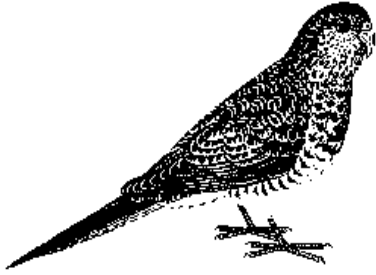


## THE NIGHT PARROT

*Pezoporus occidentalis*



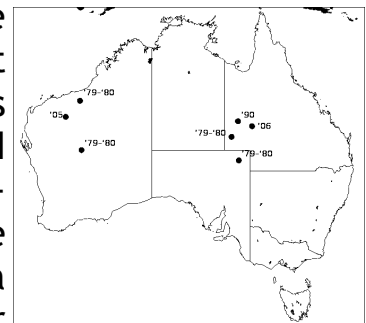
The Night Parrot is a small broad-tailed parrot endemic to Australia. The species was originally placed within its own genus, *Geopsittacus*, but it is now usually placed in the genus *Pezoporus* together with the Ground Parrot, *P. wallicus*. Testing has shown that the Budgerigar is a

reasonably close relative of the Night Parrot.

No sightings of the bird were recorded between 1912 and 1979, leading to speculation that it was extinct. However, since 1979 there have been a few reliable sightings, but the population size is unknown.

A relatively small parrot, the Night Parrot's colour is predominantly a yellowish-green, mottled with dark brown, blacks and yellows. It differs from the similar Ground Parrot by its shorter tail and different range and habitat. Predominantly terrestrial, taking to the air only when panicked or searching for water, the Night Parrot has furtive, nocturnal habits and is apparently a highly secretive species. Its natural habitat appears to be the Spinifex grasslands that still dominate much of the dry, dusty interior of Australia. Early reports indicate that it never strayed far from water.

There have only been a few reliable sightings of the Night Parrot since the 1880s, with the last authenticated report dating from 2006, when rangers found a dead specimen which had flown into a barbed wire fence in the Diamantina National Park in south-western Queensland. Prior to this, the last reliable sighting was of three individuals in 2005 near Minga Well, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Other reliable sightings were in 1979 when Ornithologist Shane Parker from the South Australian Museum spotted an apparent flock of the birds in the far north of South Australia, and in 1990 when a road-kill specimen was discovered by scientists returning from an expedition in a remote part of Queensland.



RECENT SIGHTINGS  
MAP: "KimydLinde"

Ornithologists continue to scour the outback for signs that the species still thrives, even checking the old nests of other birds, such as the Zebra Finch, for fragments of Night Parrot feathers. The species remains one of the most elusive and mysterious Australian birds.

The Night Parrot is listed on the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia