

Tracy Aviary's New Exhibit Raising Important Chicks

*Within a month of opening,
sensitive species already benefitting*

Salt Lake City, Utah - Tracy Aviary's new South American Pavilion was designed with raising birds in mind and less than a month after opening, the incubation and propagation rooms have already been put to use. The most important guests to use these rooms to date have been two Green Magpies.

According to Tracy Aviary Curator Roger Sweeney, Green Magpies, also called the Hunting Cissa, originate from South East Asia and are rarely seen in North American zoos. They were recognized as a priority species for zoos to manage under a population management plan (PMP) several years ago. Despite the increased focus, by the beginning of 2010 their population in North American zoos had fallen to less than 10 individuals, with just three female birds surviving. Thanks to a cooperative effort between the Tracy Aviary, Fort Wayne Zoo and the Denver Zoo all three of the remaining females were moved to new partners and potential breeding situations in the last 12 months with the hope of improving conditions for breeding success. "We are delighted the pair at Tracy Aviary initiated breeding. This gives us hope that the North American zoo population can be recovered and used as a conservation tool," says Sweeney.



photo by Steven Whipple

Because the adult pair has shown a behavioral pattern of damaging or eating their own eggs, a pair of Ringneck Doves was used as foster parents to incubate the eggs for the Green Magpies. Once the female Green Magpie had completed her clutch, they were carefully removed from the nest and transferred to the Ringneck Doves for incubation. Upon hatching the neonate Magpies were housed in a brooder incubator that is prominently displayed for public viewing within the new South American Pavilion. Initially the chicks are fed every two hours between 7am-9pm on a high protein diet. Most of the time the chicks live in a brooder in front of the visitor viewing window where visitors can watch their progress as they are fed and continue to grow.

Kathy Anderson, a volunteer from the AZA accredited Northeastern Wisconsin Zoo, claimed the exhibit flawlessly captures the message of recreation, conservation and education. "This exhibit is a wonderful opportunity for children to learn as well as adults. I think it's so important for conservation efforts that zoos have more exhibits like this one. I traveled all the way from Wisconsin to see this and I've not been disappointed."

Tracy Aviary is located 589 East 1300 South inside Liberty Park, enter from 900 South and 600 East. Hours of operation: daily from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Cost: \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and students, \$3 for children ages 4-12, children under 3 are free. Tracy Aviary fosters caring for the natural world, enriching and transforming lives through our connection with birds.

Visit our website at www.tracyaviary.org.