

# **Traditional Ecology, Human Livelihoods, and the African Grey Parrot in Cameroon**

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We, an American environmental historian and a Cameroonian ornithologist and ecologist, are collaborating on research on human livelihoods and the Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) in Cameroon. The Grey Parrot and the closely related Timneh Parrot (*P. timneh*) are a topical subject for historical and applied policy studies. Figures are uncertain, but losses to habitat conversion and harvesting for the cage bird trade are so great that the IUCN classifies both species as endangered. They are popular pets because they are considered to be exceptional vocal learners, even among parrots. The international trade of wild-caught birds has been banned since 2016, which will no doubt ease pressure, but habitat loss and possibly the illegal trade will continue.

Our project is to analyze survey data collected in 2008–11 for a report to the Government of Cameroon and CITES. The survey team, led by Tamungang, traveled nationwide and administered two thousand five-page long questionnaires to farmers, hunters, traders, civil servants, administrators, traditional leaders, and university students. The questionnaires covered economic matters about people eating parrots, parrots eating crops, and people supplying parrots to traders. It also prompted open-ended stories about the value and status of the parrots. These economic and cultural aspects of the data set have not yet been fully analyzed. Our project is to write an article that distills the material presence of the African Grey Parrot among humans in Cameroon. The results will have value for understandings of the valuation of a particular natural resource and also policy value for the preservation of species traded commercially.