

We are in awe: It's a Baby Macaw!

The Belize Zoo became happily overwhelmed in mid-May when the residents Scarlet Macaws hatched three healthy babies! The parents were bred in captivity about a decade ago. From the start of their love affair, it was clear that they were clueless about the process of Macaw-Mating.

Scarlet Macaws nest high off the ground, and the loving pair was provided with a four-star nest-box. But a high-rise honeymoon suite was not to their liking. These two raucous red parrots chose, instead, to nest on the ground.

TBZ keepers were frantic at their nest choice. Possums and foxes were possible unwelcome visitors, putting the birds and their eggs, at high risk. This happened during a time of unseasonable wet weather, and a drenched nest would easily result in a "no hatch situation". But the Big Reds insisted that it would be on-the-ground or no love nest at all for them.

We did our very best to counter-act their risky nesting regime, and our efforts worked! Mid-May was a special spring event, when three Scarlet Macaws hatched! Due to Mom and Dad not knowing how to raise young, the babies were carefully taken and put under the care of TBZ keeper staff. Every two hours they were fed a baby bird formula, and tending to the birds on "Macaw Night Watch" turned TBZ staff into first class Scarlet Macaw infant caregivers. Day by day, the featherless tiny birds gained weight, and have grown to love their zookeeper buddies.

In the wild, the nestlings will remain in the nest for 3 months. After that, Mom and Dad Macaw will urge them to fledge, and then teach them the ways of being a wild Scarlet Macaw. Breeding these rare birds in captivity is not difficult. Seeing them return to the wild is not possible, because they do not know the necessary survival strategies for a safe existence "out there".

Our baby Scarlet Macaws will eventually be joining Mom and Dad in their home roomy enclosure located at the entrance of The Belize Zoo. Since they have been lovingly raised by TBZ keeper staff, the young macaws will enjoy the company of all upcoming human admirers. We haven't named them as yet! But their names will reflect how very special they are to TBZ, and to Belize!

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