

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 research to improve future re-introduction success and maintaining part of the national insurance population that will support future releases into the wild.

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 continue to decline. 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 part of the national insurance population at Healesville Sanctuary and Werribee Open Range Zoo.
- + Support and engage in research 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 250 captive-bred birds to support wild populations since 1993.
- + Refined husbandry techniques resulting in improved breeding success.
- + Constructed state-of-the-art breeding/research facilities at Healesville Sanctuary.
- + Constructed a large free-flight aviary at Werribee Open Range Zoo to improve the condition of released birds.
- + Successful integration of new wild founders to improve the genetic health of our insurance population.

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 the mainland. 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 agricultural purposes.
- + Inappropriate fire regimes.
- + Drought on the mainland.
- + Weed invasion in Tasmania.

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

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

THE PLAN

Zoos Victoria has outlined six projects within the Wildlife Conservation Master Plan 2014-2019 to improve future re-introduction success and maintain part of the insurance population of this species.

- + Secure Zoos Victoria's current OBP captive breeding and release efforts. \$231,000 p.a
- + Construction of additional breeding facilities to increase the number of birds for release. \$680,000
- + Construction of a pre-release holding and conditioning aviary at Werribee Open Range Zoo to ensure the quality of birds for release. \$425,000
- + Support annual releases to the wild. \$30,000 p.a
- + Provision of funds for effective program co-ordination by Recovery Team. \$45,000 p.a
- + Implementation of new monitoring technology. \$125,000
- + Total costs (over 5 years): \$2.76 million

HOW CAN I HELP?

We are working on research 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 2014-19 by donating at:

zoo.org.au/donate

IMAGES

FRONT: Orange-Bellied Parrot. Photo by Rick Hammond. BACK TOP: An Orange-bellied Parrot in flight. Photo by Iain Stych. BACK BOTTOM: Orange-bellied Parrots released at the Western Treatment Plant in Werribee. Photo by Paul Rushworth.



PROGRAM PARTNERS

BirdLife Australia

birdlife.org.au

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

delwp.vic.gov.au

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

dpiw.tas.gov.au

Orange-bellied Parrot Volunteer groups
Zoo and Aquarium Association

zooaquarium.org.au

FIND OUT MORE

zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction



Zoos Victoria is a not-for-profit, zoo based conservation organisation. We are Fighting Extinction through our local and global conservation programs, research projects and community conservation campaigns.

For more information, visit zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction

