

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
Minister for Environment



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NEW TECHNOLOGY MONITORS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED PARROTS

The Andrews Labor Government is backing a new trial of innovative tracking technology to provide insights about one of Australia's most critically endangered species – the Orange-bellied Parrot.

Minister for Environment Ingrid Stitt announced that 19 birds from the Tasmanian Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Zoos Victoria were released at Lake Connewarre in the final year of a seven-year Mainland Release Trial in Victoria.

Zoos Victoria and Deakin University are currently trialing ATLAS (Advanced Tracking and Localisation of Animals in real life Systems) – a new fixed receiver station tracking system that uses tiny radio transmitters and aims to build knowledge about how the birds use Victorian habitats.

The technology will help researchers develop new ways of collecting high resolution information about the location of the released birds, whose wild population declined to less than 50 just six years ago.

Since the Mainland Release Trial began in 2017, more than 120 birds have been released at Victorian sites. These birds have joined wild birds, creating the largest flocks of Orange-bellied Parrots in Victoria in the past 15 years.

This year, about 140 birds are expected to naturally migrate north from their Tasmanian breeding grounds, the fourth year in a row that more than 100 migrating parrots have set off on that journey.

The Mainland Release Trial complements the successful release program of captive-bred birds in Tasmania.

The Labor Government, Zoos Victoria, BirdLife Australia, Deakin University, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA), and the Tasmanian Government are partnering to deliver this final year of the trial.

The project is supported by the Victorian Government's Icon Species Program, Zoos Victoria and the CCMA through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Since 2017, the Icon Species Program has provided more than \$4.6 million to support conservation projects for 22 of Victoria's icon species, including the Orange-bellied Parrot, Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Southern Right Whale, Hooded Plover, Southern Bent-wing Bat and Spotted Tree Frog.

Quote attributable to Minister for the Environment Ingrid Stitt

"As one of the world's rarest birds, it is fantastic that we have been able to grow the population of the orange bellied parrot and ensure future generations can enjoy this beautiful species."

Quote attributable to Senior Manager Zoos Victoria Michael Magrath

"This new tracking technology will allow us to determine how we best protect this species from extinction."

Quote attributable to Professor of Terrestrial Ecology, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University Don Driscoll

"This is the first time this tracking technology has been used in Australia. It pinpoints all the parrots every eight seconds and gives us an amazing insight into which parts of the habitat they are using and what they use it for."

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