

TAXON SUMMARY

Paradise Parrot

1	Family	Psittacidae
2	Scientific Name	<i>Psephotus pulcherrimus</i> (Gould, 1845)
3	Common Name	Paradise Parrot
4	Conservation status	Extinct

5 Reasons for listing

Despite innumerable rumours, some of which have been highly convincing, there have been no authenticated sightings since 1927.

6 Intraspecific taxa

None described.

7 Past range and abundance

The Paradise Parrot formerly ranged from near Rockhampton, Qld, south to Inverell district N. S. W. (Blakers *et al.*, 1984). Early sightings from far northern Queensland, including those by Gilbert in the Mitchell River area near the Gulf of Carpentaria (Chisholm, 1945), are unconfirmed (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Joseph, 1988). They were almost certainly Golden-shouldered Parrots *Psephotus chrysopterygius*. From the 1840s to the 1880s, the years of European exploration and spread of settlement, these parrots were fairly abundant. By 1900 they had disappeared from most of their range. A few pairs were located in the 1920s, the last confirmed report dating from 1927 (Chisholm, 1922, Williams, 1977). Rumours of its continued existence persist (eg. Schmidt, 1986, Kiernan, 1993) but are often clouded in secrecy (Joseph, 1988).

8 Ecology

Pairs and family parties of the Paradise Parrot occurred along river valleys in open woodland and forest with a grassy understorey. They fed on native grass seeds and excavated nest hollows in termite mounds or river banks (Chisholm, 1922, Forshaw, 1981, Higgins, 1999).

9 Reasons for extinction

The apparently total disappearance of the species was probably hastened by the reduction in the availability of native grass seeds. As summarised by Joseph (1988), this has variously been suggested to have resulted from drought and overgrazing (Campbell, 1915, Forshaw, 1981), altered fire frequencies (Chisholm, 1945), the

spread of prickly pears *Opuntia* (Lendon, 1973), or a combination of these factors.

10 Bibliography

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Text adapted from

Bennett (1992).

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