

FEATURE ARTICLES

SURVIVAL OF CAPTIVE-REARED HISPANIOLAN PARROTS RELEASED IN PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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Abstract. We report first-year survival rates of 49 captive-reared Hispaniolan Parrots (*Amazona ventralis*) released in Parque Nacional del Este, Dominican Republic. Our goal was to learn about factors affecting postrelease survival. Specifically, we tested if survival was related to movements and whether modifying prerelease protocols influenced survival rates. We also estimated survival in the aftermath of Hurricane Georges (22 September 1998). Twenty-four parrots, fitted with radio-transmitters, were released between 14 September and 12 December 1997. Twenty-five more were released between 29 June and 16 September 1998. First-year survival rates were 30% in 1997 and 29% in 1998. Survival probability was related to bird mobility. In contrast to birds released in 1997, none of the 25 parrots released in 1998 suffered early postrelease mortality (i.e., 3–5 days after release). Two adjustments to prerelease protocols (increased exercise and reduced blood sampling) made in 1998 may have contributed to differences in mobility and survival between years. The reduction of early postrelease mortality in 1998 was encouraging, as was the prospect for higher first-year survival (e.g., 30% to 65%). Only one death was attributed to the immediate impact of the hurricane. Loss of foraging resources was likely a major contributor to ensuing mortality. Birds increased their mobility, presumably in search of food. Survival rates dropped 23% in only eight weeks posthurricane. This study underscores the value of standardized prerelease protocols, and of estimating survival and testing for factors that might influence it. Inferences from such tests will provide the best basis to make adjustments to a release program.

Key words: *Amazona ventralis, Dominican Republic, Hispaniolan Parrot, movement, release program, survival, telemetry.*