

## **Orange-bellied Parrots to be wiped out in wave of extinctions?**

The two national bird conservation organisations, Birds Australia and BOCA (Bird Observation & Conservation Australia), warned today that the plight of the Orange-bellied Parrot is a wake up call that highlights the looming extinction crisis facing Australia.

“The crisis facing the Orange-bellied Parrot demonstrates that threatened species conservation needs to be taken seriously”, said Birds Australia’s Conservation Manager, Samantha Vine. Ms Vine said that a recent report by the IUCN warned that we are in the grip of the sixth great extinction of species, comparable to the loss of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

In a recent review Birds Australia and BOCA found that there is insufficient data to determine the population status of the majority of Australian birds. Ms Vine said that as well as monitoring, funding research is essential to quickly detect trends and breeding success and therefore predict the decline of a species. “Research has to be part of the package for threatened species recovery”, said Ms Vine.

Both organisations support the critical actions being taken by the Orange-bellied Parrot recovery team and applaud the Australian government’s commitment to saving the parrot. She stressed the importance of maintaining focus on the wild population. “It is essential that the captive breeding program be carried out to support the parrot’s survival in the wild”.

Ms Vine said that the long-term monitoring data for the Orange-bellied Parrot was collected by an army of more than 100 dedicated volunteers over 25 years. “Without these volunteers, we would not know how the species is faring. But with their help, the recovery team has been able to detect the decline, narrow down threats, and take steps to bolster the captive population. The fact that the species exists at all is testament to their efforts”, she said.

In the International year of Biodiversity, Birds Australia and BOCA are calling on all governments to recognise that we are in the midst of a Biodiversity crisis, and to invest more in research, monitoring and on-ground conservation for threatened species protection and recovery.

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