

FEATURE ARTICLES

**REPRODUCTIVE PARAMETERS AND PRODUCTIVITY OF THE YELLOW-SHOULDERED PARROT ON MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA: A LONG-TERM STUDY**

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*Abstract.* We studied the breeding biology of the Yellow-shouldered Parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*) on Margarita Island from March–August, 1990 to 1999. The timing of the different phases (egg-laying, hatching, fledging) was consistent over the years, except during 1998 when all phases were delayed. The average clutch size was  $3.38 \pm 0.78$  eggs per nest, with a range of one to five eggs per clutch, and most eggs survived until hatching ( $3.36 \pm 0.80$  eggs per nest). Total clutch size and hatching success of this species on Margarita Island are among the highest in the genus *Amazona*, suggesting the Yellow-shouldered Parrot has a higher reproductive potential than other species of the genus. We detected interannual differences for some of the reproductive parameters, all in 1998, a year with an extreme drought. Egg losses totaled 20% and were caused by hatching failure, predation, and human disturbance. Forty-nine percent of nestlings were lost, mainly due to poaching. The number of fledglings per nesting pair averaged  $1.27 \pm 1.61$ , but varied greatly among years. Thus, in relation to the average total clutch laid, each pair lost an average of 62% of its initial reproductive investment.

*Key words:* *Amazona barbadensis*, *breeding biology*, *Margarita Island*, *mortality factors*, *productivity*, *Venezuela*, *Yellow-shouldered Parrot*.