

ADELAIDE ZOO - BIRD DEPARTMENT

UPDATE - November 2004

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I hope everyone's breeding season is going well.

At the zoo the season is coming along nicely with chicks being produced from the following species, Eastern Whipbirds *Psophodes olivaceus*, Bush Thick-knee *Burhinus grallarius*, Hooded Plovers *Thinornis rubricollis*, Regent Honeyeaters *Xanthomyza phrygia*, Blue Penguins *Eudyptula minor novaehollandiae*, Budgerigars *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Superb Fruit Doves *Ptilinopus superbis*, Dusky *Pseudeos fuscata* and Black-capped Lories *Lorius lory*, Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*, Mandarin Ducks *Aix galericulata*, Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* and various finch species.

Our managed species are doing well with three Regent Honeyeater chicks being produced so far from one pair. The Swift Parrots have recently fledged one clutch of four healthy chicks and of the four pairs of Fig Parrots set up for a breeding research program, eggs have been produced from three. Not a bad effort considering they were only paired-up in the second week of October!

Last issue I mentioned one of our staff was taking leave to go to Mauritius to work with the Echo Parakeet *Psittacula echo*. Another bird keeper is off for a twelve-month period to work with Charles Munn doing macaw research in South America. Therefore for the past fortnight my time has been tied up doing job interviews to fill a total of three bird keeper vacancies.

I hope all that attended the behind the scenes aviary visit on the 31st October enjoyed the experience. I certainly had a good time and enjoyed catching up with you all and talking birds all afternoon.

Those that attended might recall I discussed the bird department's new direction toward displaying passerine species. Of the 169 species of birds

currently held at the zoo 69 are Pigeons or Parrots. This obviously represents a large percentage of the collection, considering over recent years several species of Parrot had already been deleted. The recent arrival of several new species to the zoo's bird collection from the Alice Springs Desert Park signifies this change of direction. The species include one pair of Crimson Chats, three Chiming Wedgebills, two pairs of Pied Honeyeaters, two juvenile Hooded Robins and two juvenile Red Capped Robins. These birds augment one pair of Crimson Chats and one pair of Striated Grass Wrens received late last year. Incidentally both of these pairs have attempted nesting this season.

With these new species coming into the collection the call is out to the keepers to do their research on the husbandry and management of these challenging avian gems.