

# GRAEME HALL NATURE SANCTUARY, INC.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Email: [news@graemehall.com](mailto:news@graemehall.com)

Art: [www.graemehall.com/press/releases/baby-eclectus-parrots-display/](http://www.graemehall.com/press/releases/baby-eclectus-parrots-display/)  
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## **Baby Eclectus Parrots to be Displayed at Graeme Hall October 4, 2008**

On Saturday, October 4 at 10:00 a.m., two of the newest baby parrots born at Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary will be shown in person to the public.

The parrot parents had hidden the eggs in the Gully Aviary, and hatched them in secrecy. The two 3-inch high Eclectus parrots pushed their way out of chestnut-sized eggs without assistance to the surprise of everyone at the Sanctuary.

Adult parrots are allowed to fly freely in the Gully Aviary at the Sanctuary, one of the largest walk-in aviaries in the Western Hemisphere.

"We had no idea the babies were there," said Harry Roberts, General Manager of the Sanctuary. "But we knew something was up when our normally friendly Eclectus parrots tried to nip the toes of tourists when they walked past the hidden nest."

The baby chicks will be brought out to the main lawn area at the Sanctuary on Saturday, October 4 at 10:00 a.m. for a "meet and greet" session with the public.

"We encourage parents to bring their children," said Roberts. "It is one of the few times that children will be able to see baby parrots up close."

The Sanctuary sponsors captive breeding programmes for endangered species such as the St. Vincent Amazon parrot, the national bird of St. Vincent.

Antonia Weekes, curator of birds at the Sanctuary said, "We have had a very active captive breeding season. There have been nearly 30 births this year alone, including baby Eurasian Avocets, Piping Guans, Spoonbills, Pintails and Northern Bobwhites."

Weekes and her staff fed the parrots by hand every two hours round the clock. After nine days their eyes opened, and Weekes was the first person the birds saw. Since then, the parrots and Weekes have been inseparable.

"They call me Mom," laughs Weekes. "The Eclectus chicks go with me everywhere. In the beginning,

I was feeding them every two hours from 5 a.m. till midnight. I did that for 16 days."

The chicks have also started to stretch their wings, though Weekes believes that their first flight is still some time away. The feathers begin as pins that eventually grow longer and open. "As the blood recedes from the feather shafts," Weekes explains, "they start to break open." Sometimes the chicks preen off their own feather shafts. Sometimes Weekes does it.

And because the chicks are being hand-raised, they need additional time to acclimate to other birds. Later, the chicks will leave Weekes to live in a cage inside the Gully Aviary, near the other Eclectus Parrots. "It's for socialization," Weekes says. "The chicks have to learn how to be birds before we turn them loose inside the aviary."

Female Eclectus Parrots guard their brood with their lives, and the males will feed the female by regurgitating rainforest seeds and fruits.

Native to Northern Australia, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands, the Eclectus Parrot is one of the few species where the female is prettier than the male. The female Eclectus parrot males are vibrant green with red under the wings and sides of the body and females are mainly red with blue vents. They mainly inhabit the interior and edges of lowland rainforests, however they can also be found in the higher rainforest regions.

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