



## Newsletter No: 94-Summer/Birak 2022

Get up-to-date information about the latest efforts to save this critically endangered parrot unique to Western Australia at:

[western-ground-parrot.org.au](http://western-ground-parrot.org.au)

[www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Western-Ground-Parrot-283796521652371/](https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Western-Ground-Parrot-283796521652371/) and [twitter.com/FriendsWGP](https://twitter.com/FriendsWGP)  
(note: our Twitter account is currently in hibernation)

*The Friends acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community, of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.*

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In this issue:

- Sarah Comer has a new job - see the Chair's Chirpings
- Ongoing success of the second translocation!!!
- Update for the birds at Perth Zoo
- You can help with the Recovery Program - see the Zooniverse project!!
- Lots of Awareness raising in the Chair's Chirpings

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous holiday period! And if you are looking for a present, then look no further than this [beautiful rendition of Kyloring](#) by member and artist Michelle Dumjovic.



Michelle will donate profits from the sale to the Friends - [Western Ground Parrot — Michelle Dumjovic Art.](#)

**Kyloring – settling into a new home (Djilba and Kambarang)**  
**Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)**  
**Parks and Wildlife Service, South Coast Region**

Abby Thomas, Sarah Comer, Mark Blythman, Abby Berryman, Carly Watson, Helena Stokes

As the rain started to fall and the seasons changed, the DBCA-led project team have spent the months since the last newsletter following the movements of the second year of birds released as they settled into the translocation area.

Innovations by the project team, based on learnings from the first year of the wild-wild translocation, were game changers. Automated release doors on the holding boxes allowed a stress-free release for birds and appeared to result in much less movement post release. The Lotek Sunbird Solar Argos Transmitters, purchased by the Friends, combined with a custom-built radio tracking system attached to a Matrice 300 drone, meant we could easily keep track of the birds' locations.

During the intensive radio tracking period the six birds carrying transmitters were monitored most days for a twelve-week period, with the project team keeping a close eye or ear on them up until the last combination VHF/Argos transmitters VHF battery timed out. At the end of the 90-day period, all six birds had survived the immediate post release monitoring period and remained within the translocation site. The combination transmitters and the addition of the drone meant that the team did not need to use fixed wing or rotary wing radio tracking platforms this year. The Argos transmitters provided a ballpark area, then the drone was used to identify where the individual was located and the team used this information to confirm movement from the ground. The survival and high site fidelity from the three-month post-release tracking period gives us hope that the second- year birds have settled well into their new home.

Now that the immediate post-tracking period has finished, the team has switched to acoustic monitoring of the translocated birds through the ARU network. This array of ARUs has been installed since Birak (December – January) 20-21, monitoring the release site pre- and post-translocation. Analysis of data from these following the first release of birds showed a consistent presence of calling activity over the seasons through the 12 months following the release, which is very exciting. The team now is eagerly looking forward to collecting the next batch of data from the translocation site ARUs to see how the additional individuals have settled into their new homes.

In addition to monitoring of the translocation site, between downpours of rain, the team were able to get into the middle of Cape Arid National Park to start the collection of the Autumn monitoring units, which have been used to establish trends in calling rates and occupancy in the source site following the second year of the translocation. This trip also enabled an overdue predator control program to alleviate the pressure of feral cat predation around Kyloring's breeding season. The project team were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of three Kyloring during this quick six-day trip, however intense rainfall resulted in the team having to pull out early.

Since the last newsletter, the DBCA team have launched a new citizen science program on the Zooniverse platform – 'South Coast Threatened Fauna Recovery Project' where volunteers can help with the massive task of analysing data collected from the 150+ camera traps monitoring feral cats and foxes across Kyloring's habitat. The Zooniverse program aims to increase awareness, educate, and promote the management and recovery actions that DBCA conducts to conserve and recover the unique and wonderful threatened species that occur in conservation reserves on the South Coast. The

Zooniverse platform provides opportunities for our broader community of partners and supporters, including the 'Friends' and NGO organisations and volunteers from around the world, to help analyse the hundreds of thousands of images that the team collects from its camera grid arrays. Currently data from Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve and Waychinicup-Manypeaks National Parks have been uploaded, but keep a close eye on the Friends social pages for the release of the Cape Arid data; you never know you might spot Kyloring! The link to the Zooniverse platform can be accessed here: [www.zooniverse.org/projects/abbsta/south-coast-threatened-fauna-recovery-project](http://www.zooniverse.org/projects/abbsta/south-coast-threatened-fauna-recovery-project).

The changing of seasons sees more changes in the staff of the project team. In September we wished a very sad good-bye to BirdLife project officer Helena Stokes, who accepted a permanent position with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in Queensland. Her presence in the team is greatly missed, but we wish her the very best in all her future endeavors. BirdLife Australia has appointed Susie Stockwell into this position and the DBCA team warmly welcomes her into that role.

As the project team now looks to spend some well-deserved time with their families over Christmas, we wish everyone a happy and safe festive season and thank you all for your support of this project. We would not have been able to do this work without our partners including the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, BirdLife Australia, South Coast NRM and the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Now for some action photos:



Figure 1: 22F01 in her transport box, with the combination VHF and Lotek Sunbird Solar Argos Transmitter backpack. Footage captured using CCTV system installed to monitor individual birds pre-release. (Source: DBCA)



Figure 2: Technical Officers Carly Watson and Larisse Guislain listening for VHF radio signals of year two released Kyloring. (Source: Helena Stokes, BirdLife Australia).



Figure 3: BirdLife project officer Helena Stokes (Source: DBCA – Abby Thomas).



Figure 4: DBCA staff Stu Ford, Sarah Comer, Carly Watson, Larisse Guislain and Abby Thomas and BirdLife staff member Helena Stokes at the release site monitoring the translocated Kyloring. (Source: DBCA – Sarah Comer)

## **Report from Perth Zoo on the 2022 parrot winter/spring month breeding season**

**All photo credits - Perth Zoo**

### **Aviary WGP01/02**

Early in the season, male Mingko and female Kopin both showed an increase in reproductive behaviours. While these behaviours were promising, unfortunately the pair did not progress to show any significant interest towards each other and a pair bond did not develop.

Due to the lack of progression, keepers made some changes based on calling behaviours from other males Zephyr and Brutus. Zephyr and Brutus were given access to the aviary at the end of August which caused a stir!

The males were observed engaged in an allofeeding type behaviour (Figures 1a & 1b) on numerous occasions.



**Figure 1a:** Male Brutus and male Zephyr allofeeding type behaviour.

**Figure 1b:** Male Brutus and male Mingko allofeeding type behaviour.

Kopin and Brutus quickly developed a pair bond with Brutus progressing to allofeed Kopin regularly. Soon after this, Kopin began presenting to Brutus for copulation (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Female Kopin soliciting to male Brutus.

Despite Brutus progressing to mount Kopin (Figures 3a, 3b, 3c), he did not show copulatory behaviour and copulation did not eventuate.



**Figure 3a:** Kopin copulation solicitation to male Brutus and Brutus standing on Kopin's back.



**Figure 3b:** Kopin copulation solicitation to male Brutus and Brutus standing on Kopin's back.



**Figure 3c:** Kopin copulation solicitation to male Brutus and Brutus standing on Kopin's back.

As a result, Brutus was removed to give Zephyr and Mingko the opportunity to bond with Kopin, but unfortunately no further reproductive behaviours developed.

#### **Aviary WGP03 / WGP04**

In June, a new male arrived named Golambiddee<sup>1</sup>, which means 'young man' in Noongar. He completed quarantine and was given the all-clear to move in next-door to male Jinnung and female Kangal.

Golambiddee was looking a little tattered as he was growing back some missing tail feathers, but his condition improved quickly.

He settled in well and was given access to Kangal and Jinnung. Pretty soon he was observed calling and bobbing. Activity and interest between the birds continued to increase in October. Golambiddee and Kangal's relationship progressed and in mid-October, the pair were spotted to briefly engage in allofeeding (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** Golambiddee approaching Kangal to offer allofeed

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: this is the slightly injured bird identified in the DBCA (Parks & Wildlife) winter Newsletter report.

The pair did not progress beyond this, but we are pleased with the behavioural progression by Golambiddee over such a short period of time and we are hopeful the pair will consolidate their bond next season.

#### **Aviary WGP05/06**

From mid-July, pair Joy and Leuca were observed copulating over an extended period. For the first two months, Leuca presented to Joy on vegetation (fig.5), which caused some challenges for Joy with mounting, balance and positioning.



**Figure 5.** Joy and Leuca successful copulation on vegetation.

In September, Leuca began presenting to Joy on the feed station platform, which appeared to make the process easier (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Joy and Leuca successful copulation on the feed station platform.

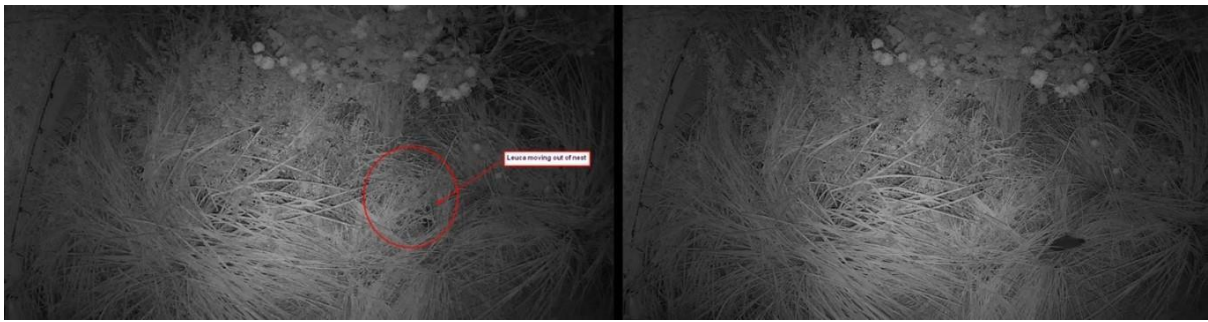
A total of 119 successful copulation events were detected up until 11 October, with a peak of five copulations noted on one day.

By 13 October, Leuca had developed a nest and had commenced incubation, with Joy visiting (Figure 7) multiple times a day to offer food.



**Figure 7.** Male Joy entering nest site area to offer food to Leuca.

We're pleased that she did not have any complications with laying eggs. The nest site chosen was well hidden under vegetation. Fortunately, the site selected was within view of one of the overview CCTV cameras providing views of the male and female (Figures 7 & 8) coming and going from the area.



**Figure 8.** Leuca moving out of her nest early in the morning.

Leuca showed dedication to the nest and based on the estimated timeframe for incubation being 21 days, we expected that if eggs were viable, they would hatch around the end of October/early November. The pair continued to show dedication to the nest beyond this date and we had high hopes that they may have been successful in hatching chicks. Over the course of the next two weeks however, the pair's behaviour indicated that they were not caring for chicks. Following a check of the nest (Figure 9), in mid-November, the nest was found to contain four unhatched non-viable eggs (Figure 10).



**Figure 9.** Leuca's nest.



**Figure 10.** The four non-viable eggs in nest.

The eggs were assessed by staff (Figure 11), with one egg confirmed to have contained a partially developed embryo, two other eggs showing some evidence of fertility and the remaining egg being infertile.



**Figure 11.** Leuca's clutch of four eggs.

Although this is a disappointing outcome, further information has been learnt from this breeding attempt and the team remain committed to continuing to work towards improving egg viability and to enhance reproductive behaviours in all birds.



## *Chirpings from the Chair* *Paul Wetton*

### **SARAH COMER, TAKE A BOW**

Sarah has recently provided the following statement to the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team, of which the Friends are a participant:

*I will be standing down from the chair of this RT at the end of January next year, as I've accepted a job offer with Bush Heritage working as an ecologist on the South Coast. You have been a wonderful recovery team to work with and I'd like to acknowledge and thank you all for your support and commitment to driving recovery actions for the scrub-birds, ground parrots, bristlebirds and whipbirds. Deon (Utber) will be taking over the chair role for this group from February next year, so will be the point of contact for the next meeting.*

Sarah's loss from the Recovery Plan (and DBCA) is devastating news, but I am certain all Friends Members will thank her for the incredible commitment and achievements over many years and wish her well in her future work and personal life. I understand that Sarah will not be lost completely to the Recovery Team and Plan so we still look forward to her ongoing contributions which will be critical to Saving Kyloring!!

### **General Matters**

Our AGM was held on 17<sup>th</sup> November. I was re-elected as Chair, with the following returning Committee members: Julie Lee (Treasurer), Sue Plewright, Peter Stewart, Liz Tanner and Chris Young. We have unfortunately lost Georgie Hawes from the Committee but we gratefully thank Georgie for her input and work over the past few years, particularly with keeping our Twitter account going.

Because we are unable to meet all our business requirements with this Committee, we have been fortunate enough that several members have agreed to provide support to us in a non-committee capacity, viz Phil Bailey (Treasury assistance), Sue Collins (Membership) and Anne Bondin (Merchandising). Anne is also performing project duties on the *Saving Kyloring Stories* initiative - see below.

Please consider taking up a role on your Committee. It's really a very positive experience and with all the current actions and outcomes for Saving Kyloring, there's never been a better time to become more involved and get the inside info! You will learn and experience so much!!

Membership of the Friends remains strong with over 70 General and over 60 Life Members.

## Social Media

## Saving Kyloring Video series

I am very confident this video will get many more screenings and viewers over coming months.

## Children's Book

**Saving Kyloring Stories** - [SAVING KYLORING STORIES \(google.com\)](#)

Caralyn and Anne approached the Friends about supporting this initiative. We have enthusiastically agreed to auspice it and we will also support it with prizes and whatever else we can do. We also thank Anne for agreeing to be the Friends' project officer on behalf of the Committee!!

**Zooniverse**-[www.zooniverse.org/projects/abbsta/south-coast-threatened-fauna](http://www.zooniverse.org/projects/abbsta/south-coast-threatened-fauna)

**We really need your help, so please consider becoming a Citizen Scientist!**

The Parks & Wildlife report outlines the background for this project. The Friends are extremely keen to support it as much as possible and in partnership with the Gilberts Potoroo Action Group (GPAG -

[Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group | Homepage](#)). We participated in a public launch for this project on 23<sup>rd</sup> November in Albany, organised by GPAG. Our *Saving Kyloring* video was screened at the launch. Liz Tanner is leading our contributions and she has highlighted the very large Citizen Science participation that is required to clear the backlog of photos, and even more so when the Cape Arid photos go up on the site. And then we can get onto more recent photos.

I personally find the photo classification process quite interesting, if not addictive. You will get to see lots of Australian fauna.

You might see this:



Figure 1. Quokkas are quite common in the camera coverage area.

Or this:



Figure 2. Ferals also appear in the camera coverage area.

### **Donations and Grants for the Recovery Plan**

A donation of \$17,295 was made from the Rescue fund (public donations) to DBCA for the Argos Sunbird tracking Units used for the monitoring of the second cohort of translocated birds, as per the

## Parks & Wildlife report.

We have also joined with BirdLife Australia for a subsidised lease of some Felixer grooming trap units. The contract for this lease is currently under negotiation and we look forward to its completion, implementation and installation of the units in the near future. I will say more about this project in the next Newsletter.

We currently hold over \$40,000 in our accounts with over \$20,000 in the Rescue fund, however we have received advice from DBCA about additional funding requirements, primarily for additional Argos Sunbird units and replacement camera traps in Cape Arid with recent flooding damage to them. Our remaining funds will be insufficient to meet the funding needed so we will be seeking to raise additional funds, either via donations or grant opportunities.

**Please donate**

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