

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



Thursday, 12 May 2022

NEW ORANGE-BELLIED PARROTS JOIN RECORD FLOCK

The bid to save the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot was boosted this week, as part of an innovative trial supported by the Andrews Labor Government.

The first of 36 Orange-bellied Parrots were released over two locations, as part of a successful five-year program to add captive-bred birds to the wild population and give them a better chance of survival.

The birds released from Lake Connewarre and Western Port Bay join 100 Orange-bellied Parrots now part of the wild flock, previously let go from Victorian sites in the Mainland Release Trial.

Supported by the success of the trial, this autumn will see the largest flock of Orange-bellied Parrots migrate to Victoria in 15 years, with over 140 expected to fly north from their Tasmanian breeding grounds.

The Orange-bellied Parrots have also benefited from a successful breeding season in the wild, combined with large-scale releases of captive-bred birds at the Tasmanian site in spring and late summer.

The species has gone from being at imminent risk of extinction, with only 50 birds left in the wild in 2017, to a fifteen-year high thanks to the trial and broader conservation efforts.

The Orange-bellied Parrot Mainland Release Trial is supported by funding from the Labor Government's *Biodiversity On-Ground Action Icon Species Grants* program, as well as Zoos Victoria, the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, and Moonlit Sanctuary.

The Labor Government has invested over \$560 million towards protecting biodiversity since 2014 – the biggest investment in Victorian history.

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

"Our record investment into biodiversity is helping bring native species from the brink of extinction – the growing flock of Orange-bellied Parrots is yet another success story."

"In the last five years this species has gone from being at imminent risk of extinction in the wild to numbers in the wild being at a fifteen-year high, thanks to this innovative release program."

Quote attributable to Zoos Victoria Senior Research Manager Michael Magrath

"Orange-bellied Parrot releases on the mainland provide an excellent opportunity to trial new tracking technologies that we hope will lead to a better understanding of their movements, habitat needs, and obstacles to their recovery in the wild."

Quote attributable to Moonlit Sanctuary Director Michael Johnson

"Breeding, releasing and now trialling site retention of Orange-bellied Parrots is both a challenge and a privilege for Moonlit Sanctuary, as we work to save this critically endangered species from extinction."

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