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*Susan L. Roth (Author/Illustrator) , Cindy Trumbore*

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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.

## Parrots Over Puerto Rico Details

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Author : Susan L. Roth (Author/Illustrator) , Cindy Trumbore

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## From Reader Review Parrots Over Puerto Rico for online ebook

### JordanD says

What a uniquely illustrated book! This picture book was awarded the Sibert Medal (2014) and Américas Award (2014). I found this book on the Sibert Medal Award page and then went to the Geneva Public Library and was able to check it out from there. I believe this book would be best for ages 8-11. The major themes that I witnessed while reading this book were deforestation, endangerment, environment, and Puerto Rico. This book discusses Puerto Rico's history and the once abundant Puerto Rican parrots journey that almost led to their extinction. The book also recounts the development of Puerto Rico and how the deforestation displaced many of the parrots that lived there, leading to their deaths. The parrots were saved with the help of scientists and survived and now soar freely over Puerto Rico today. I recommend using this book when discussing the topic of animals and extinction in the elementary school classrooms. Students should be encouraged to study the unique collage illustrations and discuss other animals that have been close to extinction, and how people helped those animals to survive. Teachers could also do a whole group discussion with the class about ways to help our environment and reduce the number of animals that are close to extinction.

Thanks,  
Jordan Dunlop

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### Joan says

This is just gorgeous! I had one person who was convinced that actual feathers had been used for the book. It is all collage by Roth! Instead of the conventional layout the book turns sideways and opens from top to bottom, a method that really works in this book. This is two stories in one: it is a brief history of Puerto Rico and it is a history of the decline, then recovery of these wonderful parrots who cry Iguaca! Iguaca! The numbers were down to \*13\* in 1975 when scientists started to successfully breed these in captivity. They have since established 3 different locations for the birds in hopes that any future disaster will leave at least one location unscathed. Right now this is a success story and hopefully that will continue as scientists and governments work together to save these beautiful birds, the only native parrot in the United States and its territories. This book is highly recommended to naturalists, environmentalists and art lovers.

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### Rebekah Torres says

Text-to-self Connection: Parrots Over Puerto Rico

For the Americas Award winning book, Parrots Over Puerto Rico by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore, I did a text-to-self connection. This means that I made a connection from the book to myself. I am so happy for this assignment that it gave me the opportunity to find this book! My husband is Puerto Rican. He was born on the island and then moved to New York when he was two. The book is a history of Puerto Rico with a central focus on the Iguaca parrots which are indigenous to the island. This story was filled with text-to-self connects for me. I have been to Puerto Rico a few times and have seen the white-sand beaches. I have explored the Fort, El Morro, in San Juan. I have heard the coquei frogs sing and seen waterfalls like the one pictured in the book. The only thing from the book that I have not seen is the rain forest, El Yunque. Next time I visit Puerto Rico, I hope I get the chance to glimpse the blue flight feathers of the Iguaca parrots and hear their calls.

## Monica Edinger says

One of my perpetual concerns is how we help children understand the complicated interrelated ways of wildlife and people, especially when it comes to endangered animals. My longtime experience in a school is that too often animals in places where lives are significantly different from those of my students are attended to at the expense of the people. That is, I fear that they will inadvertently develop a negative view of the people native to an area where animals are in danger rather than develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of the situation. So what a delight to read Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore's *Parrots over Puerto Rico* where the intertwined histories of animals and people are thoughtfully, intelligently, and beautifully presented.

To begin with there were the birds -- striking green and blue parrots with the distinctive flight call, "Iguaca! Iguaca!" There were evidently hundreds of thousands of them all over Puerto Rico when people started to arrive around 500 BCE. Among them were the Taino people who hunted the parrots and kept them as pets. After Christopher Columbus's "claiming" of the island for Spain in 1493 the island became full of Spanish settlers and a century later enslaved Africans were brought there to work the sugarcane. These new arrivals also brought new life with them: ships' rats and honeybees that managed to get to the parrots' nesting holes and attack their eggs. Others needed timber and so the forests where the parrots lived were cut down. And even as their homes were in peril, so were the birds themselves as people continued to hunt them and keep them as pets.

For the first half of the book, Roth and Trumbore do a splendid job providing young readers with a history of the island, intertwining the birds' history with its human inhabitants along the way. In the second part they indicate the awareness by Puerto Ricans that the birds are almost gone and then their efforts to bring them back. The book ends with a very informative afterward with photos as well as a timeline and a list of sources. Their research appears to be impeccable.

Of course, it must be said, that what brings this book to a level I might term "awesome" are Susan L. Roth's remarkable paper-and-fabric collages. Elegantly designed, the book's vertical orientation allows for her spectacular double page spreads throughout, increasing the sense of the birds' habitats and movement as well as the way humans affect them.

I can't say much more than that this is a fantastic book --- I recommend it highly.

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## Casey Bohnenblusch says

*Parrots Over Puerto Rico* is an informational text that uses colorful representations to portray the history of Puerto Rico. The bright illustrations combined with the brief excerpts of history made this book engaging and kept the reader wanting to learn more. The short brief paragraphs allows readers to focus on the content without getting overwhelmed with facts. I love the way Cindy Trumbore connected the lives of the parrots to the lives of the people that inhabited Puerto Rico. Overall, this creative take on informational text got me involved in the story behind the beautiful island of Puerto Rico.

Informational text would be perfect to use in a 4th or 5th grade class, as a way to connect multiple content areas. This book gives teachers the opportunity to integrate Social Studies and English with ease. Using this as an introduction to a unit on the history of Puerto Rico would give students background knowledge on the

topic that they can later build off of. While reading, key vocabulary could be discussed in order to broaden academic language both generic and content specific.

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### **Anna says**

“Parrots Over Puerto Rico” by Susan L. Roth is a non-picture picture book for children. This book is about the history of the parrots and how they became an endangered species. Within the story of the parrots, there is the story of Puerto Rico’s history. For children under four, I believe this book may be a bit to challenging. There are many dates and the book moves fast through the changes in people living in Puerto Rico. The mixed stories can make it difficult for children to follow. The author also uses health and scientific terms that can be a bit to hard for children to comprehend. However, for children over the age of 5, I believe that it is important for children to read and understand. This is because it teaches children, at a young age, the importance of the environment. They learn the truth about what happens when humans are careless about their surroundings. “Parrots Over Puerto Rico” teaches great importance to children about animal protection.

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### **Karen Witzler says**

Excellent. Beautiful history of Puerto Rico told through the lens of an endangered species. Geography, history, science, art - beautiful art made from paper cutting techniques - highly recommended for teachers, homeschool families, everyone.

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### **Sarah Wheeland says**

Parrots Over Puerto Rico

(2013, October 1). School Library Journal. <http://www.titlewave.com/search?SID=0...>

Text Structure: Chronological Sequence

Fiction Twin Text: “Pirate Pete’s Talk Like a Pirate” by Kim Kennedy (2007)

Rationale: I took a more “light-hearted” approach to this twin text pairing. Parrots are an integral part of pirate folklore and “Pirate Pete’s Talk Like a Pirate” is a fun fiction book for kids as pirates are always a topic of interest. “Parrots Over Puerto Rico” provides a look at the history of the beautiful Puerto Rican parrot and gives students an opportunity to deepen their understanding of this pirate story staple.

Teaching Strategy: KWL Chart-Create a KWL chart about parrots. Complete the K and W sections prior to reading each text. After reading one text, fill-in the L column and then read the second text and fill-in the column. Discuss with students how both texts helped them learn about parrots. Use the information to create a conservation brochure for the Puerto Rican parrot.

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## Paige Scott says

- 1) This book tells about how parrots were very abundant in Puerto Rico before the first settlers some 5,000 years ago, and these two authors tell about the discovery in 1975 of only 13 of these parrots are still living in the same place in Puerto Rico in the wild. The two authors go on to tell the threats the parrots have faced through all of the deforestation being done throughout their land through development on the land, foreign exploration, and simply destroying their habitat. However, the two authors launched the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program to save the parrots and ensure that they have the best future possible. Therefore, they tell the story of how they are slowly through recovery efforts enabling more Puerto Rican parrots to fly on their island and stay there this time.
  - 2) Age level: 6- 11 years old Grade level: 3rd-6th grade
  - 3) Appropriate classroom use: Science, to teach about the endangerment of animals around the world and how it affects an environment
  - 4) Individual students who might benefit from this book would be: students that like science/animals
  - 5) Small group use: Divide students into groups to research an assigned endangered animal from the list brainstormed before the read aloud, and have them research what they think they could do to help this animal or what needs to be done to bring the population back up.
  - 6) Whole class use: Read this book as a read aloud in class, and ask the class before reading what animals they know are endangered, and see after reading if they even knew that the parrot was an endangered species.
  - 7) Related books: The Coqui and the Iguana, The Golden Flower: A Taino Myth from Puerto Rico
  - 8) Multimedia connections: There's an informational video I found on saving Puerto Rico parrots that could be used to relate to this book.
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## Jim Erikson says

I haven't seen a sideways book since Tadpole's Promise. I'm surprised more people don't do this. I realize it makes for a different kind of read-aloud, but a picturebook is just as easy to hold the tall way as the wide way. And the tall page gives a different kind of expansiveness that is appropriate for a book about birds, trees, and sky.

I'm not a great fan of the paper cutting art anymore. But it works well for feathers and leaves, so again, good choices.

The narrow sans-serif "Francois One font was a little difficult to read, especially since it was placed on textured and colored background. Christy Hale made the words big enough and with just enough character spacing to be still legible, so it still feels like professional work even though I didn't like it.

The rescue story was remarkable, with a cautionary conservationist agenda, it gave the slice of life for science and scientists--a feel for the interesting possibilities of field work.

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## Carolynne says

I loved this book--I can see why it won the Sibert Award this year! Well-deserved, Susan Roth and Cindy Trumbore! Some of its reviewers (including some of my friends in Goodreads!) objected to the unusual

orientation of the book, and I found it slightly awkward at first, but after thinking about it for about 5 seconds I realize why they did it: the artist has much more room to convey the space of the sky and later the forest which the parrots inhabit. Puerto Rican parrots are among the most endangered species in the world, which makes this book a must for any primary unit on endangered species or the environment or conservation or the Caribbean. If you are a primary teacher and don't teach any of these units--use it for a unit on colors, or birds--find something! It's that good.

I actually think it could be used with upper elementary students, too because there is a detailed timeline, which contains highlights of Puerto Rican history as well as the decimation and later regrowth of the species (in 1975 there were only 13 of the parrots in the wild!). There is a four page afterword giving more details of the extensive conservation movement, and a bibliography of sources.

I've barely mentioned what drew me to the book in the first place: the vivid fabric and paper collages by Susan Roth. The vertical orientation of the book gives those fragile parrots room to soar!

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### **Cris Ingram says**

The parrots that are really in the trees in Puerto Rico have been there for years. Way back in history, everyone takes care of them and respects them. The color illustrations are collage and the colors are so vividly bright, then when you get to the end, reading all these different historical facts about the parrots, there are real photographs of the Parrots and how they are taken care of. The book has a fun twist as you open the front cover.

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### **Tasha says**

This exceptional nonfiction picture book tells the story of the Puerto Rican parrot. It is a bird that has flown over Puerto Rico for millions of years but almost became extinct in the 1960s. The book tells of the changes that came to Puerto Rico and its environment thanks to settlers, wars, hunting, and foreign invasive species. Forests began to disappear too, so the parrots were limited to living in just one place. By 1967, only 24 parrots lived in Puerto Rico. With them almost extinct, people started trying to save the parrots. The book tells the story of rescued parrots, storms and the dedicated scientists who figured out how to save this species from disappearing entirely.

Roth and Trumbore tell this story deftly. They focus on what was almost lost, a sky crowded with these blue and green birds. The book explores the history of Puerto Rico, tying it closely and innately into the story of the parrots themselves. The entire book is fascinating and becomes even more compelling when the story turns to the rescue efforts. Small victories such as saving a young parrot's wings are celebrated, while the larger effort is also looked at in detail.

Roth's collages are exquisite. She captures the beauty of the birds, as you can see from the cover image above, but also the beauty of Puerto Rico itself with all of its lush greens. The book is beautifully designed as well.

A dazzling nonfiction book that will be welcome in classroom discussions and units about conservation and environment. Appropriate for ages 7-9.

## **Iman Malone-Dirige says**

Puerto Rico has been invariably proclaimed our tenth favorite island within this vast world for years on end - being originally from Hawai'i Nei, we've always felt at home within the island's tropical land & heartwarming Caribbean culture...

From dancing bachata con mi reina on the beautiful beaches en Vieques to kayaking in the bioluminescent waters together upon our return from Iraq more than seven years ago...

To our first visit as a complete family last year - with our then-one year old daughter and our then-infant son on our hips whilst exploring Old San Juan y El Yunque...

To the surprise celebration visit en Loiza y Carolina for my 32nd birthday...

To our family temporarily living en Puntas Las Marias for over six weeks earlier this year - in support of our brilliant Soldier and her USACE team's recovery efforts for relief towards the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria...

To being completely welcomed by our calabash familia en Isabela this past September...

...La Isla Del Encanto has held our hearts completely!

We made the wonderful decision this past February to commit in having Puerto Rico become our haven as a nomadic Active Duty U.S. Army family - we've thus built our sweet Puerto Rico home in tranquil Juncos.

To commemorate this special milestone of our lives - we gave our two adorable children, "Los Gemelos" as they're affectionately called throughout the island, this vibrant book.

Our pretty daughter & handsome son are in love with this captivating book in its entirety - Mommy & Mama personally love the engagement of perspective from this beautiful endangered species whilst ingeniously sharing tidbits of Puerto Rican history within it's colorful pages and impressive artwork.

We highly recommend this exceptional book for all families - especially those that have fallen in love with the island of Puerto Rico & have made it their official home just like our little ohana!?

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## **Alison says**

"Parrots Over Puerto Rico" was an extremely engaging book with colorful, magnificent illustrations that would captivate any audience. This book walks through the development of what is now Puerto Rico. It discusses the people that have lived on this land and the events that have taken place, but it also discusses the beautiful parrots that have lived in the trees. These birds were plentiful when settlers first came to the island. Then, there were many different events that made their numbers decrease. First, people hunted them and ate them, also hawks and other predators hunted them and stole their homes. Over time, there were only a small number of parrots left in Puerto Rico, and they were in danger of becoming extinct. Scientists decided to help by raising parrots in captivity. This book walks through the process of raising the birds, preparing them for the wild, and finally releasing them into the wild.

This book holds readers attention and informs on different topics in an engaging and creative manner. I would highly recommend this for a classroom studying endangered species or even the development of a certain place. This book could be used with 3-6 graders in my opinion.

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