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Press Release

Dannion begins construction supervision of Wildlife Conservation and Education Centre, St Lucia

The beautiful and majestic Amazona Vesicolor, known colloquially as Jacquot, is the national bird of St Lucia. The celebrated amazon parrot, endemic to the island, adorns the coat of arms and many of the island's official symbols and calls the island's interior rainforest home.

Illegal trafficking and destruction of their natural habitat by natural disasters had cause the population of the exotic bird to significantly decline to numbers less than 100 parrots in the wild during the 1970's, firmly placing them on the endangered list and making them some of the rarest birds in the world. Fortunately, due to the efforts of the Government of St. Lucia and ACTP (Association for the Conservation of Threatened Parrots) e.V., the birds are showing steady recovery in their population, as they come back from the brink of extinction. A census of 2009 revealed that with the implementation of the protective measures for the remaining rainforest areas and the implementation of laws prohibiting local and international trafficking, the bird population has gradually increased to figures around 1,750 to 2,250 over the last 30 years.

With the limited area of the natural habitat still under constant threat by human development as well as natural disasters (evident by the devastating effect of Hurricane Tomas of 2010), a huge effort and some innovation are required to maintain the safety of the birds, and to safe guard the long-term survival and growth of the species in the wild.

The Government of St. Lucia and ACTP have agreed to collaboration on a number of joint conservation schemes to maintain and assure the long-term survival of the species. These include:

- Donation of equipment (including drones, vehicles etc.) from ACTP to the Forestry Department (responsible for the well being of the forestry and natural resources of the island). The equipment has been used to monitor the bird's important statistics, such as the comprehensive population counts that assist in maintaining a grasp of the progress of the birds.
- Education and training of employees of the Forestry Department in the area of wildlife protection.
- A signed joint breeding loan agreement for the Jacquot, which facilitates the breeding programme and growth of the bird population in captivity in ACTP's facilities in Germany, safe from the shrinking natural habitat that is under constant threat of natural disasters.
- Construction of a Wildlife Conservation and Education Centre (WCEC) to raise awareness and allow for education of both the local population as well as visitors to the island on the environmental and flora resources of the island.

Construction of the Wildlife Conservation and Education Centre facility project commenced in April 2018, with a scheduled completed date of November 2018. The facility, being constructed at the National Zoo at Union, will consist of an education centre building, a hospital and a 1,220m² aviary.

Dannion has been commissioned by ACTP and the Government of St Lucia to undertake the full construction supervision and contract administration of the project. Our responsibilities include the monitoring of progress of the works and revision of the designs to suit onsite conditions and topography.