



Photo: Chris Tzaros

Swift Parrots are bright green and have red underwings and a long pointy tail. They get their name from their swift flight.

## SWIFT PARROTS NEED YOU TO LOOK AFTER YOUR BLUE AND BLACK GUMS

Swift Parrots (*Lathamus discolor*) migrate each year from mainland Australia to Tasmania, breeding in late spring and summer when Blue gums and Black gums are flowering.

Swift Parrots can only nest where there are old eucalypts containing hollows, and where they can feed nearby on the blossoms of Blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and Black gum (*E. ovata*). The more of these gums in the area, and the closer they are to tree-hollows suitable for nesting, the better for the parrots.



Photo: Chris Tzaros

Nesting trees can be of any sort of eucalypt as long as they have suitable hollows (a). Flowering Blue gum (b) and Black gum (c) trees are both important for foraging.



Photo: Rob Wiltshire

Swift Parrots have declined dramatically to fewer than 1,000 breeding pairs, chiefly because their forest habitat has been cleared and altered. All the main forest types used by breeding Swift Parrots have been affected in Tasmania; for instance, less than 30% of the original area of dry Blue gum forest remains, and only 3% of Black gum forest.

Another significant threat is death or injury when their rapid flight causes them to collide with windows, fences and overhead wires. Changes to habitat can lead to increased competition from other birds which use tree-hollows for nesting in degraded areas.

Because their survival is so tied to their breeding habitat, the fate of Swift Parrots is in our hands - every little action that we take today can go a long way towards ensuring that future generations continue to see and hear these birds.



# AND FORTY-SPOTTED PARDALOTES NEED YOU TO LOOK AFTER YOUR WHITE GUMS

The Forty-spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus quadragintus*) is a threatened species found only in Tasmania with half its population confined to Bruny Island.

These birds need White gums (*E. viminalis*) as habitat; they nest in hollows within old trees, and feed on manna (a sugary substance) and insects from White gums of any age. They also need a water source close by.

Forty-spotted Pardalotes have long been restricted to a small part of Tasmania, although they once had a more

widespread distribution. Unlike the migratory Swift Parrot, these birds are residents, living all year round in a few remaining locations. Their numbers have declined by an estimated 60% over the past 17 years, probably because the quality of their habitat has deteriorated.

Improving the health and extent of White gum forest are the keys to securing the species' future: every patch of White gums retained will help prevent further decline, while every new planting can help it expand its range.

Photo: Chris Tzaros



a.



b.

Photo: Chris Tzaros



c.

Photo: Chris Tzaros

The lack of head markings of the Forty-spotted Pardalote (a) helps distinguish them from the commoner Spotted (b), and Striated (c) Pardalotes (*P. punctatus* and *P. striatus*, respectively).





Swift Parrots nest (blue regions) in suitable forest containing old trees in the southern, eastern and north-western regions of Tasmania; however, where they choose to settle varies from year to year according to where the Blue gum is flowering. Historic observations of Forty-spotted Pardalotes (red points) have been restricted to five main populations: at Tinderbox, Lime Bay and on Maria, Bruny and Flinders Islands.

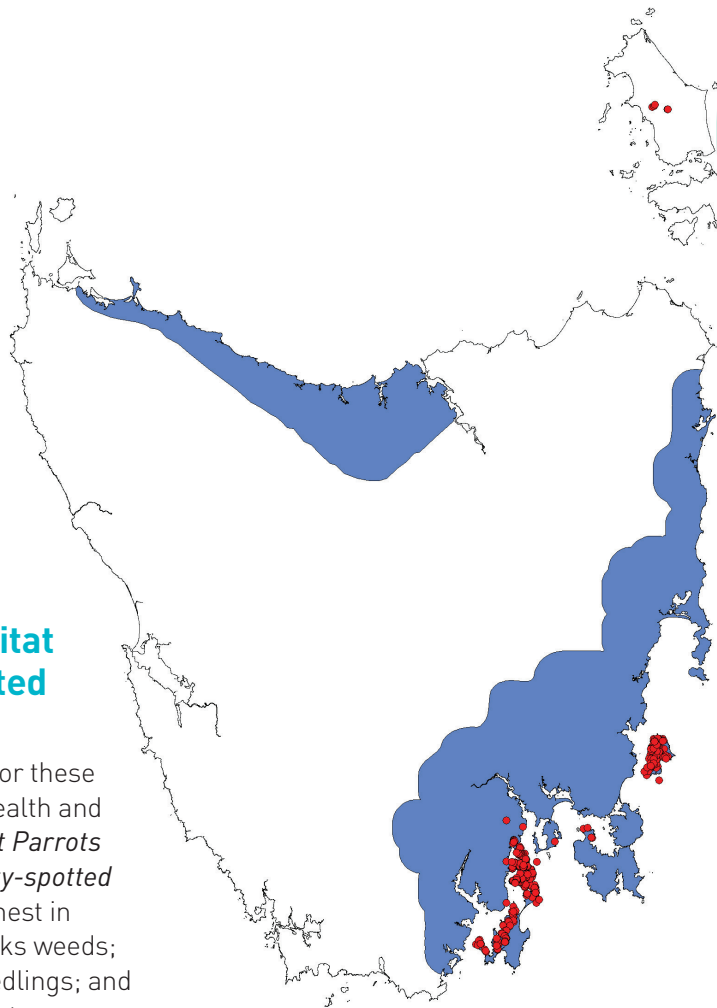
## What can you do to help?

### You can retain and improve habitat for Swift Parrot and Forty-spotted Pardalote on your land

The value of your bush in providing a home for these threatened birds is determined by its age, health and by the types of eucalypt trees present – *Swift Parrots need Blue gums and Black gums, while Forty-spotted Pardalotes need White gums*. Both species nest in hollows of old trees. The healthiest bush lacks weeds; has vigorous mature trees, saplings and seedlings; and supports a diverse range of understorey plants.

Where the health of the bush has declined, it can be revitalised by removing weeds, maintaining fences to control grazing pressure, and leaving fallen trees in place to protect new seedlings from drought and browsers. Further information about managing habitat can be found at [www.nrmsouth.org.au](http://www.nrmsouth.org.au)

While both threatened bird species require intact bushland, isolated trees in paddocks or suburban areas can be an important food resource for Swift Parrots when they have large amounts of flowers. Even relatively small areas of bush habitat can make a big difference for the Forty-spotted Pardalote, as areas of less than half a hectare can provide a vital resource.



**Below:** Swift Parrots are migratory and do not breed in the same area every year, so if you have suitable bush on your land and you look after it well, or if you create some suitable habitat by planting, then you may one day be rewarded with a family of these colourful visitors.



Photo: Chris Tzaros



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*Diverse plantings including understorey plants are more likely to be used by Swift Parrots and Forty-spotted Pardalotes in the future.*

## By planting, you can help create future habitat for Swift Parrots and Forty-spotted Pardalotes

To improve the chances of these birds using your plantings:

- Use local seed. Blue gums grown from mainland seed don't flower at the right time, so you should find out where your local nursery sources their seed before you buy.
- Plant a mix of species including Blue gums, Black gums and a range of other local trees, shrubs and understorey plants. If you also plant White gums then your efforts may also benefit the Forty-spotted Pardalote. For a list of local plants, see [www.nrmsouth.org.au](http://www.nrmsouth.org.au)
- Plant in patches rather than rows, and ideally use your plantings to expand or link up existing areas of bush already containing Blue gums, Black gums, White gums or old eucalypts.
- Prepare sites well prior to planting, and keep up the maintenance afterwards.

## Legal protection for the Swift Parrot and Forty-spotted Pardalote

These birds and their habitats are protected under state and federal legislation. If you are planning any activity that might impact on Swift Parrot or Forty-spotted

Pardalote habitats then you should contact your local council, the Forest Practices Authority or Threatened Species Section (DPIPWE) for advice.

## Information and advice

This information sheet has been prepared by NRM South in collaboration with many organisations involved in supporting landholders to secure a future for Swift Parrots and Forty-spotted Pardalotes. For further information, and for links to the contact details of these organisations, see [www.nrmsouth.org.au](http://www.nrmsouth.org.au)

*This project was supported by the following organisations:*

