

Prague zookeepers use puppet to raise endangered magpie

April 17 2018, by Karel Janicek



A keeper using a glove puppet imitating a parent feeds baby critically endangered Javan green magpie at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic, Tuesday, April 17, 2018. The Javan green magpies are one of the most endangered birds on earth. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

Zookeepers in Prague have turned into puppeteers in an effort to save the critically endangered Javan green magpie.

Zoo officials saved one precious egg after the parents threw a second egg

out of their nest. The magpie chick that hatched a month ago is being kept in a box and is being fed using a [puppet](#) that imitates a parent bird.

Bird keeper Antonin Vaidl said the puppet is needed to make sure the bird will be capable of breeding, which it won't be if it gets used to people.

"It is a critically endangered taxon, every individual is important," Vaidl said. "This way we can eliminate the possibility that the bird would not be able to breed ... it will grow into a healthy individual that is able to reproduce."

Vaidl said the puppet doesn't have to be a perfect imitation of an adult bird because the baby responds to certain signals, such as a red beak, black patches around the eyes and a bright green background.

The rare Javan green magpie and other birds are popular as status-symbol pets in the [magpie](#)'s native Indonesian island of Java and elsewhere in Asia.

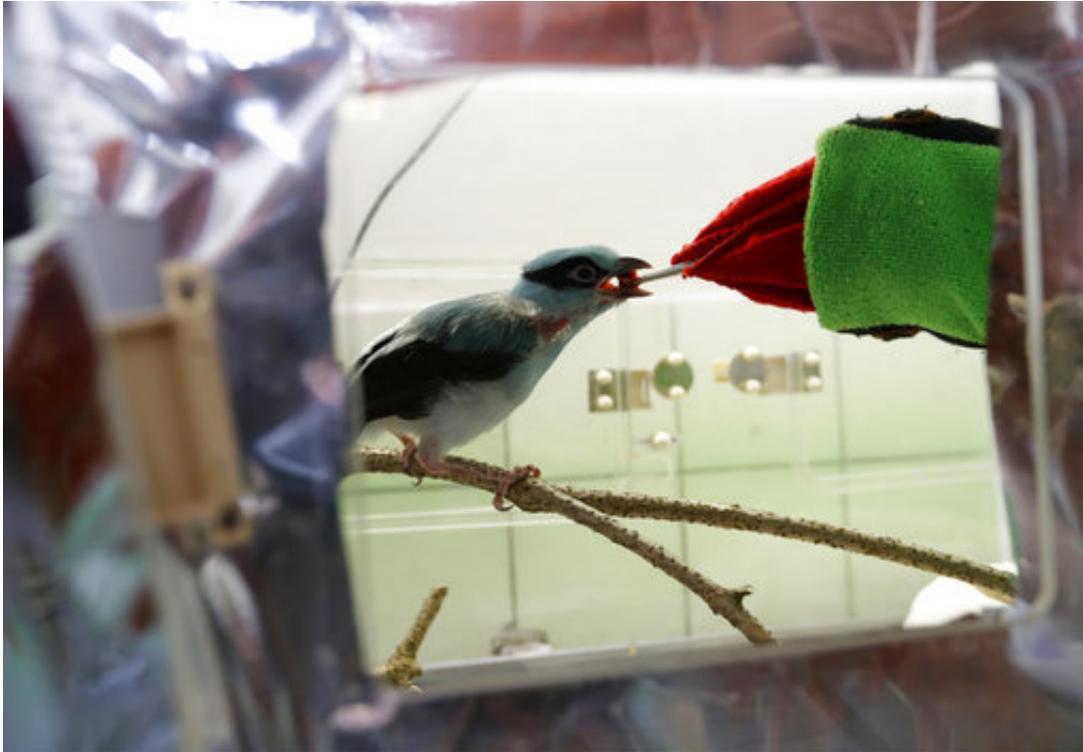
The green magpies are one the most endangered [birds](#) on Earth. It's estimated only about 50 of them are living in the wild while another 50 are in captivity in few zoos. In Europe, about 30 of them are in Britain and Prague.



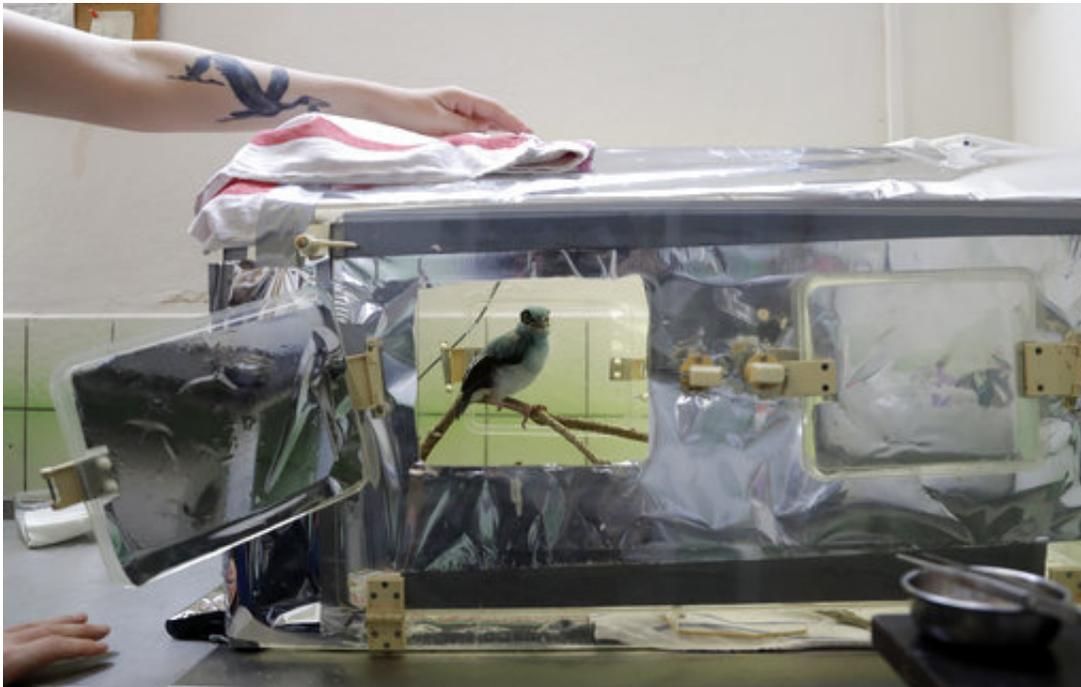
A keeper using a glove puppet imitating a parent feeds baby critically endangered Javan green magpie at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic, Tuesday, April 17, 2018. The Javan green magpies are one of the most endangered birds on earth. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

A zoo in the British city of Chester brought six pairs of them from Asia in 2015, giving one pair to Prague and another to a zoo in Jersey as part of a coordinated effort to save the species.

"To save it from extinction ... that's the reason we have been doing this," Vaidl said.



A keeper using a glove puppet imitating a parent feeds baby critically endangered Javan green magpie at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic, Tuesday, April 17, 2018. The Javan green magpies are one of the most endangered birds on earth. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)



A keeper closes a box after feeding baby critically endangered Javan green magpie at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic, Tuesday, April 17, 2018. The Javan green magpies are one of the most endangered birds on earth. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)



Baby critically endangered Javan green magpie sits on a branch at its box at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic, Tuesday, April 17, 2018. The Javan green magpies are one of the most endangered birds species on earth. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

© 2018 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Prague zookeepers use puppet to raise endangered magpie (2018, April 17) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2018-04-prague-zookeepers-puppet-endangered-magpie.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.