

Tree Adoption website to help heal Bonaire's dry forests

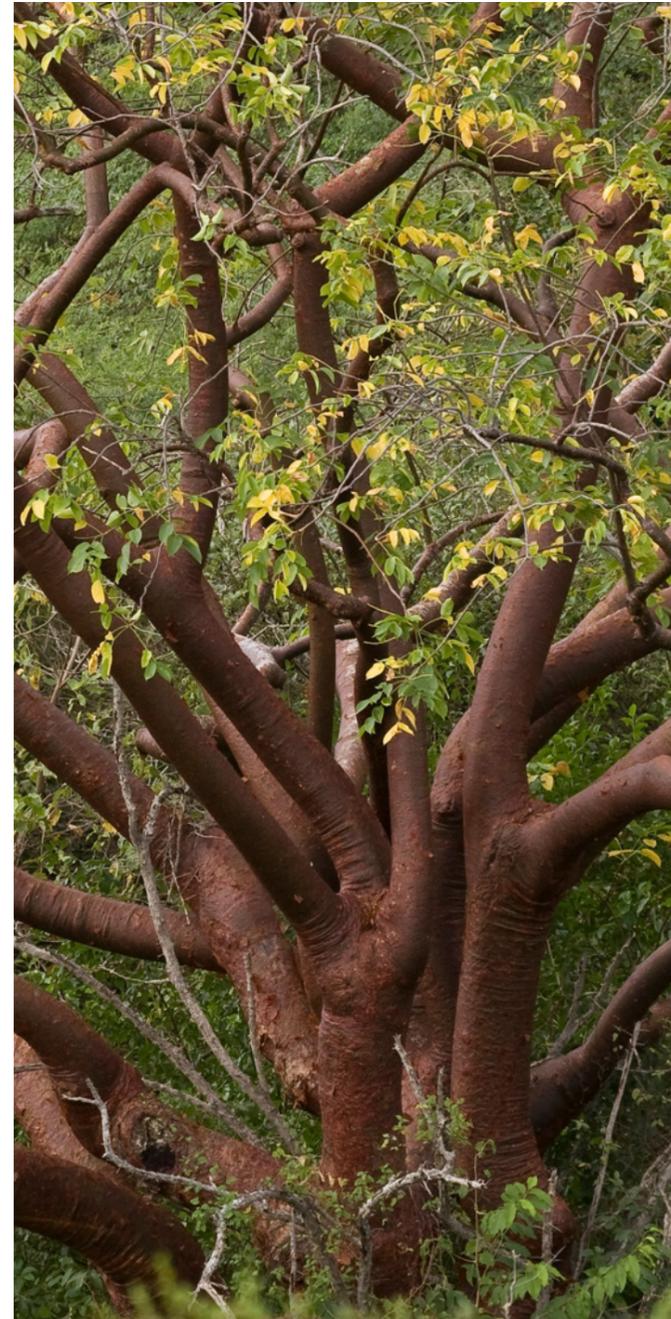
(Kralendijk, BONAIRE): Echo is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*) on Bonaire, and the unique dry-forest ecosystem in which it lives. In partnership with the local government through the Nos Ta Biba di Naturalesa campaign, Echo has launched a new initiative to safeguard the endangered species' habitat. MyBonaireTree.org offers donors a chance to support Echo's reforestation efforts through a symbolic tree adoption program.

Since 2015, Echo has been working to restore habitat and biodiversity to the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire. Ten fenced-in exclusion areas were originally designed to prevent feral goats, donkeys, and pigs from destroying planted trees as well as naturally regenerated young native trees, giving them time to grow. While the fences keep browsing animals out, a gate in the fence as well as walking paths inside each area welcome people to enjoy the areas. Each area is approximately one hectare in size and has been selected based on several characteristics relating to its environmental conditions. Echo has the goal of planting

20,000 native trees across the island. To date, nine exclusion areas have been fenced and 11,000 trees have been planted using 45 native tree species. In addition, Echo has also facilitated and planted out 3,000 trees on private land through the Reforestation project.

"Because Bonaire is hot, dry, and rocky, natural development of plant life is often slow," says Echo Board Chairperson, Lauren Schmaltz. "Reforestation is a huge help in aiding existing plants to grow and be more productive. Planting trees prevents erosion as roots keep the soil in place, instead of running off during heavy rain events. As soil and leaf litter build up, the ground is able to absorb more water, nourishing the landscape. Trees also produce vital oxygen, remove harmful gases from the air and land, provide cooling shade, and in many cases serves as a valuable food source for both parrots and people."

Everyone is welcome to participate in this important conservation work by symbolically adopting a tree at www.mybonairetree.org. Donors can choose between twelve native species of trees most commonly used in Echo's reforestation work.



About Echo

Echo (www.echobonaire.org) is a non-profit organization based on the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire, whose mission is to safeguard the future of the local Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*) and the dry-forest habitat that it calls home. Echo aims to fulfill its mission through conservation management and outreach education, using research and monitoring as tools to guide and inform these efforts.

For more information

To learn more about Echo's reforestation project, contact Echo at info@echobonaire.org or +599 701- 1188, or Openbaar Lichaam Bonaire (OLB) at 717-5330 (ask for the Environment and Nature office.)

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