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Parrots Over Puerto Rico (Americas Award For Children's And Young Adult Literature. Winner)



Synopsis

Above the treetops of Puerto Rico flies a flock of parrots as green as their island home. . . . These are Puerto Rican parrots. They lived on this island for millions of years, and then they nearly vanished from the earth forever. Puerto Rican parrots, once abundant, came perilously close to extinction in the 1960s due to centuries of foreign exploration and occupation, development, and habitat destruction. In this compelling book, Roth and Trumbore recount the efforts of the scientists of the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program to save the parrots and ensure their future. Woven into the parrots story is a brief history of Puerto Rico itself, from before the first human settlers to the present day. With striking collage illustrations, a unique format, and engaging storytelling, *Parrots Over Puerto Rico* invites readers to witness the amazing recovery efforts that have enabled Puerto Rican parrots to fly over their island once again."

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 960L (What's this?)

Series: Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature. Winner

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

Customer Reviews

Starred Review Few nonfiction picture books attempt this level of ambition, and even fewer succeed. Thankfully, Roth and Trumbore's first instinct ends up being the best one: To tell the story of the Puerto Rican parrot you must also tell the story of Puerto Ricans. The earliest

human inhabitant of the island originally known as BoriquÃ©n arrived by boat around 5,000 BCE. They found a land replete with wildlife, including the brightly colored parrots that built nests in the trees. Watershed moments in Puerto Rican history—including first contact with Europeans in 1493, the arrival of slaves from Africa, and the Spanish-American War—parallel the sharp decline in the parrots' population, which numbered only 24 by the 1960s. That's when collaborative efforts of the Puerto Rican and American governments to protect the parrots began, as scientists taught the birds basic social behaviors, how to recognize enemies, and how to raise their young. Roth's stunning artwork—fluttery, textural collages of fabric and paper with a three-dimensional quality—complement the high-interest narrative and are arranged vertically across dual pages to make the most of the tall trees and the related human actions taking place below. A triumphant reminder of the inescapable connection between people's actions and the animals in the wild. Grades 2-5. --Erin Anderson

Parrots thrived in Puerto Rico long before the first human settlers arrived some 5,000 years ago; by 1975, only 13 of the birds were still living in the wild. Roth and Trumbore follow *The Mangrove Tree* with another story of ecological revitalization, explaining the threats the parrots faced over the centuries, including invasive species and deforestation. The authors demonstrate how the parrots' survival was entwined with Puerto Rico's very history (bees and rats from Spanish settlers' ships wreaked havoc on the birds' nests) before detailing ongoing efforts to rebuild their numbers. The book itself is oriented vertically, calendar-style, amplifying its sense of height and allowing for dramatic paper and fabric collages that show the vivid blue-and-green parrots soaring over the island. In an especially lovely scene, a towering waterfall of crinkled strips of white paper cascades over a fibrous backdrop of rocks in Puerto Rico's El Yunque rainforest. An extensive afterword describes the species recovery and includes more than a dozen photographs. A thoughtful and thorough examination of the ways human action can both help and harm animal populations. --Publishers Weekly, starred review Few nonfiction picture books attempt this level of ambition, and even fewer succeed. . . . Roth's stunning artwork—fluttery, textural collages of fabric and paper with a three-dimensional quality—compliment the high-interest narrative and are arranged vertically across dual pages to make the most of the tall trees and the related human actions taking place below. A triumphant reminder of the inescapable connection between people's actions and the animals in the wild. --Booklist, starred review Before humans arrived on the island, parrots numbered in the hundred of thousands. By 1967, only 24 birds remained. Since then, scientists in the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program (PRPRP) have established aviaries to raise the birds in captivity and

release them in the wild. Using a vertical page orientation, Roth has plenty of space for detailed collages that depict the parrots' lives and struggles above human activities that have altered the island's ecosystem over the centuries. Taíno, Spanish explorers and settlers, African slaves, and others hunted parrots for food, cut down nesting places, and introduced animals that ate their eggs. After the United States took control, deforestation continued. Some military history and political questions such as the debate about Puerto Rico's commonwealth status slow the narrative. When the focus shifts to the strategies, setbacks, and successes of the PRPRP, the story soars. From constructing nesting boxes to training captive-bred birds how to avoid hawks, the program is slowly rebuilding the parrot population. After the main story, several pages of photos accompany further explanations of the group's work. In addition to their list of sources, the authors supply a detailed time line of events. Like this team's *The Mangrove Tree* (Lee & Low, 2011), this title offers an engaging and hopeful look at environmental restoration. --School Library Journal, starred review

Parrots Over Puerto Rico is a Junior Library Guild selection that teaches about the history of the Puerto Rican parrot and the island of Puerto Rico, highlighting current efforts to save the Puerto Rican parrot by protecting and managing the endangered species. The heavy, dark, single-column font that stretches across the bottom of each two-page spread may be unpleasant from a purely aesthetic viewpoint, but it is easy to read against the colorful backgrounds that Susan L. Roth designed. Let me say that being distracted by the typeface selection is the only complaint I have with this charming children's book. The wonderful paper and fabric collages of parrots flying above the island and through the trees are cleverly created and photographed to make scenes that demand your attention. Children and adults will want to spend time admiring the multiple layers and colors to see myriad objects with hidden bits and pieces in each collage. Each scene has depth or height that draws the reader down from the sky or up to the jungle canopy or through a village market. I marveled at the simple tools Roth used to create complex and remarkably colorful pictures for this book. Beyond the images, Roth and Cindy Trumbore researched and wrote a turbulent and sometimes sad history lesson in a compact 44 pages. While telling the story of the island, the women have detailed how its hurricanes, settlement and development have influenced the population of the beautiful parrots that call it home. "By 1967, only twenty-four parrots lived in El Yunque," Roth and Trumbore show how governments worked together and even used the "cousin" of the Puerto Rican parrot, the Hispaniolan parrot, to help raise chicks to bring the population up. The book tells how scientists learned what kind of nest

boxes were best for the parrots and how the scientists gathered eggs to raise the chicks in an aviary where they were protected from harm. This success story of bringing the Puerto Rican parrot back from the edge of extinction offers a wonderful way to introduce children to the plight of the wild populations of endangered species. It also offers a wonderful way to show how aviculture and the use of science can help save a wild population of an endangered species. If any of the words in this review looked daunting for reading aloud to a child, don't worry. Roth and Trumbore wisely included an extra educational tool: On pages with foreign-language words, they included a pronunciation guide for the words at the bottom of the page. For instance, the earliest settlers of Puerto Rico called the island Boriquen, which is pronounced boh-ree-KEN and named the parrots iguaca, which is pronounced ih-GWAH-kah. There are well thought out definitions and explanations throughout the book to help children understand the history of the island and the daring comeback story of the iguaca. The last few pages include full-color photographs and information that can be used in a classroom setting to teach about the conservation program. I can highly recommend this book.

This is a nice book with lots of fun information both about the Puerto Rican parrot and the history of Puerto Rico. Very nice and colorful illustrations throughout the book and given the length of the writing it would probably not be that suitable for small children (e.g. toddlers).

This book is GORGEOUSLY illustrated! It is a wonderful book for any age of children. Not only are the illustrations beautiful, it is very well researched, written, and informative as well! LOVE it!!

The illustrations in this book are beautiful! The story is very informative. My son borrowed this book from the school library, and we both loved it so much that he asked if he could have it as a gift, and I ordered it for him without hesitation.

I am saving this for Christmas but the illustrations are beautiful and the Grandson I am giving it to has a wonderful interest in birds and knows so much about them already-just turned 5. I am sure he will really like it. It is so different as it reads like a tablet-the pages turn that way.

Wonderful book with equally wonderful illustrations. Great story about an endangered species. My grandchildren were enthralled, and I think it will make a lasting impression.

Very beautiful book, so much information and very colorful. Great for young learners.

A beautifully illustrated book with wonderful story.

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