



COMMONLY CONFUSED SPECIES

Like the Swift Parrot, these four parrots nest in tree hollows and the two lorikeets feed mainly on nectar and lerp and spend most of their time up in trees. The two rosellas tend to spend more time feeding on the ground but can also be found in the trees.



RAINBOW LORIKEET

Trichoglossus moluccanus

Habitat

Woodlands, open forests, heaths, urban areas. Expanding range.

Key points

Strikingly colourful lorikeet. Its underwing pattern and colour somewhat similar to Swift Parrot, but differs in having yellow on the undertail. Constantly screeching call, particularly in flight. Noisy and sociable, often in large flocks.



MUSK LORIKEET

Glossopsitta concinna

Habitat

Dry open forests, woodlands, orchards, urban plantings.

Key points

Differs from Swift Parrot in having long red ear patches/cheek, and no red on wings and tail. Sociable, with large foraging flocks. Metallic screeching call made when in trees and in flight.

GREEN ROSELLA

Platycercus caledonicus

Habitat

Found in most wooded habitats in Tasmania. Can also be found in heathlands, grasslands, orchards and gardens.

Key points

Very small amount of red on the forehead and blue cheek patches. Much more solidly built than Swift Parrot and spends a lot of time on the ground feeding. Call is a metallic *cussik cussik* or a piping *kink kweek*.



EASTERN ROSELLA

Platycercus eximius

Habitat

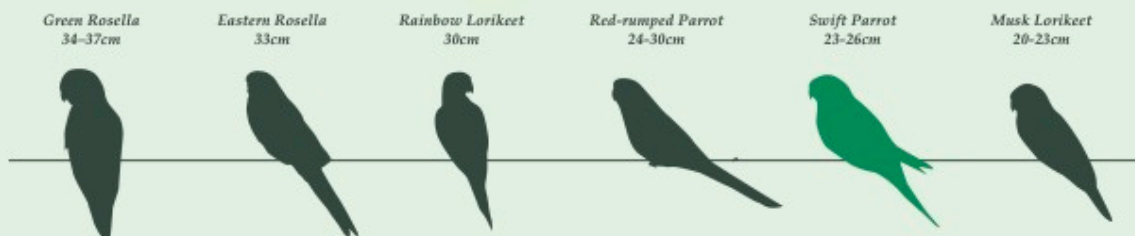
Woodland, farmland, parks and gardens.

Key points

Much more red on the head than Swift Parrot, and also has prominent white cheek patches. Contact call is a *chit-chit* or *chit-chit-chut* or a piping *pwink-pwink* when perched. Usually seen in pairs or small flocks. Often feeds on the ground.



SIZE COMPARISON



INTRODUCTION

The Swift Parrot is a medium-sized, fast flying parrot. In summer, they breed in old-growth habitat in Tasmania. All birds then fly across Bass Strait to spend autumn and winter foraging in woodland across the south-eastern Australia mainland. In spring they return to Tasmania.

SCIENTIFIC TITLE

Lathamus discolor

SIZE

23-26cm

LIFESPAN

~10 Years

POPULATION

<2,000 birds

STATUS

Critically Endangered

MAIN THREATS

Habitat Loss & Predation

HABITAT



Swift Parrots are found predominantly in stands of Tasmanian Blue Gum *Eucalyptus globulus* or Black Gum *Eucalyptus ovata* while breeding in Tasmania.

On the mainland they tend to favour certain types of trees in temperate forest and woodland, but will also use trees (particularly large old specimens) in urban and other 'created' habitats (e.g. gardens). The trees favoured:

- Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa*
- White Box *Eucalyptus albens*
- Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*
- Mugga Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*
- Red Ironbark *Eucalyptus tricarpa*
- Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata*
- Forest Red Gum *Eucalyptus tereticornis*
- Swamp Mahogany *Eucalyptus robusta*

POPULATION DECLINE



Long-term monitoring by ecologists and citizen scientists shows that the Swift Parrot population is in a perilous decline. The main culprit throughout its range is habitat loss and fragmentation – both historic and ongoing.

Additional threats on mainland Australia include aggressive and overabundant native nectarivores (like the Noisy Miner), collisions with infrastructure, and altered flowering patterns and lerp availability due to climate change.

In Tasmania large hollow-bearing nesting trees continue to be lost through logging, and Sugar Gliders (an introduced species in Tasmania) are now known as a major predator of eggs, nestlings and adult birds during the breeding season.

IF YOU SPOT A SWIFT PARROT IN TASMANIA

Log your sighting on the Birdata web portal or App:

BIRDATA.BIRDLIFE.ORG.AU

For more information on the Swift Parrot or if you would like to help support our programs visit: www.birdlife.org.au

A GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SWIFT PARROT



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HOW TO FIND A SWIFTY

Swift Parrots aren't easy to find, but there are cues that increase your chances:

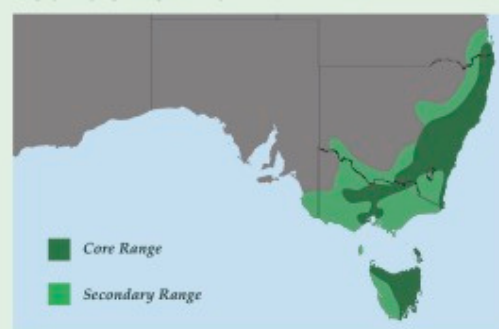
- Look for profusely flowering eucalypts.
- Search for other nectar-feeders, like lorikeets and small honeyeaters.
- Learn the calls – Swift Parrot calls have a distinctive loud 'pip-pip-pip', particularly as they fly off. This is often the only way you will know they are there. Listen to this at: www.birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/swift-parrot

WHAT ARE LERP?

Attached to the surface of eucalypt leaves, the small pale dome-shaped lerps (< 6mm across and 1-2 mm high) are secreted by insects called psyllids as a by-product of their leaf-eating life-style. Full of sugars and starch, lerps are consumed by Swifties whenever and wherever available.



ECOLOGY & MOVEMENT



The Swift Parrot is a unique nectar-feeding parrot that annually migrates across Bass Strait from its summer breeding grounds in Tasmania to 'overwinter' in south-eastern mainland Australia. Some birds fly as far as coastal south-east Qld, making the world's longest known parrot migration.

On the mainland they preferentially seek eucalypt-dominated temperate woodlands with abundant blossom or lerp to feed on, but will also use urbanised areas on occasions. Breeding is tightly linked to flowering of key eucalypt species in Tasmania. They are a gregarious species and are often observed in flocks.

SEEN A SWIFTY? TAKE NOTES

With such a vast potential distribution, searches and sightings by birdwatchers are critical to scientific knowledge and conservation of the Swift Parrot. One of the best ways to record a sighting is to take a photo, no matter how poor the quality may be. This can allow us to age the birds, help determine behaviour and identify the habitat they're using. Wherever possible, it is also important to document:

- Date and time of observation
- Location (as specific as possible)
- Number of Swift Parrots seen (and/or heard)
- Behaviour and other species present
- The presence of flowering eucalypts, lerp or other food sources.

REPORT AFTER A SIGHTING:

If you spot a Swift Parrot in Tasmania, log your sighting on the Birdata web portal or App:

Log sightings here → birdata.birdlife.org.au

For more information on the Swift Parrot or if you would like to help support our programs visit: www.birdlife.org.au