

One of the world's rarest birds found in the South East

An Orange-bellied Parrot was found recently near Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park in the state's South East, during a Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) survey of the critically endangered species.

DEH Project Officer Bob Green said there are less than 150 Orange-bellied Parrots existing in the wild, making it one of the world's rarest birds.

"Surveys were recently conducted across South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, the three states where the species usually occurs, with a total of eleven birds found – two in Tasmania, eight in Victoria and one in South Australia," Mr Green said.

"Leg bands have been placed on a high percentage of Orange-bellied Parrots, which helps us to follow their migration, movements, ancestry and lifespan.

"The two observers who made the discovery of the Orange-bellied Parrot near Piccaninnie Ponds spent almost two hours following the bird to determine if it had leg bands.

"Unfortunately, the bird did not have leg bands. Nevertheless, any sighting of an Orange-bellied Parrot is of importance, and gives us hope for its conservation.

"For example, an Orange-bellied Parrot identified in the Coorong in 2007 returned to breeding grounds in Tasmania where it successfully reared four chicks during the 2007–08 breeding season.

"While no birds were observed in the Coorong during the targeted count, earlier this month DEH Ranger Steve Gilbert spotted four Orange-bellied Parrots in Coorong National Park, at the site where the parrots was observed in 2007.

"Two of these 2008 Coorong birds were banded and DEH staff and volunteers are presently attempting to confirm band details.

"Sightings such as these allow us to collect valuable information on food preferences and habitat use.

"This information is used to develop and implement conservation actions in the South Australian part of the species' range and contribute to the national recovery effort underway for the Orange-bellied Parrot.

"The next coordinated survey of the Orange-bellied Parrot is being held on 26–27 July, but we welcome any reports of sightings on the South East coastline over the winter period," Mr Green said.

If you have a sighting to report or would like to become involved in the conservation effort for this very rare bird, contact Bob Green on 8725 0549.

Media contacts

Bob Green

Orange-bellied Parrot
Project Officer
Phone 08 8725 0549

Stephen Cox

Media and PR Officer
Corporate Communications
Phone 08 8204 9109
Mobile 0423 822 992

www.environment.sa.gov.au