

Introduction to THE RA PROJECT

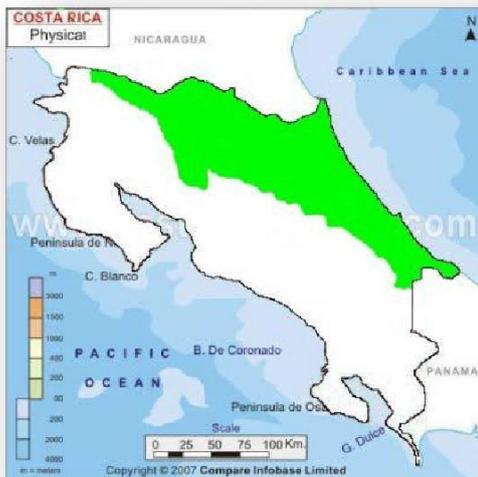
With less than 2000 Scarlet Macaws and 400 Great Green Macaws left in Costa Rica, the Ara Project is a Costa Rican non-profit organisation which breeds both species in captivity and releases the young into the wild. Breeding-stock macaws come from confiscated pets and injured wild macaws which cannot be released.



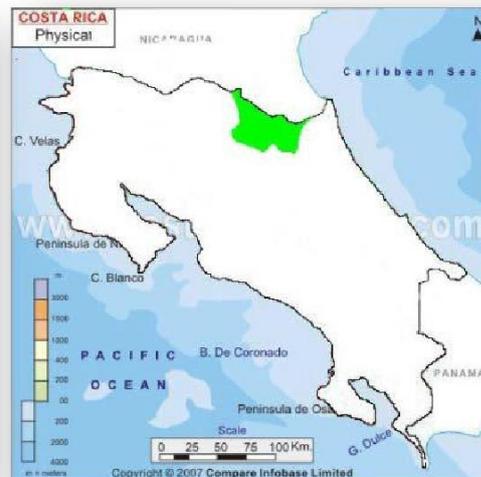
Scarlet Macaws fly free at the Ara Project Release Site in Punta Islita

The Ara Project currently has three release sites: one in Manzanillo (the first release site for Great Green Macaws in the world), one in Tiskita (where we have successfully released 70 Scarlet Macaws which have subsequently bred and produced 25 young) and our newest release site for Scarlet Macaws, located near Punta Islita, NW Costa Rica. The reintroduced birds have a survival rate of approximately 85% - a remarkable figure which is testament to our intensive soft release methodology, which we have researched and refined over the last 30 years.

100 years ago



15 years ago



Maps showing the dramatic decline in Scarlet and Great Green Macaws in Costa Rica over the last 100 years due to poaching for the illegal pet trade and habitat destruction.

The project has approximately 180 birds housed in its breeding facility on a property near Alajuela. This makes it the largest captive collection of Scarlet Macaws in Costa Rica, and the largest captive collection of Great Green Macaws in the world. This property has been sold against our will and the new owners have given us until April 2013 to relocate these internationally important birds. We are working with MINAET (Costa Rica's environmental authority) to get an extension until November 2013.

We have already been donated land for the new breeding centre (an extension of our Punta Islita release site) but now we need to raise funds quickly to build the infrastructure to move and house the macaws.

Currently, construction of a tourism centre and additional staff accommodation is near completion. We hope that the tourism centre will encourage donations from guests staying at the nearby Hotel Punta Islita and help to subsidise the remaining construction. We also plan to use it as an information centre to deliver education programs for local school children and the community as their support will be vital to the project's success.

Over the next few months construction of three more buildings (veterinary and rearing facilities and volunteer accommodation) and six large aviaries to house the 180 macaws.



Map of proposed buildings and aviaries in Punta Islita

We estimate that the entire move from Alajuela to Punta Islita will cost \$200,000. This will include all infrastructure, aviaries, transportation of materials and macaws, furnishing of buildings, planting of new trees and education materials.



Many thanks for reading about The Ara Project and the important work that we are doing for these critically endangered birds. Having been evicted off our breeding centre property in Alajuela we are in desperate need of funding to allow us to move to Punta Islita. We are urgently seeking grants to apply for and looking for new sources of funding – please let us know if you can help in any way.

If you have any questions you can contact the project at any time (Rachel@thearaproject.org). In the meantime, you can find more information on our website: www.thearaproject.org

