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PRESS RELEASE

The Blue-winged Amazon: A new parrot species from the Yucatán Peninsula

The newly identified Blue-winged Amazon parrot has a loud, short call and evolved from the White-fronted parrot quite recently, about 120,000 years ago.

In 2014, during a visit to a remote part of the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, ornithologist Dr. Miguel A. Gómez Garza came across parrots with a completely different colour pattern from other known species.

A study published today in the open-access journal *PeerJ* names these birds as a new species based on its distinctive shape, colour pattern, call and behaviour. The paper compares and contrasts the distinguishing features of this species with many other parrots.

The new parrot (*Amazona gomezgarzai*), referred to as the Blue-winged Amazon because of its primarily blue covert feathers, is characterized by its unique green crown that contrast to blue in other Amazon parrots. This new parrot occupies a similar area in the Yucatán Peninsula as the Yucatán Amazon (*A. xantholora*) and the White-fronted Amazon (*A. albifrons nana*) but it does not hybridize with them.

A very distinctive feature of the new taxon is its call, which is loud, sharp, short, repetitive and monotonous; one particular vocalization is more reminiscent of an Accipiter than of any known parrot. The duration of syllables is much longer than in other Amazon parrot species. In flight, the call is a loud, short, sharp and repetitive yak-yak-yak. While perched, the call is mellow and prolonged.

This species lives in small flocks of less than 12 individuals. Pairs and their offspring have a tendency to remain together and are discernible in groups. Like all members of the genus *Amazona*, this parrot is a herbivore. Its diet consists of seeds, fruits, flowers and leaves obtained in the tree canopy.

The analysis of mitochondrial DNA genes indicates that the blue-winged Amazon has emerged quite recently, or about 120,000 years ago, from within the *A. albifrons* population. During this time, the taxon differentiated sufficiently to be clearly recognizable as a new species.

There is no conservation program currently in effect to preserve this parrot but its small range and rarity should make its conservation a priority.

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Media:

Image 1. The male of the new Amazona. Image credit: Tony Silva



Image 2. The female of the new Amazona. Image credit: Tony Silva

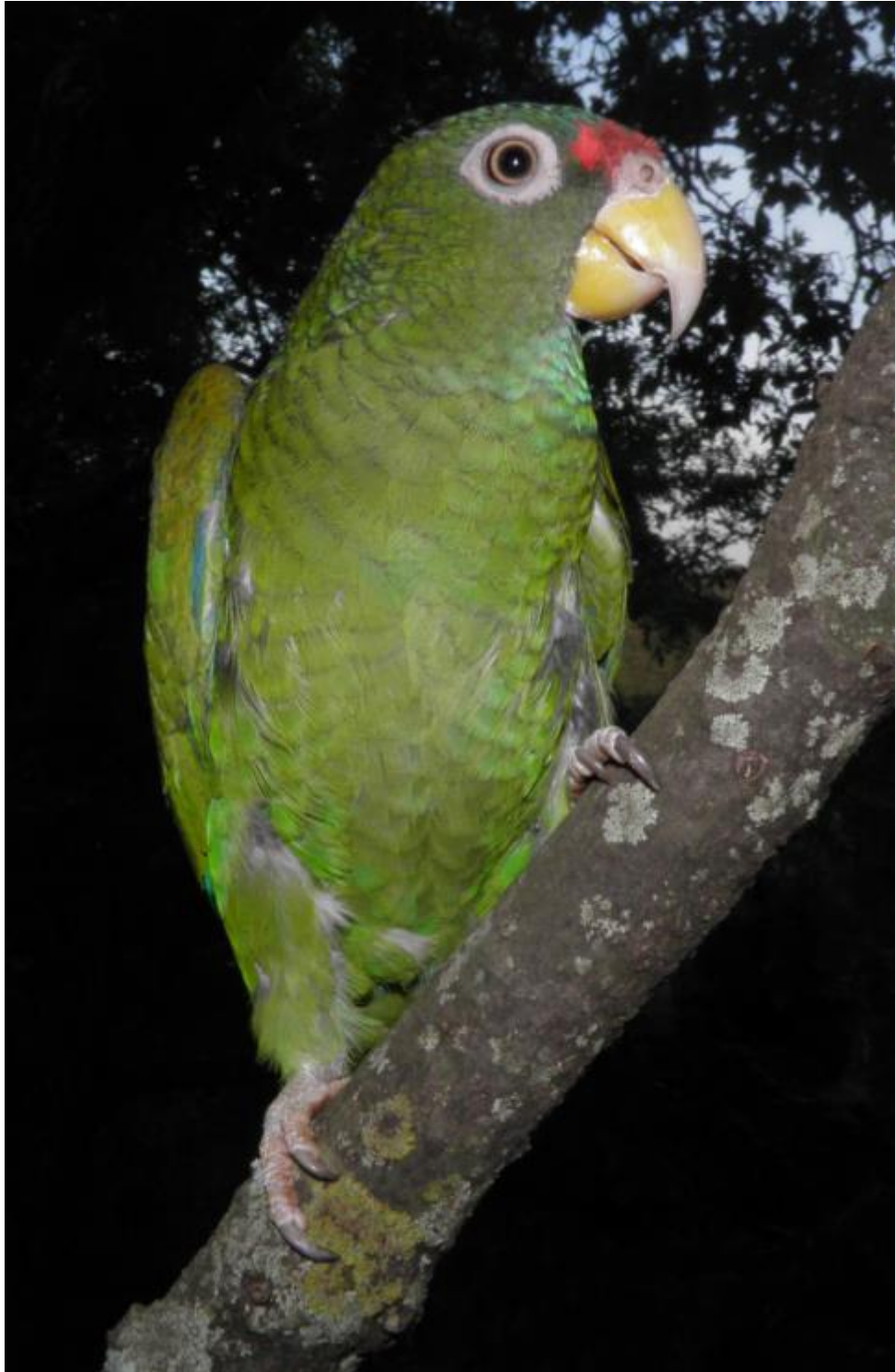


Image 3. The male of the new Amazona during its daily activities. Image credit: Tony Silva



Image 4. Head coloration of the new Amazona in comparison to other parrots, *Amazona albifrons nana* and *Amazona xantholora*, also from the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico. Image credit: Juan Garcia Venegas



**New Amazona
(male)**



**New Amazona
(female)**



***Amazona albifrons nana*
(male)**



***Amazona albifrons nana*
(female)**



***Amazona xantholora*
(male)**



***Amazona xantholora*
(female)**

Audio: Characteristic call records of the new Amazona.

Available as WAV files in the media pack link below.

Full Media Pack including image and audio:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzGrFBtalE6wcHIRc3RJRxBHdXM>

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PDF of this Press Release:

<http://static.peerj.com/pressReleases/2017/06/Press-Release-Mackiewicz.pdf>

Link to the Published Version of the article (quote this link in your story – the link will ONLY work after the embargo lifts): www.peerj.com/articles/3475
your readers will be able to freely access this article at this URL.

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