

Ringneck Parrot

FAMILY: *Psittacidae*

GENUS: *Barnardius*

SPECIES: *barnardi*

OTHER NAMES: Mallee Ringneck, Barnard's Parakeet, Ringneck, Bulla Bulla, Buln Buln.

Description:

Small to medium parrot. Overall body colour is green mottled with yellow. Red crown with blue ear coverts. Narrow yellow band behind the neck and a broad orange/yellow band across the abdomen (varies from individual to individual). The beak is a horny white colour. Adult females resemble males but with diluted colours, and immature birds resemble females.

Length: 350-380mm.

Subspecies:

There are several populations with distinctly different appearances but none of these is formally recognised as a subspecies. Basically, in the west of its distribution the Ringneck has a black head, in the south-east green and in the Cloncurry Mount-Isa region (Qld) this bird is smaller and relatively pallid.

Many aviculturalists recognise a number of subspecies: the Port Lincoln Parrot (*B. zonarius*), the Twenty-eight Parrot (*B. z. semitorquatus*) and the Cloncurry Ringneck (*B. macgillivrayi*).

Distribution:

Widespread across mainland Australia, west of the Great Dividing Range.

Habitat:

Open and semiarid woodlands and scrubs, riparian woodland in the north, mallee in the east and eucalypt forest in the west. Also roadside timber, farmland and orchards.

Diet:

Varied, but consists mostly of seeds, nuts and fruits.

Breeding:

August to January.

Usual nesting site is a tree cavity, quite close to the ground (3-5m). The nest is lined with wood dust.

The female incubates alone but the male attends and feeds her. Both parents are involved in rearing the young.

In captivity, Ringneck Parrots will breed in either logs or boxes. The Ringneck is a rather fussy nester and it is therefore best policy to provide them with a choice of each receptacle. A log should be around 80cm in height with an internal diameter of about 30cm and suspended vertically.

A box of around 60cm x 20cm x 20cm is also suitable. These should ideally be positioned at a slight angle, and supplied with an internal ladder to facilitate easy entry and exit from the nest. The preferred nesting material is wood shavings.

Courtship Display:

Like many of the rosellas, male Ringnecks front a hen and open the wings slightly to reveal the blue patch on the shoulders. In addition, they spread their tail feathers and wag it in a side to side motion. This behaviour is accompanied by much musical chattering and occasionally head bobbing.

Sexual Maturity:

The Ringneck is sexually mature and capable of breeding at the age of 2 years.

Clutch:

5-6 white eggs (29x23mm). Incubation period: 20days. Fledging usually occurs at about 35 days.

Mutations and Hybrids:

Ringnecks have hybridised with the Eastern Rosella, Western Rosella, the Adelaide Rosella and each of the varieties named above.

The only known mutation of this species is a blue variety