

Zoos Victoria's Priority Species

ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT

Neophema chrysogaster

Critically Endangered



With fewer than 50 individuals remaining in the wild, this Critically Endangered parrot is teetering on the edge of extinction. Zoos Victoria recognises the need for urgent action to save this species and plays a key role in promoting its recovery.

We are working to prevent the extinction of this charismatic parrot by engaging in actions to improve future re-introduction success and maintaining part of the national insurance population that will support future releases in the wild.

ZOOS
VICTORIA
Fighting Extinction

Zoos Victoria is committed to Fighting Extinction

We are focused on working with partners to secure the survival of our priority species before it is too late.



The Orange-bellied Parrot is in grave danger of extinction in the wild. Despite concerted efforts in the past, numbers of this parrot remain critically low. Working closely with the Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team and other stakeholders, Zoos Victoria is focused on activities that have tangible outcomes and will ensure a future for this species.

KEY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Maintain a sizeable proportion of the national insurance population at Healesville Sanctuary and Werribee Open Range Zoo.
- Support and engage in actions to improve re-introduction success and promote recovery of the wild population.
- Foster community support and involvement in the conservation and recovery of the Orange-bellied Parrot and its habitat.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Released over 280 captive-bred birds to support wild populations since 1993.
- Refined husbandry techniques resulting in improved breeding success.
- Constructed a state-of-the-art breeding facility at Healesville Sanctuary.
- Constructed a large free-flight aviary at Werribee Open Range Zoo to improve the condition of released birds.
- Contributed to a range of field trials to improve success of reintroduction to the wild.

THE SPECIES

The Orange-bellied Parrot is Australia's most endangered bird species. Weighing only 45-50g, these birds annually migrate across Bass Strait from their breeding site in remote south-western Tasmania to the south-eastern coast of mainland Australia. During this overwinter period, the parrots are mostly found within three kilometres of the coast where they forage on coastal saltmarsh vegetation.

The causes of population decline likely include habitat loss and degradation related to:

- Alteration and destruction of saltmarsh habitat for industrial and urban development.
- Vegetation clearance for agriculture.
- Inappropriate fire regimes.
- Drought on the mainland.

Populations have also likely been affected by introduced predators (e.g. foxes and cats and possibly sugar gliders), disease, and other factors related to very small population size, including inbreeding depression.

The Orange-bellied Parrot's breeding range has also dramatically contracted and is now known to breed only at Melaleuca in south-west Tasmania.

THE PLAN

The following actions will enable Zoos Victoria, along with our partners, to move forward knowing that we are doing everything we can to prevent the extinction of this species:

Maintain Zoos Victoria's captive populations at Healesville Sanctuary and Werribee Open Range Zoo.	\$1,700,000
Provide support for annual releases and over-winter ranching.	\$40,000 p.a
Construct and maintain a new captive breeding research facility at Healesville Sanctuary.	\$855,000
Provide support for development and implementation of a vaccine for Beak and Feather Disease Virus.	\$120,000
Investigate the feasibility and desirability of a resident mainland population.	\$20,000 p.a
Support operation of an automated monitoring system at the breeding sites.	\$10,000 p.a
Investigate a partnership to support citizen science approaches for monitoring OBPs and habitat restoration.	\$10,000
Activations at our zoos and online that aim to increase community care and knowledge of OBPs and generate support for the conservation projects.	\$20,000
Total cost over five years	\$3,055,000

How can I help?

We are exploring ways to improve re-introduction success for this species, but we still need all the support we can get. You can support our Wildlife Conservation Master Plan 2019-2024 by donating at: zoo.org.au/donate

PROGRAM PARTNERS

BirdLife Australia
birdlife.org.au

Department of Environment and Energy
environment.gov.au

Department of Environment and Water
environment.sa.gov.au

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
delwp.vic.gov.au

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
dpi.wa.gov.au

Moonlit Sanctuary
moonlitsanctuary.com.au

Orange-bellied Parrot Volunteer Groups
Zoo and Aquarium Association
zooaquarium.org.au