



Our interventions help baby parrots to fly.

The 2023 nesting season started terribly for Golden-shouldered Parrots on Artemis. At one stage every nest we were monitoring failed. But our emergency interventions turned that around.



A dismal start

The graphic photo above says it all... a large yellow-spotted monitor broke into this nest and ate all five Golden-shouldered Parrot chicks.

We understand that predation is a natural and important process, but when prey numbers are so perilously low - as they are with the endangered Golden-shouldered Parrot - we need to take interim actions to reduce it.

By early May this year, every parrot nest we found had failed. Given an average clutch size of 5 eggs, this amounted to about 35 baby parrots that would never be added to the population.

We monitored some nests 24/7 with small cameras and so we found out why they failed: tree-snakes and goannas.

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A shocking trial

As a response, from May onwards, we built electric fences around active parrot nests to safeguard vulnerable nestlings from snakes, goannas and any other ground-based predators, like feral cats.

The setup was an outer ring of two wires to stop wandering cattle. Closer to the nest we built a second, much lower barrier, with 5 or 6 narrowly-spaced wires. Both barriers were connected to a solar-powered energizer that delivered a powerful (but harmless) electric shock to any would-be nest robber.



Not knowing if it would work, including how the adult parrots would respond, and given our limited budget, we started with a relatively small and cautious trial. We purchased enough equipment to protect a few nests at a time and monitored them daily. As one nest finished, we quickly moved the equipment to another.

100% success so far

So far, every single nest where we installed electric barrier fencing has been successful. There remain two active nests with advanced chicks that are due to fledge any day now. If these little guys fly away successfully, the fenced nests will have added 23 new parrots to the Artemis population.



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Big plans for next year

As this year's nesting season comes to a close, we are already looking ahead to the next one. Our aim for 2024 will be to install fences around every active nest we find. With more searching, we estimate we can find 20 active nests on Artemis next year. Given the 5 egg per nest average, we're talking about being able to add 100 or so parrots to the population next year alone. This will be a significant outcome not just for the Artemis population, but the species generally.



Our longer term aim is to protect nests with fences for the next few years as an interim management action designed to increase Golden-shouldered Parrot "recruitment rates" - the rate at which parrots are recruited to the adult cohort. This, along with other intensive interim measures, will secure the population while our broader goal of reducing predation pressure through habitat restoration catches up.

Keep an eye out for future updates about other aspects of our integrated management program.

Adding 100 new parrots to the Artemis population in 2024 will cost money.

In addition to equipment costs (approx. \$13,000),

maintaining these fences takes considerable time. For example, we need to keep the area under the fences clear of grass, otherwise they will "short" and not deliver the shock we need to deter predators. The demanding tasks of setting, maintaining and moving fences will need a dedicated field worker for the 4 month breeding season. That adds another \$30,000 to the cost of the program.

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A young Golden-shouldered Parrot emerges and gets set to take its first flight. He (we can tell from the blue cheeks) was one of SIX nest-mates that survived through the vulnerable nestling phase thanks to our electric barrier fencing.

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