



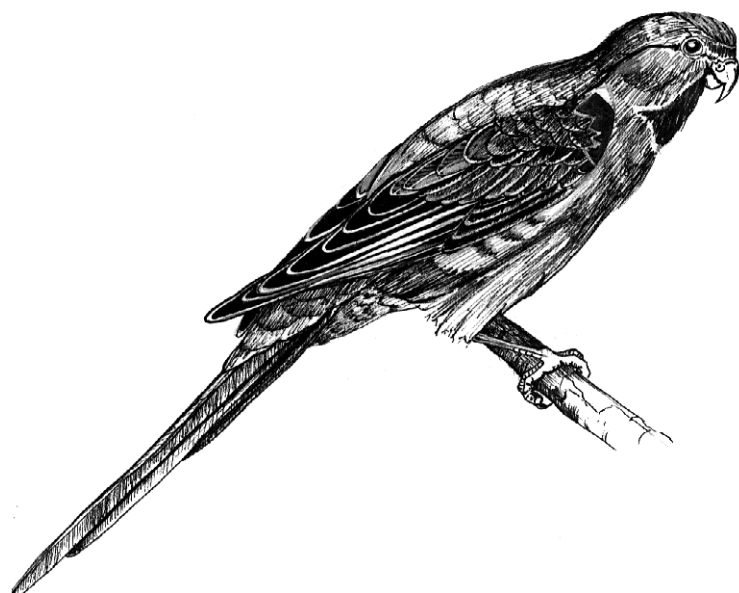
THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ACT

Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)

A vulnerable species

Issued: 4 March 2005

The Swift Parrot is a small, streamlined, bright grass-green parrot, about 250 mm in length. It has a dusky red spike-shaped tail, red forehead and throat bordered by yellow, and blue crown and cheeks.



The Swift Parrot is mainly an arboreal feeder, usually in the outer canopy of Eucalyptus trees. Their main food is nectar, also psyllids, lerps, seeds and fruit. It occurs in small flocks, appearing where eucalypts are in flower.

The species breeds only in Tasmania where it nests only in hollows in mature and senescent eucalypts. It migrates north to mainland Australia over winter, following abundances of flowering eucalypts and lerps as they occur. Small numbers of the species are recorded intermittently in the ACT.

Grassy Blue Gum (*E. globulus*) forest in eastern Tasmania is the preferred habitat of the Swift Parrot in the breeding season. On the mainland, the species inhabits mainly dry open eucalypt forests and woodlands, usually box-ironbark communities and also Yellow Box-Red Gum woodland.

Critical local habitat features include:

- winter flowering eucalypts; and
- eucalypts carrying lerps.

In the ACT, the species is likely to occur anywhere below 700 m. ACT records of the species over the last 25 years are mainly from inner Canberra suburbs, Gungahlin and Hall.

CONSERVATION THREATS

Nationally, the range of the Swift Parrot has been reduced by half. The principal causes are loss of breeding and feeding habitat (Blue Gum *Eucalyptus globulus*, Messmate *E. obliqua* or Swamp Gum *E. ovata* forest) in Tasmania due to clearing for agriculture and urban development, and forestry operations. Clearing of box-ironbark and box-gum woodlands in its wintering range in mainland Australia, including the ACT.

—Continued over page



ACT Government

environment ACT



Helpline: 02 6207 9777

Website: www.environment.act.gov.au

Email: EnvironmentACT@act.gov.au



CONSERVATION ACTIONS

- Identification of key habitats and potential habitats.
- Protection and management of habitat including:
 - maintenance of woodland remnants and isolated paddock trees;
 - limitation on removal of live and dead timber;
 - regeneration of habitat; and
 - minimisation of adverse effects of fire.
- Monitoring long term trends and status.
- Research into the ecology and conservation requirements of the species.
- Liaison to achieve regional approach to conservation.
- Education and community liaison to raise community awareness.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The primary source of information for this Information Sheet is the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy—Action Plan No. 27 where a full bibliography is available. Action Plans are available from the Environment ACT Website: www.environment.act.gov.au or the Arts, Heritage and Environment Information Centre at 12 Wattle Street, Lyneham ACT.

Acknowledgement

The illustration of the species was prepared for Environment ACT by Fiona Sivyver.