Final Project Write-up

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Take-home message:

Main Message: The parrots poached in Mexico do not show a significant pattern regarding characteristics.

Extra Message: The poachers in Mexico are mainly local farmers.

Data preparation:

Original data include more characteristics, including estimated poaching count, legally trapped counts, overlap parrots people, nests, price, threat status, beauty, and length. I picked five of them which are more approachable to the targeting audience.

One concern about my data selection is that I did not pick overlap parrots people. The parameter shows the rank order of sum of human population density within species' range. This category is very related to my secondary message that "the poachers in Mexico are mainly local farmers." However, the data collecting method from the original paper for this category is very questionable, since it only considers the area-based overlapping rank without considering the population density of the species. Also, specific methodology for the data collection was not mentioned in the paper. Hence, I decided to not include it to avoid possible confusion.

Also, in my final infographic, I combined the beauty and the length in to one plot, since they both describe the appearance of the parrot. The two categories are relatively straightforward, so combining the two should not bring too much confusion.

Audience:

General public. Plots heavy on statistics might be challenging for the general public, so I only pick plot types easy to interpret—bubble plot and point graph. Also, the general public tends to search for patterns in the graphic. This could be challenging for me since the data does not show significant patterns.

Visual task:

For all three plots in the infographic, the ultimate goal is showing that there is no pattern (possibly except for the last one where this is a weak pattern in length).

For the threat status plot, the audience needs to notice the threat status does not affect the size of the bubble.

For the price plot, the audience needs to understand the points randomly distribute on the graph, thus no correlation between the poaching count and the price.

For the appearance plot, the audience needs to understand the 1) the points randomly distribute on the graph with some outliners with high poaching count and smaller length, thus a weak correlation between the poaching count and the length. 2) beauty indicators randomly distribute on the plot, thus no correlation between the poaching count and the beauty.

Visual design techniques:
For the threat status plot, I used bubble plot with color hue indicating the threat status. I picked red for endangered, yellow for vulnerable and green for least concern since it fits the public's intuition of red-endangered. The audience should notice the bigger bubbles and the bubbles with different colors first. In this situation, the bigger bubbles are all green, while the red and yellow bubbles have median to small size. With the contradictory message brought by the size and the color, the audience should be able to understand that there is no pattern.

For the price plot, I picked the point graph thus using location to deliver the message. Threat status indicated by color is introduced again here to 1) reinforce the previous information; 2) bring visual beauty. Since the points on the graph do not fit in a line, the audience should understand the randomness. To avoid the whole graph being too statistical, I also used three text boxes to highlight three species with different threat status, price, and similar low poaching count to reinforce the message.

The appearance plot has the similar strategy as the price plot, but I change color hue to color value to indicate the beauty level since it is continuous data (even though, there are only three levels in the paper, so color value here actually is not too different from color hue). Since the outliners gather in the left of the plot where the length is low (this will make the audience group these outliners together since they are closer to each other), the audience should be able to extract the message. To highlight the possible pattern in smaller size-more poaching, I introduced three text boxes to highlight three species with different beauty level, high poaching count, and smaller size.

Character and plot:
The most important character is the parrots. After the first draft, I also introduce the farmers in the end.

Throughout the infographic, I tried to tell this detective novel like story where I am leading the audience to identify "what is harming these beautiful birds". For each sector in the infographic, I used prompts and oral languages to build on the suspense. In the end, I "revealed" the truth, relieving the tension.

The approach is very narrative since the plots themselves are rather straightforward. I hope by utilizing this traditional story-telling strategy the audience could be more interested in the visualization.

Techniques:

Other than the narrative prompts and oral languages mentioned above, I also introduced some background in pet parrots, a general threat status of Mexican parrots, and several photos of the parrots (popular pet species).

The pet parrots background is an attempt to relate the audience to the story and make them concern about the species, so they would be interested in interpreting the graphs later.

The general threat status of Mexican parrots introduction part is used for building up this concern. I highlight some important numbers and messages with the red color to catch attention.

The photos are another strategy to attract attention since they are common pet species people see a lot in their daily life. Also, these parrots are particularly cute thus creating a visual enjoyment.

All these extra elements are used to relate the audience more into the story, thus making them willing to read the relatively dry plots.

Also, the main message of the plots are also summarized in the text.