

REGENT PARROT

NEWS (9)



November 2013

2013 Regent Parrot Nest Survey

The 10 selected nest colonies were surveyed during the period August to early November by a number of volunteers. A full report will be written on this work, but in the mean time here is a snippet of what is to be included in the report.

One colony, upstream of Renmark, which is located in dead River Red Gums that were drowned when the locks were installed in the river 80 years ago has been surveyed several times since 1991 with the following results

Year	1991	2000	2003	2006	2008	2010	2013
No. nests	27	26	20	9	4	0	1

In this colony 20% of the nest trees have decayed to the point where they have fallen over (in some of these drowned tree colonies over 30% of the nest trees from 1991 have gone). Perhaps the nest hollows in the remaining trees in these colonies are no longer suitable for Regent Parrots to nest in. So, where are the Regents that once nested here? There are several stands of live trees (with what appear to be suitable hollows for nesting) in that section of the river, but few of these are used by Regent Parrots. The more we find out about these fascinating birds, the more we realize we do not know

Nest Camera Project

Only one of the 4 nests that we filmed last year is occupied by Regent Parrots this year.

The camera being used this year was installed late in the season and so only fledging data from this one nest will be obtained this year. We will endeavour to return to a 4 nest, whole of season camera surveillance next year.

Disease testing

A total of 27 Regent Parrots have been captured this year and 25 of these have been tested for disease. Two of these also had foot lesions. Preliminary results from the blood samples collected during 2012 indicate that there are signs of early stages of beak and feather disease present in some individuals. We are awaiting results of tests from those captured this year to see if the disease has progressed.

Tracking Regent Parrots

Radio transmitters were placed on some of the Regent Parrots captured. The trials carried out on captive birds were successful, as the trackers have remained on the birds, with one bird still being tracked over two months after the tracker was placed on it using the harness that the team developed during the aviary trials. This has provided excellent information on feeding, nesting and roosting locations. Now that this harness system has been refined, 4 satellite trackers will soon be placed on birds so we can track where they roam for the rest of the year.

Community sightings

Over 400 sightings of Regent Parrots were reported during the past 18 months. These have all been plotted and provide information on important areas for the birds at different times of the year. The 1800 Parrot number will not operate after 31st December, but we hope to obtain funding next year to set it going again accompanied by a television promotion. Sightings can still be reported by telephoning DEWNR (8595 2111) or through the web site www.regentparrot.org

SA Regent Parrot Recovery Team

Two of the hardest working members of our team are leaving SA to work on larger parrots in South America. We wish Ellen Ryan-Colton and Luke Ireland every success and happiness for the future and offer a huge thank you to them for the outstanding effort they have put into this project. We will miss them greatly.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2014 from the "team".

Kevin Smith