

REGENT PARROT

NEWS

March 2017



Hi everyone,

Whilst assisting the Monash University student to locate flocks of Regent Parrots for trapping and subsequently placing trackers on to further our understanding of where they move about the landscape, it became evident that our previously largest breeding colony appeared to be very much down in numbers. Based on this observation and because it has been 6 years since our last big effort to survey the whole breeding area in SA, we would like to attempt to conduct a nest survey in the breeding season this year (September- October). Whether this will be possible depends on how many volunteers we can muster to undertake this huge task. Details about the nest survey are given below.

The team has continued to work on other aspects of the life of these intriguing birds in an effort to work out ways to ensure their survival into the future.

Regent Parrot Nest Surveys

A variety of approaches have been tried over the years to locate Regent Parrot nests in an area of riverine vegetation. As a result of these efforts we have decided that the best approach to achieving the survey of the whole breeding area in SA is to conduct the survey as follows:

- Volunteer receives on ground training in nest hollow locating and recording of details.
- Short sections of the river corridor are allocated to each volunteer (these sections would generally need about a week of full time searching to complete the task).
- Volunteers can then search their area at any time over the two month breeding season and engage as many helpers as they like (or do it entirely on their own). The aim is to record details of every Regent Parrot nest hollow being used in that breeding season.

The ideal way to conduct such a survey is to camp out in the area for a period of time, enjoy nature in its entirety and at the same time seek out those nest hollows.

I have had some wonderful experiences doing surveys in this way such as up close encounters with 2m long Carpet Pythons, Being almost deafened by a family of screeching Barn Owls, hearing literally hundreds of frogs calling from a single lagoon and having outsmarted some very elusive Regent Parrots into revealing their nest hollow location.

Nest camera project

Darren Schmitke, with assistance from Recovery team members and other interested volunteers set four cameras in motion focussed on active Regent Parrot nest hollows during the last breeding season. A great deal of footage was obtained and this has been forwarded to Prof. Kleindorf at Flinders University who will engage her students in watching and analysing what happens around these hollows (competition, predation, number of fledglings etc.) We look forward to receiving this information and comparing it to the results of our last nest camera effort where 33% of the nesting pairs failed to complete the breeding effort which resulted in just 1.3 young per nest being successfully reared to fledging age.

Tracking

Rosie Collins from Monash University attached trackers to eight Regent Parrots during the last breeding season and from this we will gain more knowledge about food sources, roosting areas and Dr.David McClelland (veterinarian) from the Adelaide Zoo checked the health of birds and tested for disease in the population.

Due to a generous grant from Banrock Station we will be able to attach a number of trackers to birds early next year. These trackers are currently being tested on captive Regent Parrots at the Zoo.

Please pass on the email to which this newsletter is attached to anyone you think may be interested as we would welcome as many enthusiastic volunteers as we can muster in our efforts to assist with our projects.

Best wishes,
Kevin Smith