

# REGENT PARROT

## NEWS (10)



April 2014

### Regent Parrot Nest Surveys

Following the whole of river survey that was conducted over the 2003 and 2004 breeding seasons it was proposed that 10 selected colonies dispersed along the river corridor be surveyed every two years as a way of monitoring the population of this species. This method was based on the firmly held belief that Regent Parrots return to the same nest site each year. Another whole of river survey conducted over the 2010 and 2011 breeding seasons showed that there had been a change in nesting locations at several places along the river corridor. This ten colony survey was found to be an unacceptable way of monitoring the population of Regent Parrots.

Our counterparts in Victoria and NSW have also been attempting to determine a practical way of monitoring the population, but no one has yet managed to find the best way to achieve this.

At our planning meeting it was resolved that we attempt a "River Reach" approach as a way of eliminating errors in the ten colony approach due to Regent Parrots shifting their nest sites to areas adjacent to their regular nest site. This will mean that instead of concentrating on monitoring nests in a discrete colony, a stretch (reach) of several kilometres will be thoroughly searched for Regent Parrot nests.

This "river reach" approach will also enable us to concentrate the limited number of volunteers available to assist with surveys into the one area thus making the task of finding all nests in the area easier.

The plan is to have a concerted effort in one reach in the 2014 breeding season to test the feasibility of this approach.

The survey will be conducted early in the breeding season when all the birds have commenced breeding. This will be around the first week in September. Details will be released as the time approaches.

### Tracking Regent Parrots

Radio tracking during the breeding season provided valuable information about feeding areas, flight paths and roost sites. Three satellite trackers have now been placed on birds. One was attached to an adult male and two were placed on juvenile birds from the 2013 breeding season. These trackers were attached using a harness designed by the "team". The trackers were attached to the birds while they were under anaesthesia administered by qualified veterinarians from the Adelaide Zoo. The adult male managed to lose its tracker after only a few days, but the juvenile birds are still providing information on their movements.

In past years juvenile birds have been present in locations distant from the river at this time of the year. Gluepot and Lameroo have been locations where flocks of these juvenile birds have been seen previously. We would have expected our juveniles with trackers on to be "out bush" by now, but they are staying around the horticulture areas in Loveday and Moorook. The usual flocks have not appeared at Gluepot this year and there have not been any reports from places south of the river so far. Why are the birds behaving differently this year?

There were big fires north and south of the river in late 2013 and rainfall has been minimal in these areas. Perhaps these are reasons for the Regents to stay closer to the river this year.

### Community sightings

Sightings can still be reported by telephoning DEWNR (8595 2111) or through the web site [www.regentparrot.org](http://www.regentparrot.org)

### SA Regent Parrot Recovery Team

With the loss of 2 ecologists at the end of last year and no replacements being appointed, the "team" has to rely on other departmental officers who are already stretched to the limit with their other commitments. The task of conducting surveys, tracking birds and determining how we can address the many issues facing Regent Parrots will rely heavily on the other agencies such as Local Action Planning groups and volunteers.

Kevin Smith