



saving
our
species

Superb parrot

Polytelis swainsonii

Vulnerable

The stunning superb parrot is a bright green parrot with a long, narrow tail, sharply back-angled wings and an aerodynamic body for fast flight. The superb parrot is a medium-sized parrot at 40 cm long.

Males have yellow foreheads and throats and a red crescent that separates the throat from the green breast and belly. Females are slightly duller green and have a dull, light blue wash. They do not have the males' red and yellow markings.

There are two main superb parrot populations in New South Wales, although they are likely to be interconnected.

The Riverina population breeds in the river red gum riparian forests along the Murray, Edward and Murrumbidgee rivers. Throughout the year they forage in the surrounding woodlands and grasslands of the Riverine Plains, away from the major rivers.

The South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands population breeds in spring and early summer in grassy box woodlands in an area roughly bounded by Yass and Canberra in the east, and Grenfell, Cootamundra and Coolac in the west.

In late December, most birds leave their breeding habitat and migrate north to the western slopes and plains of New South Wales. They spend the next eight months in their non-breeding habitats, which extend as far north as the Queensland border.

Superb parrots nest in hollows in large trees. They use hollows in living and dead trees.

It is estimated that there are less than 8000 superb parrots left in the wild. However, when they congregate to breed they can seem common.

Photo: David Ingram



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Support local action to help save the superb parrot



Perfect superb parrot habitat, a hollow-bearing tree in Boorowa. Photo: Rainer Rehwinkel/OEH

The superb parrot is a much-loved, threatened woodland bird. Regional communities in NSW are rallying to make sure the species continues to survive on their farms and in local towns. Volunteer observers are helping ecologists to survey for superb parrots to understand how many remain in the wild and the habitat features that are important to their survival. They are also taking note of when the birds arrive and depart their local area.

Landholders are retaining both living and dead large hollow-bearing eucalypt trees that provide potential nest sites for superb parrots. They are also restoring woodland habitat on their properties and improving the connectivity of habitat for superb parrots and many other threatened woodland birds. Farmers and Landcare groups have planted hundreds of thousands of trees and shrubs in paddocks, along fence lines and creeks and rivers.

As well as planting, new trees, protecting medium-sized eucalypt trees is also important as they will one day develop the hollows that superb parrots nest in.

Superb parrots are prone to being hit by vehicles on regional roads, especially when they feed on spilt grain after harvest. The community of Boorowa has erected road signage to let road users know to slow down, in case superb parrots are foraging on or near the road.

If you are interested in raising awareness and inspiring your community to help save the superb parrot and other local threatened species, contact the *Saving our Species* team and we can forward some resources to assist you:
savingourspecies@environment.nsw.gov.au



Female and male superb parrot. Photo: David Ingram

There are also opportunities for landholders to permanently protect superb parrot habitat on their properties through conservation agreements. The NSW government recently launched the NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Trust, a new approach to land management and conservation in NSW. You can find out more here:
<https://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au/nsw-biodiversity-conservation-trust/>

Over 50 community volunteers have also signed up as citizen scientists and have registered nearly 800 sightings of superb parrots via the Atlas of Living Australia. If you want to find out more go to:
<https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/superb-parrot>

If you want to find out about volunteering and research projects related to superb parrots and other threatened species, find out more here:
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/help-save-our-threatened-species>

Saving our Species is a NSW Government flagship program targeting on-ground action to secure NSW's threatened plants and animals from extinction.

The program aims to increase the number of species that can survive securely, in the wild. *Saving our Species* can only succeed if we work together. We need your help to ensure that today's actions help to secure the future of NSW's threatened species.

To find out more about threatened species in NSW and the *Saving Our Species* program go to:
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/SOS