

PSITTASCENE

Magazine of the WORLD PARROT TRUST



Winter 2017/18



WORLD PARROT TRUST

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ABOUT THE WPT


Capture for the live-bird trade, habitat loss and other factors put wild parrots at risk. One in three parrot species are currently threatened in the wild.

As an international leader in parrot conservation and welfare the World Parrot Trust works with researchers, in-country organisations, communities and governments to encourage effective solutions that save parrots.

Since 1989 the WPT has grown to become a global force that moves quickly to address urgent issues and support long-term projects for parrots. WPT has led projects in 42 countries for 67 species of parrot.

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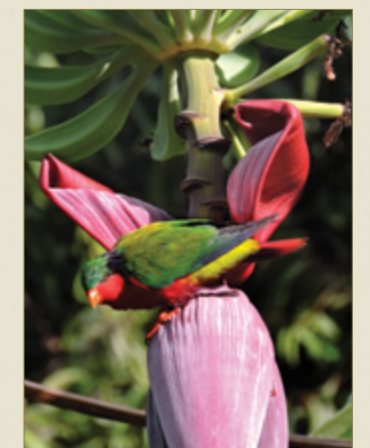
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Purple-crowned Lorikeets

ON THE COVER

A **Rimatara Lorikeet** (*Vini kuhlii*) forages on a giant banana bloom, using its specialised brush-tipped tongue to acquire nectar and pollen. Photo © Alan Lieberman

These parrots have experienced a remarkable growth in their numbers since 27 were translocated from Rimatara to Atiu in 2007.

Learn more on **Page 5, Rimatara Lorikeet: Population Re-established on Atiu Island after 200 Years.**



A message from...

Matt's desk

In this issue we focus our sights on the Australasian region of the world—an area that includes Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, and the Islands of Indonesia and the Pacific Ocean. It is an immense geographic area of immense importance to parrots. It sustains 42% of the world's parrot species, including half of all Critically Endangered species. We at WPT have resolved to improve that picture for parrots in this region.

Some of the WPT-supported work currently in progress is highlighted in this issue: from the Tasman Parakeet, which is teetering on the edge of extinction, to the beautiful Rimatara (Kuhl's) Lorikeet, a nectivorous parrot (with a brushy tongue!) whose recovery in the wild is celebrated, and a startling but hopeful story about the destructive trade in the wild parrots of Indonesia.

As always, our aim is to inform and inspire. Your support of the World Parrot Trust is critical to our collective success. Thank you for your help and feedback.

Best wishes for the new year!



Matthew Kirchhoff,
Communications Director

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Legacy

What will be your legacy?

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“I can’t believe it...”

Those were the first words out of my mouth on our first morning on Atiu as we began our survey of the island, nearly 10 years after the reintroduction of the Rimatara Lorikeet (*Vini kuhlii*) translocated from Rimatara in 2007.



We had an inkling of what to expect in terms of population size from the regular reports we received over the years from our “man in the field” Roger Malcolm, who kept track of the lorikeets flying over the Atiu Villas Resort. Even though we were hoping to see (and count) lorikeets, we could hardly believe what greeted us upon our arrival on Atiu.

Before we even started our official count, we saw not just a bird or two, here and there, or perhaps a pair or trio... but rather amazingly, and to our delight, we had the thrill of watching *dozens* of lories feeding in nectar-rich didap tree blossoms (*Erythrina subumbrans*).

We were in open-mouthed awe by what we saw and excited about how robustly the flock had grown in less than 10 years. What was our two week survey going to reveal in terms of total birds?

But before we get to our best estimates, let us begin at the beginning...



RIMATARA LORIKEET

Population Re-established on Atiu Island after 200 Years

By Alan Lieberman and Gerald McCormack

THE RIMATARA LORIKEET (also known as *Kubl's, Ruby, Ura, Kura, and Scarlet-breasted lorikeet*) appears on CITES Appendix II and is listed on Birdlife International/IUCN Red List as “Endangered” due to its small population, limited distribution, and risk of ship rats becoming established on its home islands.

The species is restricted to three islands: Rimatara in western French Polynesia, and Tabuaran and Teraina in remote northeastern Kiribati. The former natural range for the species was the southern Cook Islands and Rimatara, while the inclusion of the Kiribati Islands is due to birds introduced by Polynesians before the discovery of the island group in 1798. The native Atiu population valued the lorikeet’s brilliant red plumage, and it was hunted to extinction before Captain Cook’s arrival in 1777.

The overall goal of this conservation effort was to reintroduce a founder population from Rimatara to establish a reserve population on a rat-free island within its former natural range. Using capture and transport techniques used for similar lorikeet species in French Polynesia, in 2007 the field team captured 27 birds in Rimatara, transported and released them on Atiu. The following year we recorded the

first breeding from translocated parents on Atiu - the first lorikeet chicks hatched on Atiu in 200 years.

The initial translocation project was organized by the Cook Islands Natural Heritage Trust, the Ornithological Society of French Polynesia (MANU) and the San Diego Zoo Global with the support of the communities of Rimatara and Atiu, and the approval of the governments of French Polynesia and the Cook Islands.

Our goal for the survey in 2016 was to determine, as closely as possible, the total population size on Atiu and how the available habitat was being utilized by the new reintroduced lorikeet population. Counting birds in the field is a science in itself with many techniques and models to consider. We decided to use a direct count along transects as defined by the eight

roads that cover the island, and then consider the total available habitat on the island to estimate the potential number of birds that are on the island.

We walked every morning for 2-3 hours beginning just before sunup when the birds are most active and vocal. We formed 4 teams of 2-3 persons and followed pre-assigned routes each day, often replicating routes taken by the different teams. We counted all birds seen or heard within 50 metres on either side of the road, which totalled a transect area of 292 hectares (29km in length x 100m width = 292ha).

The average number of birds detected within 50m of the eight road-transects was .35 birds/ha. The 292 hectare area sampled via transects constituted 26.5% of the habitable 1,100ha on the island.



Alan (l) and Gerald (r) reviewing the transects for the survey

“ From an initial infusion of just 27 birds released in 2007 to a conservative estimate of 385 birds in less than 10 years is truly remarkable... ”

We multiplied .35 Kura/ha x 1,100ha to arrive at our estimate of 385 Rimatara lorikeets on Atiu. The entire exercise was wonderful.... walking a tropical Pacific island every morning, looking for lorikeets but also enjoying the native Pacific pigeon and chattering kingfisher, and especially the endemic Cook Islands fruit dove and Atiu swiftlet. Of course, the lorikeet was the highlight.

In the afternoons, we concentrated our activities on mist-netting lorikeets that feed late in the day on the banana flowers that begin to open around 4 pm. This proved to be much more challenging than counting active birds. We captured four birds and gave each a quick physical exam to include blood samples, ectoparasite collections, weights and measurements. All four birds were in excellent physical condition. The birds were handled quickly (<15 minutes), banded and released.

An ancillary but critical component of the recovery effort for the lorikeet on Atiu was the complete elimination of the common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*). This species was introduced in 1916 in an effort to control the coconut stick insect, a pest on the coconut plantations.

Unfortunately, the abundant and pugnacious mynas have had a negative impact on the native birds by harassing them when they attempt to nest within a myna territory. Mynas were observed attacking the nest of the first nesting lorikeets in 2008 and the Atiu Island Council agreed to the removal of the non-native myna. Over the next 8 years, an estimated 26,000 mynas were

eradicated and the removal of the last bird, ironically enough, occurred during our survey in September 2016. So now the lorikeets, kingfishers and fruit doves can breed unmolested.

After two weeks of walking roads (we liked to call our team “Old Men Walking Roads”) we reviewed all of our daily survey data, considered all of the most recent mapping of the island and its varied habitats, and agreed on a conservative population estimate of 385 Rimatara lorikeet on Atiu. From an initial infusion of just 27 birds released in 2007 to a conservative estimate of 385 birds in less than 10 years is truly remarkable. It is a testament to what can be done if you have a willing species, a dedicated human population and a habitat that is still intact and can support the return of a native species.

The recovery effort has exceeded our wildest expectations and we are thrilled with how quickly the population has grown. Given the number of acres dedicated to food crops on the island (especially banana) and the abundance of nectar producing trees, we feel there is still ample room for the population to grow.

We look forward to returning to Atiu in another 10 years for a 20 year follow-up to the initial translocation to conduct another survey of “Even Older Men Walking Roads”. What better way to enjoy a tropical paradise like Atiu than by watching lorikeets wheel through the air, chattering and bickering as they consider which nectar tree to land in next. □



Rimatara lorikeet
(*Vini kuhlii*)

World population:
< 2000, decreasing.

Where found:
Rimatara in the Austral Island group of French Polynesia; Tabuaran and Teriana in the Kiribata Island nation, and most recently, re-established on the island of Atiu in the Cook Islands.

Threat Summary:
Exploitation for this species' red feathers is the reason for its prehistoric extinction on the Cook Islands. A significant modern threat on other islands is the black rat (*Rattus rattus*) eating their eggs, young and the often the adults themselves.

About the Authors

Alan Lieberman is a Research Fellow at San Diego Zoo Global. Gerald McCormack is Director of the Cook Islands Natural Heritage Trust.

See the article “An Island Endemic - Kuhl's Lorikeet”, in *PsittaScene* November 2008.

Many thanks go to the National Heritage Trust, Air Rarotonga and Atiu Villas for their logistical support. The survey team consisted of Gerald McCormack of Natural Heritage, Alan Lieberman and veterinarian Dr. Bruce Rideout of San Diego Zoo Global, Roger Malcolm and George Mateariki of Atiu, along with new members Elaina Bufano, Liam Kokaua and Alanna Smith. The authors are indebted to the British Birdwatching Fair through Birdlife International and Te Ipukarea Society, Cook Island Natural Heritage Trust, and San Diego Zoo Global with support from Loro Parque, the World Parrot Trust's 2007 Action Grant, the American Lory Society and numerous private donors. On Atiu, the program has enjoyed support from the Mayoress and the Island Council, the traditional leaders especially Rongomatane Ariki, Man Unuia, Maara Tairi, Nooroa Teipo, Kau Henry, Roger Malcolm and Eddie Saul. Special thanks to Jason Tuara and George Mateariki who were tireless in their quest to take out the last myna on Atiu, and to Dr. Lisa Nordstrom for her valuable comments on survey methodology. Photo credits: Alanna Smith, James Millet, Bruce Rideout, Gerald McCormack, Alan Lieberman.

The sprawling Indonesian archipelago is home to thousands of land-based species, many of them endemic to each of the islands. The area was once almost completely forested, with tropical moist and dry broadleaf forest blanketing the hills and valleys. The higher mountains are home to montane and sub-alpine forests, and mangroves are common in coastal areas.

The islands are secluded too: their scattered and enigmatic nature makes Indonesia an ideal place for piracy and smuggling.



© Nawalescape | Pixabay



© Mehd Halaouate

BY DESI MILPACHER



© Mehd Halaouate



© Mehd Halaouate

Far left: Rescued White Cockatoos seek comfort with each other.

Above: Slash and burn is a common method of agriculture in Indonesia.

Upper and lower right: Eclectus Parrots and Black-capped Lories regain their strength after rescue.

Slowing Parrot Trafficking in Indonesia

NORTH SULAWESI AND NORTH MALUKU (MOLUCCAS) feature most prominently as areas for trafficking in all manner of wildlife, especially parrots. The World Parrot Trust has become increasingly concerned about accelerating numbers of lorries, parrots and cockatoos being trafficked throughout Wallacea, an area that comprises Sulawesi, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Sumba, Timor, Halmahera, Buru, Seram and a number of smaller islands. The area boasts dozens of species of parrots and cockatoos, some of which are commonly found in trade.



Chattering Lorries in particular are under extreme pressure from heavy trapping to supply the bird markets in Java and Bali. Not surprisingly, this has had devastating effects on wild parrot populations, as evidenced by trappers not finding any birds to capture on many of the islands. And the reasons for concern go beyond the decline in numbers and welfare issues of the birds: officials are also worried that increasing trade is bringing zoonotic (animal to human) diseases into contact with more people.

A new era of partnership and cooperation

Now, thankfully, there is a renewed counter-effort to quash it. The region was recently the focus of a series of meetings involving local and international NGOs, local zoos, a newly-minted government, host Tasikoki Rescue Centre, and sponsor World Parrot Trust.

The Wallacea Regional Wildlife Trafficking conference was held in June 2017, and marked a fresh start in the fight to end illegal trapping of indigenous wildlife. It was the first meeting ever to bring forestry law enforcement officials from Maluku and Sulawesi together to discuss the

region's trafficking issues, the bulk of which focused on bird trade. Since 2016 a new directorate, civil and marine police, and navy units have been taking stronger measures in tackling wildlife smuggling issues in different parts of the country. Various NGOs have done fieldwork in the region recently, gathering new data on wildlife populations and trade impacts, adding important heft to this brand-new collaboration.

Addressing the issues will take no small amount of planning, as the number of islands, governments, and square kilometers involved in the trade in this area is staggering. Meeting attendees have already accomplished much by making contact with

each other and narrowing down key actions to focus on: monitoring the source, route and destination of trade, encouraging border control and detection, empowering law enforcement, and most crucially, housing and caring for the vast array of confiscated wildlife.

In the midst of this are the local people. Many have already had their lives severely affected by the loss of their natural resources to outsiders. To make up for it, many have turned to trapping to earn a meagre living. Because of this development, in order for anti-trade efforts to work it is imperative that local people have a say in the use of their country's natural bounty and benefit from its protection.

Concerning Confiscations

Since the meetings took place, officials in Ternate have confiscated birds which had been advertised on the Internet: twenty Red-flanked Lorikeets (*Charmosyna placentis*) and five Violet-necked Lorries (*Eos squamata*).

Another seizure, with seven Black-capped Lorries (*Lorius lory*), three Chattering Lorries (*Lorius garrulus*), one Ornate Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus ornatus*), one Yellow-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*), and one Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*), took place in Sulawesi province Gorontalo, when someone tried to sell some of them through Facebook. They are now recovering at Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre in northern Sulawesi.

The latest confiscation took place in November 2017, when 125 parrots (White Cockatoos *Cacatua alba*, and Eclectus Parrots *Eclectus roratus*) were seized from four smugglers in four regions on Halmahera Island.

The World Parrot Trust is on site assisting in the rehabilitation of the birds, and has provided funding for nutritious food, and training for proper care. WPT will continue to support these birds in their recovery, with the hope that some can be returned to their historical ranges.

THANK YOU! DONORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“
I am a believer that all living creatures deserve respect and the freedom to live in a safe environment. I support World Parrot Trust because of the critical work they do in protecting those birds when they cannot protect themselves.
~ Karen D. Shaw, United States

“
Working inside the world of parrot conservation is often a logistical and political nightmare; often a Sisiphean task that seems hopeless at times. WPT and their partners persevere every day in the face of terrible odds, and for that I am eternally grateful.
~ Emily Robinson, United States

“
With its focus on conservation, research, welfare and education – the four pillars necessary for saving wild parrot populations – the World Parrot Trust has built a strong foundation upon which my dream of a peaceful and compassionate world full of parrots can be built.
~ Cheryl Rutherford, Canada



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IMPACT REPORT online at:

parrots.org/2017impact



Upper left: The careful cleaning of damaged feathers begins.

Upper right: Transporting confiscated birds to Tasikoki.

Lower left: Nutritious foods help feed hungry birds and promote their recovery.

Lower right: WPT's Mehd Halaouate with Tasikoki staff and government workers.



Encouraging community engagement through education and awareness outreach and endorsing sustainable and alternative livelihoods for all is paramount.

The hard work begins

Mehd Halaouate, World Parrot Trust's Indonesia Program Manager, and Angela D'Alessio from Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue, have begun leading the charge. They recently took an ambitious number of trips around Wallacea to provide wildlife management training and to collaborate with officials, spending two weeks in the field in Ternate, Halmahera, Bacan and Obi islands. Together, they are encouraging authorities to work together to coordinate confiscations, urgent care and rehabilitation efforts. On Ternate Island in particular, forestry workers are faced with an influx of birds – White Cockatoos, Eclectus and Great-billed Parrots, Violet-necked, Red-flanked,

Yellow and Green, and Chattering Lorries – from neighbouring islands. Outside of the region brings bBack-capped Lorries, Sulphur-crested and Palm Cockatoos, and various Racquet-tailed species. Bait birds, which are used to attract wild birds for capture, are being seized in an effort to slow the trappers down. The situation is sometimes overwhelming.

Valuable skills are being taught; these include the delicate art of handfeeding chicks, instructions in housing, husbandry and enrichment, and preparation of suitable birds for eventual release. Hands-on learning occasionally happens: a recently confiscated White Cockatoo chick still begging for food proved to be the perfect teacher in one of the sessions.

Forestry staff have received guidance on species and subspecies identification as all too often, but with the best of intentions, birds are released into the

wild in the wrong areas. Still to come is training and the dispersal of educational materials for the local people so they can begin to lead birders into the forest, and then benefit from the parrots being there. Educational banners and other materials will be dispersed, bringing the word about parrots and their plight in the wild to as many people as possible.

This is just the beginning in what will be a relentless effort on many levels, all in a bid to untangle the complicated and seedy world of the wild bird trade in Wallacea. It will not be easy, but with regional and international cooperation, and determination, it's hoped that wild parrots will begin to fly free without fear of capture in Indonesia again. 📄

Many thanks to these NGOs: Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre, ProFauna Indonesia, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, WCS-Indonesia, Burung Indonesia, Indonesia Parrot Project, Haribon Foundation, Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

Back from the Brink, Again:

The Decline and Recovery of the Tasman Parakeet



Adapted from a report by:
Luis Ortiz-Catedral,
Raymond Nias,
James Fitzsimons,
Samantha Vine and
Margaret Christian.

Photos © Luis Ortiz-Catedral

Norfolk Island is a bit of serenity in a tiny package: abundant green rolling hills, crystal clear rock pools, soaring seabirds and magnificent Norfolk Island pines are all part of the island's backdrop.

This remarkable place is also home to around sixty other plant species found nowhere else on Earth, including the world's tallest tree fern.

Along with neighbouring Nepean Island, Norfolk has been identified by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area because it supports entire populations of a number of endemic bird species.

One of them, the Tasman Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus cookii*), is especially in need of help.

THE MAINLY GREEN PARROTS WITH the red-accented foreheads are found only on this mild, rainy islet between Australia and New Zealand. They feed in trees and on the ground, busily sweeping aside leaf litter with their feet looking for seeds. They weigh all of 100g each, and are very much endangered in the wild.

Upon the discovery of Norfolk Island in the late 1700s they were common in the forests. Now they inhabit a tiny forest fragment of 300 hectares, and face threats typical of island dwellers – past clearance of large trees, and competition with introduced animals such as Crimson Rosellas (*Platycercus elegans*), Common Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and feral honey bees. Feral predators have made an impact too – rats and domestic cats have caused catastrophic nest failures.

And, like many other island species, they sometimes find themselves at the mercy of unexpected major events, such as severe storms or disease outbreaks.

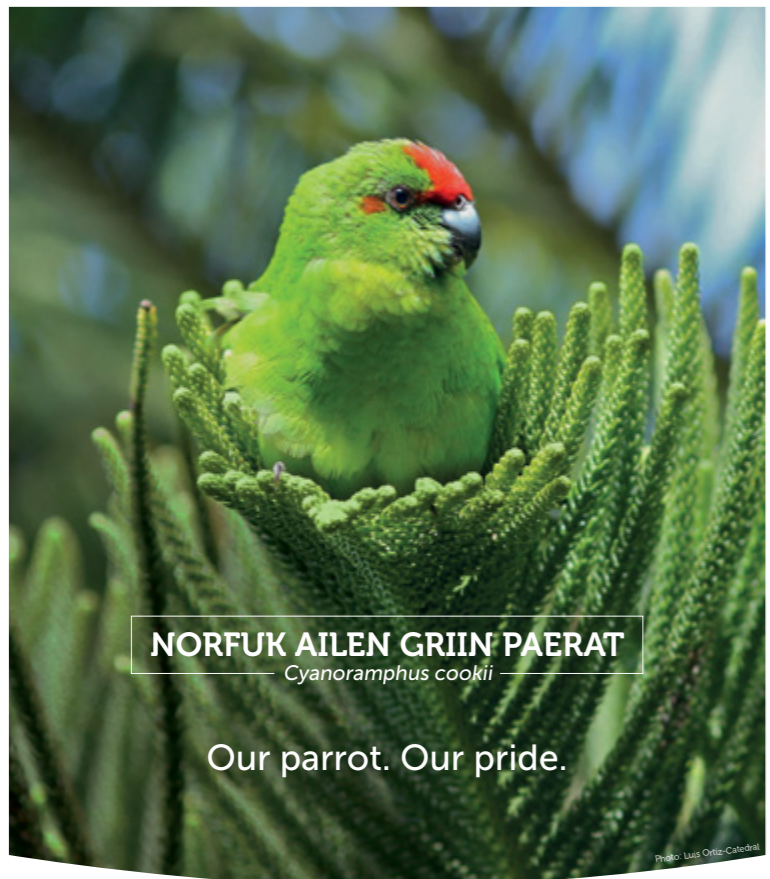
These vulnerable parrots have also come up against a shift in conservation management: nest-provisioning and protection of natural nest sites, which had previously helped to recover their numbers, were overlooked once the parrots returned from near extinction in 1988. The population had increased by 250 chicks, and sightings became more common. It was considered to be 'saved.'

As a result, and because of budget constraints, the work concentrated on restoring habitat and multiple species in Norfolk Island National

Park, and less on directly protecting the parakeets. The birds seemed to backslide again after that. It's worth noting too that local communities strongly interested in the welfare of the birds saw declines in their populations.

Urgent action needed, agreed on

Thankfully, that was to change. Collaboration with NGOs, Parks Australia and other important organisations are now in place. An action plan, implemented by the Australian Government, called for expert training of national park rangers to ensure birds and nests were properly monitored and maintained. A targeted survey, the first since the 1990s, was begun in 2013 once a reliable counting method had been determined by experts.



NORFUK AILEN GRIIN PAERAT
Cyanoramphus cookii

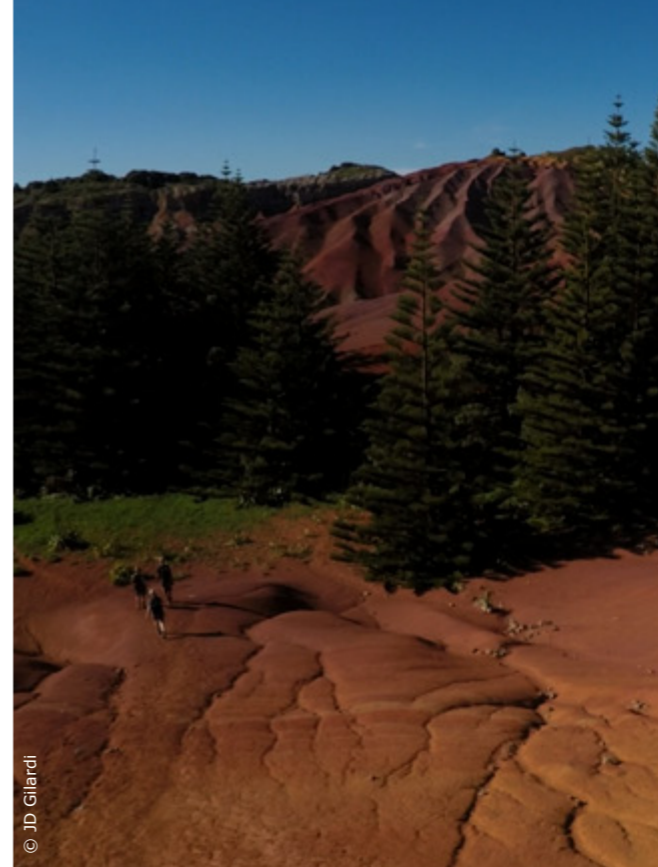
Our parrot. Our pride.



Left: A poster in Norfolk language featuring the Tasman Parakeet or "Green Parrot," promoting awareness of the plight of the species to the Norfolk Island community.

Top: Margaret Christian (Flora and Fauna Society) briefing the community about progress on the conservation of the parakeets.

Bottom: Luis Ortiz-Catedral and Tasman Parakeet plush toys used for outreach and educational activities on Norfolk Island.



Left: Researchers at translocation site, eroded by goats and rabbits, on Phillip Island.

Top right: Luis and student Serena evaluating parakeet foraging habitat.

Lower right: Cassandra Jones from Norfolk Island National Park working on a predator-proofed natural nest.



It revealed that between 42 and 96 birds survived, including only ten females. It was thought that the low numbers were the result of nest deterioration and a lack of feral predator control around nest sites. Tasman Parakeets, like other *Cyanoramphus* species, reach breeding age within months of fledging and lay clutches of up to eight eggs in the right conditions, so the decline in birds clearly spoke to the necessity of shoring up their nests.

After necessary meetings involving officials at all levels of the environment ministry, within a year 78 cat and rat-proof nests were installed and predators were reduced. A renewed commitment to maintain and protect the nest sites began, and follow-up surveys saw increasing parakeet numbers: on average,

nest success (where at least one chick fledged) became 70% by the 2016 breeding season, up from 40% previously. Surveys have continued every 4–6 months, conducted by volunteers and staff from the Norfolk Island National Park. There were 13 active nests which fledged chicks by mid-2014, and by early 2017, seventeen females were on secure nests. Developing a method for disturbance-free nest checking was important. To prevent females from deserting nests they are checked weekly, but only after males call females out of the nest to feed them.

Instilling pride in and stewardship for the peoples' bird

Engaging local communities in the conservation of their endemic parrot has become essential. Involvement

has taken the form of public seminars, the use of educational materials, and sharing up-to-date census data. Businesses from tourism shops, supermarkets and cafés have received over a hundred information posters, and students have been given symbolic parakeet soft toys. Staff from Parks Australia have visited schools with messages on protecting nests and the importance of keeping domestic cats away from nesting areas. Thanks to these efforts, the Tasman parakeet is becoming somewhat of an icon – a special survivor that people can be proud of and inspired by.

The plan forward

The Tasman Parakeet team and its many collaborators will keep up the momentum on the gains that have been made. Researchers firmly believe

that the key to ensure the long-term survival of Tasman Parakeets is multi-agency partnerships which bring in a range of experts to help, and the formation of a formal team to continue the birds' recovery is a must.

The Recovery Plan, first drafted in 2002, is due for revision to guide future recovery efforts, and planning and implementing habitat restoration is also key. But keeping a close eye on the birds' numbers and starting new populations in secure locations are top of the list, as the species now only exists as a single breeding population.

Experience with other *Cyanoramphus* parrots has shown that translocation to predator-free sites is an effective measure

to increase the number of individuals. So, the next milestone in the conservation of the species is to establish a population on rodent-free Phillip Island, located 6 km south of Norfolk Island. It's hoped that this will provide an important insurance population in case of extreme events such as disease outbreaks or major habitat loss.

In the end, the fate of the Tasman Parakeet is in the hands of human benefactors. But history shows that with a little *sustained* help from its friends, this sturdy little parrot can come back from the brink and thrive again. 📍

Thanks to the collaboration and support of the following organisations:

Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, The World Parrot Trust, Norfolk Island Flora & Fauna Society, WildMob, Island Conservation, The Packard Foundation, The Nature Conservancy's Ecological Science Program generously funded by The Thomas Foundation, Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund, Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Energy, Foundation for Parks and Wildlife Australia, The Parrot Society of Australia, Massey University, BirdLife Australia, Island Conservation, Parks Australia, Norfolk Island National Park, Taronga Zoo. A special thanks to the Disney Conservation Fund, whose support has made this possible.

■ UPDATES

Fighting for African Grey Parrots

In early December 2017, WPT's Africa Program Director Rowan Martin attended meetings in Geneva, convened to discuss ways to manage the global trade in endangered wildlife. The ban in trade of wild African Grey and Timneh Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus* and *Psittacus timneh*) was on the agenda, and the many countries attending discussed the impact of the CITES I decision and ways to improve its implementation.

This meeting occurred just as a new peer-reviewed study of trade in Grey Parrots was published in scientific journal Emu. The most comprehensive analysis of its kind, the study reveals that a staggering 1.2 million African grey parrots were legally exported between 1978 and 2014. Further observations of confiscated birds have shown that at least 50% of them die during transport. The majority of captive-bred Grey and Timneh Parrots now come from large breeders in South Africa.

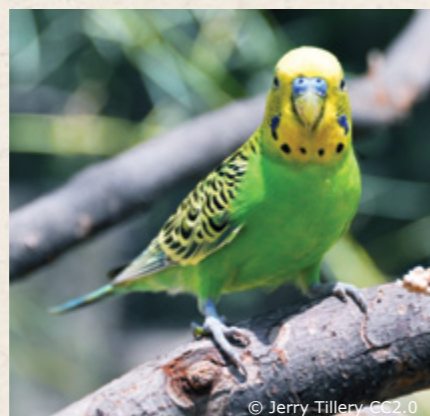
Read more:
tinyurl.com/y87438kl

■ NEWS

Scientists' colourful quest to discover how parrots became green

A team of scientists have identified the mysterious yellow pigment gene that parrots have in their iconic green plumage. A recently published study has found the gene encoding the enzyme that creates yellow pigment in Budgerigars, called a 'psittacofulvin.' It's unique in the animal world in that it is only found in parrots. Another recent study found that feathers coloured with psittacofulvin pigments are better resistant to bacterial breakdown than white feathers.

Read more:
tinyurl.com/yc3x3coh



© Jerry Tillery CC2.0

Rottneest Island's native Rock Parrot population saved from extinction



© Cas Liber CC2.0

Five years ago, local conservationists grew concerned about the fate of a group of Rock Parrots (*Neophema petrophila*) on the island of Rottneest, off the southwestern coast of Australia. Their surveys found only six of the birds, which were once common on the island. The population's decline was due to removal of eggs for the caged-bird trade and the introduction of feral cats. After steps taken by the Bold Park Bird Banding Group and the Rottneest Island Authority to protect and band the parrots, a new count has revealed a total of 16, with hopes for more with the breeding season. An information campaign has also been launched to encourage island visitors to report sightings of the small parrots.

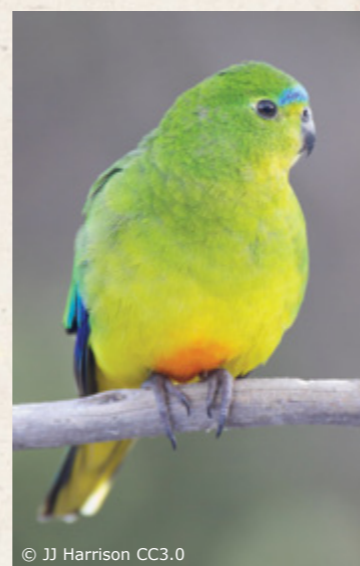
Read more:
tinyurl.com/yblaakvw

New hope as Orange-bellied Parrot reported in old South Australian habitat

There is renewed optimism about the Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*): a ranger has reported seeing the rare bird along the coast of Canunda National Park, in South Australia's southeast. The parrots haven't been reported in that particular area for nearly two decades. Bob Green, the coordinator of the South Australian Orange-Bellied Parrot (OBP) Recovery Team, is investigating the claim and notes, "It would confirm that we do have birds moving into South Australia... the last orange-bellied parrot known in South Australia was five years ago at Port MacDonnell."

Green also stated that sightings had to be investigated carefully as members of the public often confused them with blue-winged parrots (*Neophema chrysostoma*), Rock Parrots (*Neophema petrophila*) or Elegant Parrots (*Neophema elegans*). He was hopeful however, as the ranger who spotted the lone bird also reported a distinctive call associated with the species.

Read more:
tinyurl.com/y9s9wto4



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Keas Uplisted to Endangered

Keas (*Nestor notabilis*) have seen their wild populations decline rapidly as of late. The alpine parrots were once abundant, but due to predation by introduced stoats, rats and possums their numbers have plummeted. A bounty scheme introduced in the late 1860s before that did not help, resulting in the loss of over 150,000 birds. As a result of recent population studies, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature has uplisted the Kea from Vulnerable to Endangered. New Zealand is stepping up efforts to remove invasive predators, a job the government hopes to complete by 2050.

Read more:
tinyurl.com/yc6zl8zk

■ PS EXTRA

EB Cravens article, Part Two

In the Autumn 2017 issue of *PsittaScene*, EB Cravens wrote about the state of companion parrots in rescues in *Reflections on Parrot Rescue and Adoption*.

Part two, *Solutions that Might Benefit the Rescue/Adoption Situation* can be found online at the WPT website (parrots.org) under **Learn > Reference Library > Ethics & Welfare**.



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■ EVENTS

**Think Parrots 2018
Sunday 10th June 2018
Kempton Park Racecourse
Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, England**

Back for another year, the ever-popular *Think Parrots* event is always an excellent opportunity for those who are passionate about parrots and want to provide the best care for their birds. A wide diversity of exhibitors will be there providing all things parrot, and will again feature the UK's most knowledgeable experts to discuss the important topics concerning companion and wild parrots.



While you are there, be sure to drop by the World Parrot Trust booth to say hello to David Woolcock, WPT Trustee and Curator at Paradise Park (Cornwall) and chat about all the new and exciting things happening in the areas of parrot conservation, and beyond.

Get your tickets:
www.thinkparrots.co.uk

**Parrot Lover's Cruise 2018
Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao
November 9-17, 2018**

Imagine cruising crystal blue waters while experiencing some of the most incredible sightseeing in the world. Join your fellow parrot lovers aboard for eight days of enlightening seminars and exciting excursions visiting a variety of stunning locations, all while supporting parrot conservation.

Don't miss out - **contact Carol Cipriano** to book your ticket today!

Email: carolstraveltime@gmail.com
Phone: (1) 510-200-5665
Web: parrotloverscruise.com

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**PARROTS IN THE WILD:
Purple-crowned Lorikeets
(*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*)**

“One of those amazing experiences that make the hours of toiling away looking for birds all worthwhile. I visited this nesting site on a couple of occasions to check in on the progress of the breeding season, and on this particular morning there was an abundance of activity amongst the Purple-crowned Lorikeets.

No less than eight individual birds inspected this nest, at one stage six birds were all perched around the hollow. But the resident pair were not going to give up their home - the bird pictured inside the hollow fiercely protected its patch and fought off all would-be challengers!”

Photo © **Adam Blyth Photography**
Werribee, Victoria, Australia