

# HOODED PARROT

**FAMILY:** *Psittacidae*

**GENUS:** *Psephotus*

**SPECIES:** *dissimilis*

**OTHER NAMES:** Black-hooded Parrot, Antbed Parrot, Anthill Parrot.



**Description:** Small parrot closely related to and resembling the Golden-shouldered Parrot. Males have a black forehead, crown and nape with a brown mantle and back. Cheeks, throat and underparts blue-green. The rump and upper tail coverts are turquoise blue. The central tail feathers are bronze-green tipped with black. Outer tail feathers green-blue edged with white. Under-tail coverts pink, feathers edged with white.

Immature birds resemble females. However the face and under-tail of the males are much darker and brighter respectively. Males do not

attain adult plumage until around 15 months of age.

**Subspecies:** The Golden-shouldered and Hooded Parrots were formerly considered to be separate races of the same species.

**Length:** 260mm.

**Distribution:** The Hooded Parrot has disappeared from parts of its former range and is now restricted to semi-arid regions in the north of the Northern Territory. It has also been recorded on Banyan Island (NT).



**Habitat:** Open savannah woodland with abundant termite mounds.

**Diet:** Seeds of various grasses, berries, vegetable matter and the seeds of herbaceous plants.

**Breeding:** August-December. The nesting site is a chamber at the end of a tunnel drilled into a terrestrial termite mound.

Clearly, Hooded Parrots would prefer an actual termite mound to nest in, but they will breed in either a nesting box or log. A suitable box should be approximately 35cm x 20cm x 20cm and suspended vertically. Logs should be a little taller and have a similar internal diameter. Preferred nesting material is wood shavings.

**Sexual Maturity:** Hooded Parrots become sexually mature and ready to breed at around 12-15 months of age.

**Clutch:** 3-6 white rounded eggs (20mm x 18mm). Incubation period: 19-20 days. The young usually fledge at around 35 days.

**Mutations and Hybrids:** There are no records for mutations in this species although crossings are reported with Mulga and Red-rumped Parrots.

**Suitable Aviaries and Compatible Birds:** As a minimum, a single tame bird could be housed in a small cage provided it measures around 600mm x 600mm x 800mm (approximately). Pairs can be kept in a slightly larger cage. Birds kept in such a situation should not be confined to their cage however.

For breeding purposes Hooded Parrots usually perform better in suspended cabinets. These need be no larger than around 1200mm wide x 1200mm long x 800mm high and lined with a medium grade mesh. Nevertheless, they look much more spectacular in an aviary situation. The aviary should offer plenty of shelter with part of the roof covered in and the back and sides at least partially covered.

**Species Specific Problems:** Because Hooded Parrots originate from the extreme north of the continent they may leave the brood rather early during the incubation process. In colder climates this can be a problem in that the exposure of the brood often leads to mortality. As a result the best approach is to provide them either with an artificial source of heat or a fully insulated nesting box. Another approach often preferred by aviculturists is to remove the eggs to an incubator.