

THE LITTLE LORIKEET

Glossopsitta pusilla



Photo: "Adviceda"

The Little Lorikeet is endemic to Australia. It is a small bird, predominantly green in plumage with a red face. Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical dry forests and subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests.

The species was first described by British ornithologist George Shaw in 1790 as *Psittacus pusillus*. Its specific epithet is the Latin *pusilla* "small".

Other common names include Tiny Lorikeet, Red-faced Lorikeet and the rather vulgar-sounding names of Gizzie and Slit.

Both sexes measure 15cm (6") in length, and are similarly coloured, although the hen has a duller green body and the red face not quite as large in extent as that of the male. The crown, lores and throat are red, the nape and shoulder bronze-green, the remainder of the plumage green. The underparts are tinged with yellow. The beak is black and the iris golden.



George Shaw
1751-1813

The Little Lorikeet range is eastern and southern Australia, from the vicinity of Cairns in Queensland southwards through New South Wales from the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range eastwards to the coast, though most of Victoria and the south-east of South Australia. It also occurs in Tasmania but is not common there. The preferred habitat is forest, especially in the vicinity of flowering or fruit-bearing vegetation.



Yakka

Xanthorrhoea semiplana

Photo: "Peripitus"

Fruit and flowers form the bulk of the diet, including native grasstrees (*Xanthorrhoea* spp.), and tea-tree (*Melaleuca* spp.), *Loranthus*, and the introduced loquat, *Eriobotrya japonica*. They occasionally visit orchards.

In the northern part of the range the breeding season commences in May, while in the south, it is from August to December. The nest is a tree hollow in which a clutch of three to five matte white roundish eggs, measuring 20 x 16mm, is laid. The incubation period is approximately twenty-one days.

The Little Lorikeets were first exported to Europe in 1877, but is now rarely seen outside Australia.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia

