

New study could offer helping hand for picky parrots

December 11 2020



Credit: Difficult Bird Research Group

New research has shown just how picky the iconic superb parrot is about the types of tree hollows they nest in, with the discovery potentially key to protecting the threatened species.

One of the lead authors of the study, Dr. Dejan Stojanovic from The Australian National University (ANU), says while the superb parrot is a

much-loved Australian bird, until now, little was known about what kind of habitat it needs.

"Understanding the type of hollows animals need, and how abundant they are, is a critical step for [conservation](#)," Dr. Stojanovic said.

"Superb parrots like hollows in large tree limbs that have deep chambers, wide entrances and enough space on the floor for a big family.

"This particular combination of traits is especially rare, and only 0.5 percent of tree hollows in a woodland actually fit these criteria."

The paper showed that very few mature [trees](#) have suitable hollows for the picky parrots. The researchers say this reinforces the need to protect their nests.

"Baby parrots must be delicious, so they like to nest in hollows where the chicks are harder to reach by predators. This is why good hollows are critical for threatened species recovery," Dr. Stojanovic said.

Superb [parrots](#) are listed as vulnerable, and potential shortages of suitable tree hollows may limit their populations in landscapes where large trees are rare.

This study is part of a partnership between ANU and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

Dr. Laura Rayner, Senior Ecologist from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, and a lead author on the study said: "These results will help us identify and protect these very rare and valuable nesting trees.

"Land managers, like ACT Parks and Conservation Service, use practical

information based in strong science like this report to help us protect superb parrot habitat.

"This research will be used alongside the Government's ACT Native Woodland Conservation Strategy, which guides the protection, restoration and management of our precious woodlands-and the plants and animals that live in them-for the next 10 years."

The research is published in the journal *Forest Ecology and Management*.

More information: Dejan Stojanovic et al. Suitable nesting sites for specialized cavity dependent wildlife are rare in woodlands, *Forest Ecology and Management* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.foreco.2020.118718](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2020.118718)

Provided by Australian National University

Citation: New study could offer helping hand for picky parrots (2020, December 11) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-12-picky-parrots.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.