

Regent Parrot (Eastern sub-species)

Polytelis anthopeplus monarchoides

Vulnerable



Features

Regent Parrots are medium sized birds recognised by their bright colours, with their most distinct feature being their red bill.

Male Regent Parrots are a bright golden-yellow colour with a dark green back, blue-black flight feathers with a yellow wing patch and a red bar across the mid-wing.

Female birds and juveniles (young birds) have similar patterns to the males but are more of a greener colour around the head and body.

Mistaken Identity

The Regent Parrot (L) is often confused with the Yellow Rosella (R), but they actually look and behave differently. Yellow Rosellas are not brightly coloured, they have a blue patch under their beak as well as on their wing, their bills are white not red, and they have a red patch on their forehead.



Regent Parrots generally like to move around in flocks ranging in size from just a few birds to over 100. Their flight is fast and direct, and they tend to call out to each other as they fly. Listen to their call here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hj3Cnr2ilGk>

Yellow Rosellas fly more slowly and with an undulating motion. They are usually seen in pairs, or if in a small group they tend to interact with each other in a noisy manner. Listen to their call here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NP9dqfKKIE0>

Diet

Regent Parrots like to feed on seeds, buds, flowers and sometimes insect larvae. Some of their favourite foods include ruby saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*), flat-top saltbush (*Atriplex lindleyi*), *Maireana sp.* and *Roepera fruticulosa* (formally *Zygophyllum sp.*)

Flocks of male Regents have been known to travel over 12km to forage for food and bring it back to their nest sites to feed their chicks.

Habitat

The Regent Parrot has three essential habitat requirements: nest trees, foraging areas and well foliated flight corridors between these different areas.

During the South Australian breeding season (August – November), Regents nest in the hollows of mature River Red Gums along the River Murray between Chowilla and Swan Reach.

The female will lay her eggs inside the tree hollow where she will incubate them for around 22 days. After hatching, the chicks need to be fed for up to 6 weeks. The male Regent will feed the incubating female for 3 weeks and then the female and nestlings for 2 weeks, before the female joins him to feed nestlings until they fledge.

During the non-breeding season, the adult birds will take their young out to mallee areas north and south of the River where they gather in flocks. The young birds will not return to the river until they reach maturity which is over 2 years of age.



Female Regent Parrot



Male Regent

Threats

Currently there are less than 400 breeding pairs of Regent Parrots in South Australia. Threats to this parrot include:

- Competition for hollows
- Predation of nests
- Nestlings (baby birds) fail to reach fledgling stage (around 7 weeks old)
- Adult birds are lost
- Starvation
- Clearance of mallee connecting nesting and foraging sites
- Drought – contributes to declining health and death of River Red Gums
- Illegal destruction to reduce agricultural damage
- Human disturbance around nest sites
- Accidental killing by cars while feeding on grain spills along roadsides
- Disease

What can we do to help?

- Report any sightings of Regent Parrots to your local Landcare office or the Berri National Parks and Wildlife Service on 8595 2111
- Join the ***Polly Tell Us*** project and report your sightings using the new app (fact sheet attached)
- Slow down and be careful when driving near grain spills
- During breeding season, keep your activity near nest sites to a minimum

