

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Tuesday, 28 April 2020

ENDANGERED ORANGE-BELLIED PARROTS RELEASED

Critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrots have been released into the wild, as part of an innovative trial funded by the Victorian Government to save the species from extinction.

With less than 50 adult Orange-bellied Parrots remaining in the wild, the four-year *Mainland Release Trial* aims to increase the size of the birds' population in conjunction with increasing their survival in the wild.

This year's trial has seen 27 Orange-bellied Parrots released after being captively bred and prepared for the wild by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Zoos Victoria and Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park.

The release locations were the Spit Nature Conservation Reserve near Werribee's Western Treatment Plant and a private property in Pearcedale near North Western Port Coastal Reserve.

For the first time, some of the released birds have been satellite tagged to help provide more information about where and when the parrots travel.

The Orange-bellied Parrot is a migratory species, and each year makes a round trip across the rough oceans of the Bass Strait between south-west Tasmania and mainland Australia.

The Government has invested \$200,000 in the *Mainland Release Trial*, which aims to establish flocks of released parrots in suitable habitats in Victoria – to attract migrating birds to these sites and provide those migrants a better chance of surviving the autumn and winter period.

This year's release also coincides with the largest number of parrots migrating north from Tasmania for over a decade.

A successful breeding season, teamed with the largest ever release of juveniles at the breeding site, has resulted in over 100 Orange-Bellied Parrots believed to be flying north.

In another innovation, the independently funded Moonlit Sanctuary have undertaken pre-release training for the birds being released near North Western Port, with the hope of developing new techniques to support successful releases for this species.

All staff involved have adhered to appropriate physical distancing and hygiene requirements to ensure safety.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"This is another important and exciting step in a trial which has a real chance of saving these precious parrots from extinction."

"Thanks to improved techniques and innovation we're hopeful this year's release will be the most successful yet."

"Protecting this iconic species is one of many actions we're taking under Victoria's Biodiversity 2037 plan to make sure our wildlife and biodiversity survives and thrives."

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