

# Have you seen a night parrot?



BRUCE GREATWICH



STEVE MURPHY



NICK LESEBERG



Night parrot sleeping habitat

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Open grassy feeding habitat

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Sleeping habitat in old spinifex

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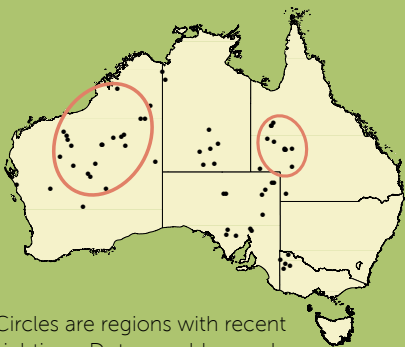


Sleeping habitat in old spinifex

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## Where are they?

- In the past they were found across lots of desert country.
- Night Parrots are now very rare as their habitat has been reduced by large fires and they are easily eaten by cats. These days they are only known from a very small number of places including the Paruku IPA.



Circles are regions with recent sightings. Dots are old records.

## What habitat do they like?

- During the day they sleep in old spinifex that has been protected from fire for a very long time.
- At night they feed in open areas where grasses and fleshy plants grow around saltpans and drainage lines.
- At night they visit water.

## What do they look like?

- Adults - small parrots with long wings and a short tail. Bright green body with a yellow belly, and black and yellow patterning on the back.
- Juveniles - Young night parrots are grey, and become green as they get older.

## How do they behave?

- During the day they sleep in a tunnel along the ground in spinifex.
- They also nest in spinifex but the tunnel starts at the top of the clump.
- They are very shy and rarely seen during the day unless disturbed from their sleeping tunnel.
- If disturbed, the bird will fly a short distance low over the spinifex before diving back to the ground and hiding again, similar to how a quail bird flies away and lands.
- They call more after rain and when breeding.

## How to find

- The best way to find a night parrot is by its call. You can hear examples at [nightparrot.com.au](http://nightparrot.com.au).
- About 30 minutes after sunset they usually call for a few minutes near where they sleep.
- About 30-90 minutes before sunrise they usually call for 10-15 minutes near where they sleep.
- While they are feeding and drinking during the night they can also call.
- Most monitoring programs use automated recording devices and sometimes camera traps.
- During the day you can also look for their sleeping and nesting tunnels in spinifex, feathers, tracks on the ground and dead birds.

## Spinifex tunnels



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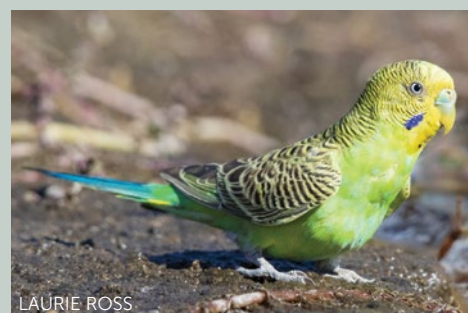
Sleeping tunnels are along the ground.



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Nesting tunnels start higher up in the spinifex.

## Size



LAURIE ROSS

Night parrots are a bit bigger than a budgerigar (shown above) but smaller than a corella.



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(L) Prints of night parrot feet (actual size)  
(R) Night parrot feathers.



## Heard or seen a night parrot?

Night parrots are now very rare and it is important we look after them. If you think you've seen or heard a night parrot, please contact your local ranger group.

You can also contact Indigenous Desert Alliance  
[info@indigenousdesertalliance.com](mailto:info@indigenousdesertalliance.com)  
and night parrot researcher  
Nick Leseberg - [n.leseberg@uq.edu.au](mailto:n.leseberg@uq.edu.au)