



**Welcome to the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot Newsletter
No. 87 – Spring 2020**

Get up-to-date information about the latest efforts to save this critically endangered parrot unique to Western Australia

Kyloring rising from the ashes



Efforts to recover Kyloring have been ongoing for many years. The photo above is of Allan Rose, Anne Gadsby and Arnold Morales when the Western Ground Parrot was rediscovered in Cape Arid National Park in 2003 (Photo Brenda Newbey)

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Western Ground Parrot Spring Update

Sarah Comer, Abby Thomas, Stewart Ford and Steph Hill

In the last report the DBCA team had only just returned from collecting and servicing 139 Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) deployed in Cape Arid National Park and Nuytsland Nature Reserve, which has been supported through funding from the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, the Australian and State Governments. Processing of the autumn monitoring data was completed by the end of June, and we were happy to get a fuller picture of the status of ground parrots across approximately 65,000 ha of habitat. This included the solar ARU array, which has 32 monitoring points at 5km spacing, and eight intensive monitoring grids with 105 ARUs deployed in areas of historical or potential habitat. Two of these sites, Pasley and Poison Creek, have been monitored with ARUs for the past seven years.

Despite the impact of 2019 fires, the autumn results were encouraging. Ground parrots were detected on 12 of the 32 solar ARUs, covering around 15,000ha of potential habitat. Seven of the eight intensive monitoring grids also yielded birds, with good calling rates on six of these.

Further analysis is continuing, with the processing of solar ARU data files with Kaleidoscope software, and manual processing of six days per month. It is hoped that some of this work will be expedited by the current UWA Masters student (Ben Barrett) who is working on improving software recognisers for detecting western ground parrot calls.



Our capacity to survey the expansive areas of heath in Cape Arid National Park has been enhanced by the solar ARU network (Photo Stewart Ford, DBCA).

Unfortunately, wet weather has delayed our plans to service the ARUs deployed in the Fitzgerald River National Park. However, this work will be completed as soon as we can access the sites without compromising dieback hygiene requirements.



We are also happy to welcome Stewart (Stu) Ford to the DBCA project team. Stu has an impressive background in conservation, having worked as a zoologist in WA for the past 20 years. and his skills in conservation and monitoring of threatened fauna will be a great benefit to the team. He is looking forward to bringing his applied ecology knowledge to the design and analysis of monitoring programs on the south coast, particularly for those relating to ground parrot conservation.

Over the next few months two new staff will be joining the south coast DBCA team to work on the western ground parrot recovery project, including a BirdLife project officer and a DBCA technical officer, and we will introduce them once they have started.

Western Ground Parrot Update from Perth Zoo

September 2020

The Western Ground Parrots have all remained in good health and have become very comfortable with zoo keepers carrying out the routine feeding and servicing. Provision of the breeding diet has been implemented, and significant quantities of native food plants in the form of seeds, pods, buds, and flowers are now being consumed. Over the last few months, staff have dedicated increased time monitoring and tracking the birds' behaviour remotely via the CCTV cameras.

Male Mingko and female Leuca have shown little interest towards each other so far. Leuca's feeding behaviour has increased significantly and she is very comfortable in the aviary, while male Mingko has shown a level of nocturnal activity.

Male Monak has shown increased maturity this season with frequent calling, display flights as well as showing regular affection towards the micro-sprinkler in his aviary which presents similar to mate feeding. He has recently shown increasing interest towards female Kangal and the pair have been identified making their first beak to beak contact signalling the start of allofeeding for this pair. We are hopeful they will progress further in the coming weeks.

In September male Zephyr started allofeeding female Kopin. In the lead up to the allofeeding Zephyr was observed approaching Kopin at her feed station numerous times and she would swiftly chase him away. It is unclear if this behaviour is part of the pair's courtship or if the female was simply guarding her feeding area. Female Kopin has recently presented with a copulation solicitation response when keepers refresh food at her feed station area. It is not yet clear as to why the keeper's presence is eliciting this behavioural response from Kopin and we are exploring this in further detail. This behaviour does however indicate that Kopin's breeding hormones are developing.

Incubation equipment is now fully operational and ready should it be required.

The next few months will be a busy time for the team here at Perth Zoo as we closely track the birds' behaviour and continue to support breeding efforts with provision of an abundance of food.



Male Monak & female Kangal showing interest in each other - September 2020



Monak and Kangal first beak to beak contact and start of pair bonding and allofeeding September 2020





Male Zephyr feeding female Kopin September 2020



Male Zephyr tail fanning as he struts up to feed female Kopin September 2020



Technical Officer Lauren Sumner preparing the morning feed for the parrots.

A carefully selected variety of native food plants are harvested weekly from the South Coast by Abby Berryman from Parks and Wildlife and sent via courier over 400km to the Zoo exclusively for the Western Ground Parrots.



Chirpings from the Chair

Paul Wetton

Isn't it Great!!

You have hopefully gotten the vibe, particularly from Sarah Comer's report that a very interesting, exciting, but also challenging future lies ahead for the conservation of the parrots. It's great news that a substantial number of birds have survived last summer's fires!!

After many years of hard work and lobbying to protect the remaining wild population, the potential translocation of a small number of birds from Cape Arid National Park to another, safer site is now within the grasp of the Recovery Project. As members and supporters you have been a large part of this journey with your ongoing support, interest and financial contributions. It's fantastic that state and federal governments are now providing more support and have increased their funding for the Recovery Plan; and I thank them for this support. The resultant increase in staff resources at the Department of Conservation, Biodiversity and Attractions (DBCA) for this work is particularly noteworthy. Also, it's great that BirdLife Australia has been successful in its application to the Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery Program Fund (<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/bushfire-recovery/open-grant-program>) which will provide additional resources.

Equally, the Friends are able to continue to provide financial support for the Recovery Plan. The Friends have been successful in our applications for the grants outlined in my last Chirpings, plus one more. At the time of this Newsletter we have funds from the following sources for which I am grateful:

- \$10,650 grant from the Commonwealth Government's Communities Environment Program provided via the Member for O'Connor, Rick Wilson.
- \$30,000 grant from the WIRES and Landcare Australia Wildlife Relief & Recovery Fund.
- A \$15,000 grant offer from the Australian Wildlife Society (AWS- www.aws.org.au) for which I am currently finalising arrangements.

The first two funds will be used to support DBCA's monitoring activities, primarily the retrieval of acoustic recording units (ARUs) or their data cards from Cape Arid/Nuytsland and Fitzgerald River National Park over the coming months. The AWS funds are intended to be used to purchase camera traps placed into potential translocation sites to detect unwanted potential predators (eg feral cats) to guide subsequent management actions.

Additionally, due to ongoing contributions from donors (including many of you!) the Western Ground Parrot Rescue Fund has over \$30,000 available to support these and other priority activities under the Recovery Plan. These funds are additional to the \$50,000 we provided to DBCA in 2019/2020.

It's also great that the parrots will feature in an "audio tour" of WA at the new WA Museum's digital platform audio guide.

Annual General Meeting - 10th November

Our AGM is an opportunity for any of you to join more closely in this exciting period via your more direct participation. I would like to encourage nominations for Committee membership. All positions will be available, although I have indications that the majority of the current Committee (<https://western-ground-parrot.org.au/the-western-ground-parrot-committee/>) will be re-nominating, including myself. There are a number of vacancies on the current Committee. While the majority of the current Committee reside in Albany, our most recent meetings have been very successfully conducted using video conferencing facilities allowing our more distant members to actively participate. At our last meeting Julie participated from Sydney, Chris from Perth and Anne from Cairns. So not being in Albany is not a barrier!!

Details of the AGM will be dispatched to you soon.

Website

Thanks to the great work of Deon our website has received a significant “refresh” with the Blog section being a new feature. This is available for you to get in touch with us and also for me to improve our communication of important items- see <https://western-ground-parrot.org.au/blog-2/>.

Chirping moments from a recent holiday up north (with the rest of WA)



A very Chirpy moment for me at Coral Bay!! Photo- Daniel Brown. And for the bird lovers:



Major Mitchell cockatoo- Wooleen Station. Credit Paul Wettin



Reef Heron and unfortunate fish- Coral Bay. Credit Paul Wettin.

Contacts:

Chairperson: Paul Wettin

Email: wgparrot@gmail.com
Mailing address: PO Box 5613, Albany, WA 6332

Website: www.western-ground-parrot.org.au

Please donate

Join us