city of Trinidad has effectively fragmented the macaw population into two sub-populations (northern and southern). In the north, ABC and partner Armonía established the Blue-Throated Macaw Reserve to protect this sub-population's most critical foraging and roosting sites. In the south, however, similar protection is lacking and we now have the opportunity to change that.

A property called "Esperancita" that is 1,682 acres in size is the most important breeding area for the southern sub-population, which numbers between 70-80 individuals. It is also the location of Armonía's long-running nest box program, which has fledged 45 Blue-throated Macaw chicks since 2005. In 2017 the first pair of nest box-fledged macaws returned to breed at Esperancita. These birds—highly adapted to nest boxes—have enabled Armonía's conservation program to directly manage and protect this breeding area to date. Purchasing this land and protecting it enables this program to continue.

Importance

In the Beni department, which is typified by grasslands and savannahs, cattle ranching is the predominant economic activity. If the Esperancita property were not purchased for conservation, it would most certainly have been purchased by cattle ranchers and converted into pastureland, further reducing the amount of optimal breeding sites for this critically endangered macaw—its primary threat.



The map above shows the Beni department of Bolivia, outlined in solid gray. Within this area, the northern population is distributed across a larger territory, east and west Mamore. The black and white dots indicate places where researchers surveyed for the macaw: black dots are where the macaw was present and the white are where they were absent. There is a concentration of black dots in the south, particularly in the Esperancita property, demonstrating its importance to the southern sub-population.