

RACE TO PROTECT RARE NIGHT PARROT DETECTED ON QUEENSLAND CATTLE STATION

The historic discovery extends our knowledge of one of Australia's most enigmatic species

Conservation Partners is excited to announce the potential discovery of a second Night Parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*) population in Queensland, following dozens of call recordings at a remote cattle station.

This discovery represents a potential new population of the very rare species, more than 150 km from the only currently known QLD location.

Although the population has only just been detected, experts are already very concerned about its future. They are urgently [fundraising](#) to return to the property, identify the breeding location, and protect it from feral cats.

The night parrot calls were detected using specialised automated acoustic recorders during a multi-year monitoring study that searched for the bird across vast areas of arid outback Queensland.

The detection was made by scientists at Conservation Partners, a not-for-profit organisation that works with landholders to secure populations of threatened species on the brink of extinction.

Not only is this discovery significant for future conservation efforts of Night Parrots, it's also another demonstration of the high biodiversity values that exist on cattle stations, and how these can be protected through partnerships with landholders.

The surveys were partly funded by Queensland Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation under Threatened Species Research Grants and by private donations to Conservation Partners.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of Night Parrot conservation and the risk of disturbance, the exact location will remain undisclosed to protect this population.

Conservation Partners founder and ecologist Dr Steve Murphy said a second population would make a big difference to the long-term survival of the species in Queensland.

"This discovery shows how important pastoral properties can be to biodiversity conservation.

"Night parrots are a remarkable nocturnal desert bird that nests on the ground in spinifex clumps.

"Sadly, their numbers plummeted quickly after Europeans introduced cats to arid inland Australia.

"Numbers fell so low they were no confirmed sightings for a century, and it gained a legendary status as arid Australia's 'ghost bird.' There was genuine concern that it could be extinct.

"So, the discovery of a population on a cattle station in Queensland thirteen years ago was incredibly exciting for the conservation sector and gave us a rare chance to prevent extinction.

"If we can confirm that this is a second Queensland population, and work with the station owners to protect this population, it would be very significant for the long-term conservation of the species," said Dr Murphy.

"We actually think they are likely to breed really soon, as there have been good rains and grass will be seeding.

"They nest on the ground. And when they are nesting and caring for young, they call a lot more which makes them extra vulnerable to being killed by feral cats.

"We need to get back out there and identify the breeding site, which could be tens of kilometres away from where we detected the calls, which we think is a feeding area.

"Then we will undertake feral cat control around the site, to stop the vulnerable breeding birds and chicks from being killed by cats.

"The population may be as low as a dozen birds, so a single cat could be devastating.

"We are currently [fundraising](#) to enable that work. Without it, the population could wink out before we even learn much about it."

Media enquiries: Dr Steve Murphy: 0458 171714; steve.murphy@conservationpartners.org.au

ABOUT CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Conservation Partners is an Australian conservation organisation specialising in practical threat abatement. Working across all land tenures, especially on privately owned farms, we co-design land management solutions with landholders to secure populations of threatened species on the brink of extinction.