**Rare Kingfisher Hatches at CRC**

A rare Guam Micronesian kingfisher hatched at the National Zoo’s Conservation and Research Center (CRC) in Front Royal, Virginia, four months ago. The chick, the first offspring from a genetically valuable pair, weighed only 5.5 grams at hatching. “We would have preferred to have the parents raise their chick,” says CRC Bird Curator Scott Derrickson, “but when the parents refused to incubate the egg, it was removed from the nest cavity for artificial incubation and hand rearing. Few chicks have been hatched successfully from eggs receiving full-term artificial incubation, so we are extremely pleased.”

Like most of Guam’s native birds, kingfishers were decimated by an invasive predator, the brown tree snake, which was introduced to Guam from Melanesia following World War II. The last wild Micronesian kingfisher was observed on Guam in 1986, and the species exists now only in captivity. The captive population, which numbers about 65 birds distributed among 12 zoos, is being managed under the auspices of the American Zoo Association’s Species Survival Program (SSP). CRC staff has been involved in all aspects of the conservation program for this species, since its inception. Derrickson, who serves on both the SSP’s Management Committee and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Recovery Coordinating Committee, notes that the ultimate goal of the breeding program is to reintroduce kingfisher’s back to their native habitat on Guam. Although breeding this species in captivity has proven difficult, he remains optimistic about the kingfisher’s survival and repatriation to Guam.

Over the past two decades, researchers have developed a variety of techniques for controlling brown tree snakes, including barriers, trapping, and toxicants. As soon as these techniques can be implemented effectively over large areas of native habitat, kingfishers can be reintroduced to Guam. To support this reintroduction effort, the SSP is increasing the captive kingfisher population as quickly as possible, and working with Guam’s Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) to establish a captive breeding facility on Guam. The DAWR facility received 2 male kingfishers from CRC in September 2003 and a breeding pair from the San Diego Zoo in April 2004, and additional transfers are planned.

Field studies of wild kingfishers on are underway on the island of Pohnpei, to secure essential biological information on wild populations and to test various reintroduction techniques for use on Guam. The Pohnpei field studies are being directed by Susan Haig and her students at Oregon State University. Now a biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, Haig worked at CRC on Micronesian kingfisher genetics with Derrickson and John Ballou as a Smithsonian Postdoctoral Fellow in the 1980s. Derrickson notes, “Sue recognized early on that the effort to reestablish the Micronesian kingfisher on Guam would span many years, and require the sustained commitment of many individuals, institutions, and agencies.”

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**Job Opportunity**

The Center for Tropical Plant Conservation at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden seeks a full-time Caribbean Plant Conservation Scientist. The Scientist will support and implement plant conservation in the Caribbean Basin through collaborative projects, including conservation assessments of important habitats or areas; biogeographic, phylogenetic, monographic and other analyses; the restoration of species and habitats; coordination of regional conservation initiatives including the Caribbean Botanic Gardens for Conservation (CBGC) and the Caribbean Vegetation Monitoring Network (CaribMoNet). For specific duties and skills required, see <http://www.ftg.org/publicprograms/n_employment.html>. Applicants are to send an application, consisting of c.v., statement of research experience, names, email addresses and telephone numbers of three referees, to research@fairchildgarden.org with the subject line “Caribbean Plant Cons Scientist Application.” Hard copy applications will not be accepted.
Salary commensurate with experience; FTBG is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Position will be open until a suitable candidate is found.

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**Current Literature**


Martin, P.H., Sherman, R.E., and Fahey, T.J. 2004. Forty years


Rivera-Monroy, V.H., Twilley, R.R., Bone, D., Childers, D.L.,...


