

# Vulnerable Victorians

DSE's Threatened Species recovery projects

February 2006

## Orange-bellied Parrot

Australia's most endangered bird species is rarer than more high profile threatened species, such as the Giant Panda or the Siberian Tiger.

There are only an estimated 200 individuals of the **Orange-bellied Parrot** (*Neophema chrysogaster*) remaining in Victoria, with predators and loss of habitat the main reasons for its decline.

Despite the low numbers, Andrew Govanstone, a Biodiversity Officer with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), said the parrot population has turned the corner.

"We would like to think that we have turned the corner in terms of halting the decline of it," Mr Govanstone said.

"The first step to achieving this was cracking the breeding cycle and we've now put about 80 nest boxes into their breeding grounds in south west Tasmania because there was a lack of hollows, which they need to nest in."

The Orange-bellied Parrot is a migratory bird so the second part of the recovery plan involves restoring the bird's winter habitats along the southern coastline of Victoria, into the south east of South Australia.

"We are preparing site management plans for the Orange-bellied Parrot 'hotspots' and we are revegetating those areas with woolly tee tree and melaleuca, the thick dense indigenous shrubs the parrots like to provide protection close to where they feed," Mr Govanstone said.

Mr Govanstone is one member of the National Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team, which is made up of representatives from Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, the Federal Government, Universities, Zoos and Birds Australia.

But its not just institutions that are leading the way in protecting this endangered bird, the department has established a network of volunteers and community groups along the coast to monitor the Parrot's migration.

"The work here in the south west is being held up as a model for work in the rest of Victoria in other coastal regions."



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### FACT SHEET

#### **ORANGE BELLIED PARROT (*Neophema chrysogaster*)**

**STATUS:** Endangered

**DESCRIPTION:** Grass-green upper parts, two-tone blue frontal band on edge of wings, yellow undertail, bright orange belly.

**LOCATION:** Summer in Tasmania and winters along the coasts of Victoria and South Australia.

**HABITAT:** Dense tea tree and melaleuca, the thick dense indigenous coastal shrubs.

**THREATS:** Predators including birds of prey foxes and feral cats.  
Habitat reduction, especially on the mainland.  
Risks and stresses of migration.

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