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Amazing Animals
Fact sheets

Native Parrots

Around 300 species of the parrot family have been recorded throughout the world, extending from the tropics to the subtropical and colder parts of the Southern Hemisphere. 56 species are found in Australia, and only five of these are found elsewhere in the world. The parrot family includes cockatoos, lorikeets, rosellas, ringnecks and budgerigars.

Australian King Parrot

Being a large, brilliantly coloured bird, king parrots are conspicuous and never fail to impress, irrespective of how familiar they may be to the observer. The adult male is a particularly striking bird having a bright scarlet head, neck, breast and abdomen, dark green mantle, back and wings, longitudinal turquoise-green stripe on the wing coverts, dark blue lower back and rump, black tail feathers and a red upper mandible, tipped black. The adult female has a dark green head, wings and back, dull green throat and upper breast tinged red, scarlet lower breast and abdomen, faint pale green wing stripe, blue lower back and rump, tinged green and a dark brown mandible.

Habitat

In coastal and high-rainfall mountain regions, king parrots are characteristic inhabitants of densely forested areas, where they frequent a variety of forest communities, including temperate and subtropical rainforest, wet sclerophyll forest and secondary growth. On the inland side of the Great Dividing Range they favour remnant patches of wet forest in gullies or along watercourses, but do come regularly into drier open woodlands. They have been quite successful in colonising urban habitats and farmlands to utilise manmade feed sources, becoming regular visitors to parks and gardens. The king parrot is found in coastal and connecting mountain regions of eastern Australia, excluding Tasmania.

Diet

King parrot feed on seeds, fruit, berries, nuts, nectar, blossoms, leaf buds, insects and their larvae. Seeds of eucalypts, angophoras and acacias make up a major proportion of the diet, and these are procured mostly in the trees and shrubs.

Breeding

The breeding season lasts from September to January. King parrots nest in a hollow limb or hole in a tree, usually in the trunk of a tall tree standing in or at the edge of a forest. A favoured site is in the hollow trunk of an eucalypt, entrance being where a limb has broken off, and the hollow is usually very deep with eggs being at or near ground level.

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