

Nomadic swift parrot find the best food sources

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Scientists have discovered the nomadic swift parrot has an uncanny ability to find the best food supplies across the whole of Tasmania each year.

The finding is part of ongoing research into the Tasmanian [swift parrot](#) by Dr Dejan Stojanovic from The Australian National University

(ANU). The latest study aimed to better understand nomadic animals and why they move around.

"By moving to where there is plenty of [food](#), we've found swift parrots produce a stable number of offspring each year compared to less mobile animals, who have no choice but to make the best of local conditions," Dr Stojanovic said.

However, he said it was unclear how swift parrots managed to find where the richest patches of tree flowering occur.

Swift parrot food availability fluctuates and only small patches of forest flower in a given year.

Previous ANU studies have found the swift parrot is facing population collapse and could be extinct within 16 years. The iconic Tasmanian birds are preyed upon by sugar gliders, especially in areas of deforestation.

Dr Stojanovic said the latest research found the benefits of moving to rich patches of food was outweighed by the cost of living in forests where sugar gliders are abundant.

"The research shows that even though swift parrots are superbly evolved to cope with unpredictable conditions in Tasmania, deforestation and predation threaten to push this species into extinction," he said.

"We need to protect forests that support swift parrot food trees so that we increase the pool of potential resources for breeding swift parrots."

Dr Stojanovic has run a [crowdfunding campaign](#) which has raised more than \$66,000 to help protect critically endangered birds, and support continues to grow.

More information: "Exploiting the richest patch has a fitness pay-off for the migratory swift parrot." *Journal of Animal Ecology*.
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Provided by Australian National University

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