

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Neophema chrysogaster Orange-bellied Parrot

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Aves (birds), Psittaciformes, Psittacidae

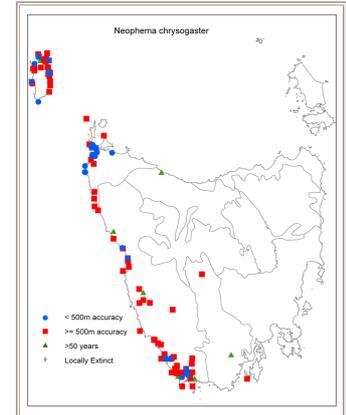
Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995:* **endangered**
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Critically Endangered

Endemic: Migratory, breeding endemic

Status:



The Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*) is a migratory bird, which breeds only in coastal south-west Tasmania and spends the winter in coastal Victoria and South Australia. The Orange-bellied Parrot is about 45 g in weight, bright grass-green above and mostly yellow below, with a bright orange patch in the centre of the lower belly. Birds arrive in Tasmania's south west in early October and depart after the breeding season usually in March and April. In the breeding range, the species feeds on the mature flowers, fruits and seeds of a range of grasses, chenopods and herbs, and prefers sedgeland which have not been burned for between 3-15 years. Nesting takes place in hollows in eucalypt trees, which grow adjacent to its feeding areas. The species' current breeding range is a narrow coastal strip of south-west Tasmania near Melaleuca. After breeding, migrating birds move northwards up the west coast via King Island to the mainland, during which time they are reliant on the seeds of a range of coastal and saltmarsh plants but are also known to utilise exotic plants, particularly in degraded pasture adjacent to saltmarshes. Numbers of Orange-bellied Parrots have declined from perhaps several thousand in the late 1800's to less than 50 birds. Threats to the species include past and ongoing loss and degradation of habitat (including non-breeding habitat), loss of genetic diversity and inbreeding, stochastic environmental events, and predators and competitors.



Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

Habitat

- 'Habitat' refers to both known habitat for the species (i.e. in or near habitat where the species has been recorded) and potential habitat (i.e. areas of habitat with appropriate characteristics for the species and within the species' potential range which have not yet been adequately surveyed).
- If in doubt about whether a site represents potential habitat for this species, contact the Threatened Species Section for further advice.
- The non-breeding range of the Orange-bellied Parrot in Tasmania includes coastal western and north-western Tasmania (including offshore islands).
- The known breeding range of the Orange-bellied Parrot is mostly confined to near-coastal areas of south-west Tasmania between Birchs Inlet, in Macquarie Harbour, and Louisa Bay on the southern coast. Most breeding activity occurs within 20 km of Melaleuca and 5 km of Birchs Inlet.
- Non-breeding (migratory) habitat for Orange-bellied Parrot includes the following elements: dunes, heathland, coastal grasslands, saltmarsh and pasture; on King Island, the species favours saltmarsh dominated by Beaded Glasswort *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, flanked by tall dense Swamp Paperbark *Melaleuca ericifolia* forest
- Nesting habitat for Orange-bellied Parrot includes the following elements: a mosaic of eucalypt forest, rainforest, and extensive fire dependant moorland and sedgeland plains, intersected by wooded creeks, rivers and estuaries; nesting occurs predominantly in the hollows of live Smithton Peppermint *Eucalyptus nitida* in patches of forest.

What to avoid

- Drainage of wetland habitat
- Stock grazing on coastal areas causing damage to foraging and roosting habitat
- Loss or degradation of saltmarsh habitat for agriculture, industrial and urban development
- Weed invasion of saltmarsh habitat
- Building structures including lighted structures at key points on the migration route
- Disturbance at nest sites and in key migration areas

Surveying

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| Key | Survey reliability more info |
| M | Peak survey period |
| M | Potential survey period |
| M | Non-survey period |

To ensure you follow the law - check whether your survey requires a permit. Always report any new records to the Natural Values Atlas, or send the information direct to the Threatened Species Section. Refer to the Activity Advice: Surveying page for background information.

| <i>Neophema chrysogaster</i> | Spring | | | | Summer | | | | Autumn | | | | Winter | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Orange-bellied Parrot | S | S | O | O | N | N | D | D | J | J | F | F | M | M | A | A | M | M | J | J | J | J | A | A |

- The Orange-bellied Parrot is subject of an annual breeding survey by NRE.
- The Orange-bellied Parrot is about 45 g in weight, bright grass-green above and mostly yellow below, with a bright orange patch in the centre of the lower belly. It has a bright azure blue patch on the outer wing and a blue bar across the forehead above the nostrils.
- The species gives an 'alarm' call when birds are disturbed or upset. It is a harsh, rapidly repeated 'zit-zit-zit', usually given whilst the bird is rising from a perch or the ground. In level flight, a single 'tseet' note is given each time it dips.
- The species can be confused with its near relative, the Blue-winged Parrot *Neophema chrysostoma*, which is more common and widespread. Species identification should be confirmed by an expert.

Helping the species

- In order to recognise the species if it uses your property on its migratory route up the west and north-west coast of Tasmania, learn to identify the Orange-bellied Parrot by sight and by its calls.
- In order to recognise non-breeding (migratory) habitat if it occurs on your property, learn to identify potentially suitable wetland and saltmarsh habitats.
- Important! Always report any observations of the species to the NRE Natural Values Atlas, or else provide the data direct to the Threatened Species Section. Records stored on the NVA are a permanent record and are accessible to other people interested in this species
- Consider the needs of the whole habitat. Preserving a threatened species' habitat is the best way to manage both the species and the environment in which it lives.
- If you have Orange-bellied Parrot non-breeding habitat (saltmarsh and wetland) on your land - consider protection of habitat through a vegetation management agreement or conservation covenant. See the NRE Private Land Conservation Program for more details.

Cutting or clearing trees or vegetation

- Orange-bellied Parrot habitat has been degraded and lost throughout the species' range, with the majority of this impact occurring within the non-breeding range (ie. migratory corridors and wintering areas).
- The major contributing factors to the loss of non-breeding habitat include drainage of wetlands for grazing, and clearing of saltmarsh for agriculture, industrial and urban development.
- To prevent loss of non-breeding (migratory) habitat - avoid clearing and conversion of wetland and saltmarsh habitat (e.g. for agriculture, and industrial and urban developments).

Stock grazing

- Orange-bellied Parrot habitat has been degraded and lost throughout the species' range, with the majority of this impact occurring within the non-breeding range (i.e. migratory corridors and wintering areas).
- A major contributing factor to the loss and degradation of non-breeding habitat is grazing of coastal vegetation. Negative impacts include physical damage to food and roosting plants, and removal of seeding heads otherwise available to Orange-bellied Parrots.
- To prevent loss and degradation of non-breeding (migratory) habitat - protect coastal habitat from grazing by stock through fencing.

Weeds

- Invasive weeds have the potential to impact on Orange-bellied Parrot foraging habitats throughout the species' non-breeding range. Species of concern include: Tall Wheat Grass *Lophopyron ponticum*, Rice Grass *Spartina anglica*, Coast Barb-grass *Parapholis incurva*, Sea Barley-grass *Critesion marinum*, Marram Grass *Ammophila arenaria*, and Sea Spurge *Euphorbia paralias*. These aggressive colonisers are salt-tolerant and have the capacity to swamp native food plants within saltmarshes, coastal herbfields and coastal dune systems.
- To prevent degradation of non-breeding (migratory) habitat - avoid grazing or undertaking any other activity that creates disturbance that allows weed establishment, and control the above weeds using recommended techniques.

Construction

- The presence of wind-farms, and increasing level of development proposals throughout the Orange-bellied Parrot migratory and winter range, has the potential to impact on the species.
- To prevent impacts of wind-farms and other large-scale construction projects on migrating Orange-bellied Parrots - consider potential impacts of construction projects on bird collisions, and avoid important sites or undertake mitigation actions to ensure no impacts occur.

Recreation

- Inappropriate recreational activities (e.g. four-wheel driving) in non-breeding habitat have the potential to severely degrade habitat and disturb birds.
- To prevent impacts of inappropriate recreational activities in non-breeding habitat - avoid four-wheel driving in non-breeding habitat for the Orange-bellied Parrot.
- Development of tracks and other infrastructure within the species' breeding range can cause destruction of habitat and increase disturbance to foraging and breeding birds.
- To prevent impacts of developments in the breeding range - seek expert advice on appropriateness of proposal and site location.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

National Recovery Plan
Birdlife's guidelines on identifying the orange-bellied parrot
Further information

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2025). *Orange-bellied Parrot (Neophema chrysogaster): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Orange-bellied-Parrot.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 19/5/2025.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.