

= Martinique macaw =

The Martinique macaw or orange @-@ bellied macaw (*Ara martinicus*) is a hypothetical extinct species of macaw which may have been endemic to the Lesser Antillean island of Martinique , in the eastern Caribbean Sea . It was scientifically named by Walter Rothschild in 1905 , based on a 1630s description of " blue and orange @-@ yellow " macaws by Père Jacques Bouton . No other evidence of its existence is known , but it may have been identified in contemporary artwork . Some writers have suggested that the birds observed were actually blue @-@ and @-@ yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*) . The " red @-@ tailed blue @-@ and @-@ yellow macaw " (*Ara erythrura*) , another species described by Rothschild in 1907 based on a 1658 account , is thought to be identical to the Martinique macaw , if either has ever existed .

The Martinique macaw is one of thirteen extinct macaw species that have been proposed to have lived in the Caribbean islands . Many of these species are now considered dubious because only three are known from physical remains , and there are no extant endemic macaws on the islands today . Macaws were frequently transported between the Caribbean islands and the South American mainland in both prehistoric and historic times , so it is impossible to know whether contemporaneous reports refer to imported or native species .

= = Taxonomy = =

The Martinique macaw was scientifically described by the British banker and zoologist Walter Rothschild in 1905 , as a new species of the genus *Anodorhynchus* , *A. martinicus* . The taxon was solely based on a 1630s account by Père Jacques Bouton of blue and orange @-@ yellow macaws from the Lesser Antillean island of Martinique . Rothschild reclassified the species as *Ara martinicus* in his 1907 book , *Extinct Birds* , which also contained a restoration of the bird by the Dutch artist John Gerrard Keulemans . The reassignment lead to confusion as recently as 2001 , when Williams and Steadman assumed the two names were meant to refer to separate birds . The Martinique amazon (*Amazona martinicana*) of the same island , was also based solely on a contemporary description .

What Bouton described is likely to remain a mystery , but various theories have been proposed . In 1906 , Tommaso Salvadori noted that the Martinique macaw seemed similar to the blue @-@ and @-@ yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*) of mainland South America , and may had been the same bird . The American ornithologist James Greenway suggested Bouton 's description could have been based on a captive bird . Edwards ' *Dodo* , a 1626 painting by the Dutch artist Roelant Savery , shows several birds including a blue and yellow macaw , which is different from the mainland bird in having yellow undertail covert feathers instead of blue , but the origin of this macaw is unknown . Another macaw in the painting may be the also extinct Lesser Antillean macaw (*Ara guadeloupensis*) . Another Savery painting from about the same time shows a similar blue and yellow macaw , as does a mid @-@ 1700s illustration by the English naturalist Eleazar Albin . In 1936 , a Cuban scientist claimed to have found a stuffed Martinique macaw specimen , which was supposed to have been collected in 1845 . After examination it was shown to be a hoax , combining a burrowing parakeet (*Cyanoliseus patagonus byroni*) with the tail of a dove .

In the article that named the Martinique macaw , Rothschild also listed an " *Anodorhynchus coeruleus* " , supposedly from Jamaica . Salvadori also questioned this in 1906 , as he was unsure what Rothschild was referring to . In his *Extinct Birds* , Rothschild clarified that his first description was erroneous , as he had misread an old description . He renamed it *Ara erythrura* , based on a 1658 description by Charles de Rochefort , and conceded that its provenance was unknown . This supposed species subsequently received common names such as " red @-@ tailed blue @-@ and @-@ yellow macaw " and " satin macaw " in the ornithological literature . Greenway suggested Rochefort 's description was dubious , as he had never visited Jamaica , and appeared to have based his account on one by Jean @-@ Baptiste Du Tertre . If either bird ever existed , *Ara erythrura* is likely to have been identical to the Martinique macaw . Other similar blue and yellow macaws , such as the " great macaw " (" *Psittacus maximus cyanocroceus* ") were also reported

from Jamaica . Birdlife International does not have an entry for the Martinique macaw , but it was mentioned in that of the Lesser Antillean macaw (which is considered Not Recognized) as possibly identical .

= = = Extinct Caribbean relatives = = =

Macaws are known to have been transported between the Caribbean islands and from mainland South America both in historic times by Europeans and natives , and prehistoric times by Paleoamericans . Parrots were important in the culture of native Caribbeans , were traded between islands , and were among the gifts offered to Christopher Columbus when he reached the Bahamas in 1492 . It is therefore difficult to determine whether the numerous historical records of macaws on these islands refer to distinct , endemic species , since they could have been based on escaped individuals or feral populations of foreign macaws of known species that had been transported there . As many as thirteen extinct macaws have been suggested to have lived on the islands until recently . Only three endemic Caribbean macaw species are known from physical remains ; the Cuban macaw (*Ara tricolor*) is known from nineteen museum skins and subfossils , the Saint Croix macaw (*Ara autochthones*) is only known from subfossils , and the Lesser Antillean macaw is known from subfossils and reports . No endemic Caribbean macaws remain today ; they were likely driven to extinction by humans in historic and prehistoric times .

Many hypothetical extinct macaws were based only on contemporaneous accounts , but these species are considered dubious today . Several of them were named in the early 20th century by Rothschild , who had a tendency to name species based on little tangible evidence . Among others , the red @-@ headed macaw (*Ara erythrocephala*) and the Jamaican red macaw (*Ara gossei*) were named for accounts of macaws on Jamaica , and the Dominican green @-@ and @-@ yellow macaw (*Ara atwoodi*) was supposedly from Dominica island . The violet macaw (*Anodorhynchus purpurascens*) , which was named for accounts of blue parrots supposedly from Guadeloupe , is now thought to have been based on references to the Guadeloupe amazon (*Amazona violacea*) .

Other species of macaw have also been mentioned , but many never received binomials , or are considered junior synonyms of other species . Williams and Steadman defended the validity of most named Caribbean macaw species , and wrote that each Greater and Lesser Antillean island probably had its own endemic species . Olson and Maíz doubted the validity of the hypothetical macaws , and that all Antillean islands once had endemic species , but wrote that the island of Hispaniola would be the most likely place for another macaw species to have existed because of the large land area , though no descriptions or remains of such are known . They wrote that such a species could have been driven to extinction before the arrival of Europeans . The identity and distribution of indigenous macaws in the Caribbean is only likely to be further resolved through palaeontological discoveries and examination of contemporary reports and artwork .

= = Contemporary descriptions = =

Bouton 's original description of the Martinique macaw is reproduced below , translated from French :

The macaws are two or three times as large as the other parrots , [and] have a plumage much different in colour : those that I have seen have their plumage blue and orange @-@ yellow (saffron) . They also learn to talk and have a good body .

A translation of the original French description of " *Ara erythrura* " by de Rochefort follows below :

Among them are some which have the head , the upper side of the neck , and the back of a satiny sky blue ; the underside of the neck , the belly , and undersurface of the wings , yellow , and the tail entirely red .

In spite of the fact that the tail of " *Ara erythrura* " was described as entirely red , the plate in Rothschild 's *Extinct Birds* showed a blue tip , which Charles Wallace Richmond complained about in his review of the book .