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Proposal to amend the Live Import List to delete unassessed psittacine specimens

Purpose

The Australian Government proposes to delete from the *List of Specimens Taken to be Suitable for Live Import* (the Live Import List) those psittacine (parrot) specimens that have not undergone an environmental risk assessment.

Background

The Live Import List

The Live Import List is established under section 303EB(1) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The list has two Parts:

- Part 1 contains unregulated specimens that can be brought into Australia without a permit, including domestic species such as dogs, cats and horses. Part 1 must not include specimens listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Part 2 comprises allowable regulated specimens that can be imported under certain conditions and that require a permit under the EPBC Act. Conditions and restrictions may be imposed on any imports of these specimens.

Existing status of psittacines on the Live Import List

There are 33 psittacine species (17 exotic and 16 native species) listed in Part 2 (allowable regulated specimens) of the Live Import List (refer Table 1 below).

Thirty of these species have **not** undergone an environmental risk assessment, as these species were grandfathered to the Live Import List from the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982* in 2002.

In addition to exotic species, native species must also be assessed as captive breeding can result in physical or behavioural modifications or adaptations that differentiate them from specimens occurring naturally in Australia. Such variations may impact on native populations of the species if an imported specimen were to establish populations in Australia.

Psittacine imports

In 1995, due to an incomplete knowledge of certain diseases of psittacine birds and the lack of suitable methods for testing imported birds for the presence of these diseases, the import policy for live psittacines from approved countries was suspended.

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The only psittacine birds that can currently be imported into Australia are pet birds from New Zealand whose owners are moving to Australia to reside permanently, and that are species already included on the Live Import List.

In 2016, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) commenced a non-regulated import risk review under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* for psittacine birds from all countries (the psittacine review) in response to ongoing requests from pet owners, hobbyists and zoos to develop a safe importation pathway for parrots. In light of comments provided by stakeholders on the draft psittacine review report released in July 2020, further consideration of the potential biosecurity risks relating to the environment is being undertaken. The Biosecurity Advice providing the latest update on the status of the review can be found [here](#).

Finalisation of the psittacine review would provide import conditions to manage the biosecurity risks associated with the importation of psittacine birds and all psittacines on the Live Import List would be eligible for import. Some of these specimens may become highly invasive in Australia and could impact native threatened species.

Native threatened species

There are 56 species of psittacine birds in Australia, 26 of which are listed under the EPBC Act. Of these, 4 species are extinct, 4 are critically endangered, 9 are endangered and 9 are vulnerable (refer Appendix A below). Some of these species have populations with very small numbers of individuals, for example 50 orange bellied parrots, fewer than 250 night parrots and fewer than 175 western ground parrots. Nine species are listed as priority species under the [Australian Government's 2021-2031 Threatened Species Strategy](#).

Responsibilities

Threatened native psittacine species are Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act. There has been significant investment by Australian, state and territory governments in recovery programs to protect these species and further consideration is needed to ensure these species and programs are not compromised by the introduction of potentially invasive species.

Australia has an obligation under Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 6 of the [Convention of Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) to 'Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands.' Removal of unassessed species from the Live Import List supports Australia's obligations under the CBD.

Furthermore, [Australia's Strategy for Nature](#) include objectives to 'maximise the number of species secured in nature' and 'reduce threats and risks to nature and build resilience'. A measure of success includes 'minimise incursion and spread of new and emerging invasive species'.

Threats from introduced species

Impacts

Introduced species can have significant impacts on ecosystem function and biodiversity, leading to changes in the abundance, diversity, and behaviour of native species. They can outcompete native species for resources such as food, water, and habitat; and may have greater reproductive potential, higher environmental tolerances, or more efficient use of resources.

Some psittacine specimens on the Live Import List have the potential to become highly invasive in Australia and may carry diseases that could impact native threatened species. Invasive pest birds are a severe hazard to agricultural and natural systems in Australia, inflicting annual losses of about AU\$313 million (Gong et al. 2009, Pimentel et al. 2005).

Introduced species can also bring new diseases to Australia that native species may not be adapted to, leading to declines or even extinctions. Novel infectious diseases bear a great risk for populations of naïve host species (Dirren et al. 2021) and are one of the most significant disease risks for conservation management programs (Lyles & Dobson 1993). The biosecurity risk of pests and diseases associated with imported psittacine birds is assessed by DAFF. This assessment includes consideration of the potential consequences relating to the environment both directly (including the life and health of wildlife) and indirectly (including biodiversity, endangered species and ecosystems).

Risk of escape

Over 5,000 pet birds were reported to be missing on animal websites during the last 15 years in Australia, 90% of which were parrots (Vall-Llosera & Cassey 2017). Given that an estimated 13% of Australian households keep pet birds, private keeping may pose the greatest potential risk to establishment and subsequent invasion. Similarly, an analysis of records from Australian zoos revealed that over a third of all vertebrate release events were bird escapes, and that bird escapes were significantly less likely to be retrieved than any other taxa (Cassey & Hogg 2015). The risk that parrots could establish as feral populations in Australia is relatively high and could incur significant financial losses to agriculture and the environment.

For example, in Australia, the ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) is on the Live Import List and is classified as an 'extreme' threat by the Environment and Invasives Committee (EIC). The ring-necked parakeet can cause significant harm to grain crops, oil-seed crops, fruits and vegetable crops in their native range, and are a known pest of multiple commodities currently grown in Australia, such as cereals, vegetables, citrus fruit and grapes (Vall-Llosera et al. 2017). Escapes of newly imported psittacine species could result in significant impacts to agriculture and the environment.

Proposal to delete unassessed specimens

The 1995 import ban has been an effective control measure to prevent invasive parrots establishing in Australia. With the possibility of the ban being lifted, the department has recommended to the minister that she consider deleting those psittacine specimens that have not undergone a departmental risk assessment to mitigate the risk of unassessed psittacine species becoming invasive in Australia and carrying diseases that could impact native threatened species.

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The department proposes to delete from the Live Import List all psittacine specimens that have not undergone a departmental risk assessment. The 30 species recommended for deletion are listed in Table 1.

Three species (*Ara rubrogenys*, *Psittacus Erithacus* and *Pyrrhura frontalis*) have undergone an environmental risk assessment and **are not** proposed for deletion.

Once the DAFF review recommending import conditions for psittacines is finalised, and if it permits psittacines to be imported from other countries, potential importers from countries other than New Zealand would then be able to make an application to amend the Live Import List to include individual species. New Zealand residents planning to move to Australia may make an application at any time. This would trigger the department to undertake an environmental risk assessment using the most current scientific literature to ensure that risks are adequately assessed and control measures, such as conditions on import and keeping, are applied.

For more information on the application process, see the DCCEEW website - [Live Import List](#).

Table 1 List of psittacine species on the Live Import List.

Those that have not been risk assessed, as indicated in the last column, are recommended for deletion.

Taxon	Common Name	Conditions for import as stated on the Live Import List	Risk assessment completed?
Exotic species			
<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>	Peach-faced Lovebird, Rosy-faced Lovebird		No
<i>Amazona aestiva</i>	Blue-fronted Amazon		No
<i>Amazona ochrocephala</i>	Yellow-crowned Amazon		No
<i>Ara ararauna</i>	Blue and Yellow Macaw		No
<i>Ara chloroptera</i>	Green-winged Macaw		No
<i>Ara macao</i>	Scarlet Macaw		No
<i>Ara rubrogenys</i>	Red-fronted Macaw	Specimens and progeny must be microchipped and a DNA sample kept and provided to the Australian Government on request.	Yes
<i>Diopsittaca nobilis</i>	Red-shouldered Macaw, Hahn's Macaw, Noble Macaw		No
<i>Guaruba guarouba</i>	Golden Parakeet		No
<i>Lorius garrulus</i>	Chattering Lory		No
<i>Lorius lory</i>	Black-Capped Lory		No
<i>Pionites melanocephalus</i>	Black-headed Caique, Black-headed Parrot		No

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Taxon	Common Name	Conditions for import as stated on the Live Import List	Risk assessment completed?
<i>Pseudeos fuscata</i>	Dusky Lory		No
<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	Alexandrine Parakeet		No
<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Ring-neck Parakeet		No
<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	African Grey Parrot	For eligible non-commercial purposes only. Specimens and progeny must be microchipped and a DNA sample kept and provided to the Australian Government on request.	Yes
<i>Pyrrhura frontalis</i>	Maroon-bellied Conure	For eligible non-commercial purposes only. Specimens and progeny must be microchipped and a DNA sample kept and provided to the Australian Government on request.	Yes
Australian native species			
<i>Barnardius zonarius barnardi</i>	Mallee Ringneck Parrot	None	No
<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Sulphur Crested Cockatoo	None	No
<i>Cacatua leadbeateri</i>	Major Mitchell Cockatoo	None	No
<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>	Little Corella	None	No
<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Gang Gang Cockatoo	None	No
<i>Eolophus roseicapillus</i>	Galah, Roseate Cockatoo	None	No
<i>Eos bornea</i>	Red Lory	None	No
<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	Budgerigar	None	No
<i>Neophema elegans</i>	Elegant Parrot	None	No
<i>Neophema pulchella</i>	Turquoise Parrot	None	No
<i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	Cockatiel	None	No
<i>Platyercus elegans</i>	Crimson Rosella	None	No
<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>	Princess Parrot	None	No
<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	Red Rumped Parrot	None	No
<i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	None	No
<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet	None	No

More information

Learn more about the [Live Import List - DCCEEW](#).

Find more information on the status of the [DAFF psittacine import risk review](#).

Detailed information on recovery plans for native parrots can be found on [Recovery plans - DCCEEW](#).

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Learn more about EPBC Act Threatened species on the [Species Profile and Threats Database](#).

Appendix A: EPBC Act list of threatened psittacines

Genus, species (subspecies, population)	Common Name	Status
<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Gang-gang Cockatoo	Endangered
<i>Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne</i>	South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Endangered
<i>Calyptorhynchus banksii naso</i>	Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Karrak	Vulnerable
<i>Calyptorhynchus baudinii</i>	Baudin's Cockatoo, Long-billed Black-Cockatoo	Endangered
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus</i>	Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Glossy Black-Cockatoo (South Australian)	Endangered
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami</i>	South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Vulnerable
<i>Calyptorhynchus latirostris</i>	Carnaby's Cockatoo, Short-billed Black-Cockatoo	Endangered
<i>Cyanoramphus cookii</i>	Norfolk Island Green Parrot, Tasman Parakeet, Norfolk Island Parakeet	Endangered
<i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae erythrotis</i>	Macquarie Island Red-fronted Parakeet, Red-crowned Parakeet (Macquarie Island)	Extinct
<i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae subflavescens</i>	Lord Howe Tasman Parakeet, Red-crowned Parakeet (Lord Howe Island)	Extinct
<i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma coxeni</i>	Coxen's Fig-Parrot	Critically endangered
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Critically endangered
<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri leadbeateri</i>	Eastern Major Mitchell's cockatoo	Endangered
<i>Neophema chrysogaster</i>	Orange-bellied Parrot	Critically endangered
<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>	Blue-winged Parrot	Vulnerable
<i>Nestor productus</i>	Norfolk Island Kaka	Extinct
<i>Pezoporus flaviventris</i>	Western Ground Parrot, Kyloring	Critically endangered
<i>Pezoporus occidentalis</i>	Night Parrot	Endangered
<i>Platycercus caledonicus brownii</i>	Green Rosella (King Island)	Vulnerable
<i>Platycercus elegans melanopterus</i>	Kangaroo Island Crimson Rosella	Vulnerable
<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>	Princess Parrot, Alexandra's Parrot	Vulnerable
<i>Polytelis anthoepus monarchoides</i>	Regent Parrot (eastern)	Vulnerable
<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>	Superb Parrot	Vulnerable
<i>Probosciger aterrimus macgillivrayi</i>	Palm Cockatoo (Australian)	Vulnerable
<i>Psephotus chrysopterygius</i>	Golden-shouldered Parrot, Alwal, Thaku, Arrmorral, Minpin	Endangered
<i>Psephotus pulcherrimus</i>	Paradise Parrot	Extinct

References

- [The Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy 2021–2031 DAWE 2021](#), Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, April. CC BY 4.0.
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Acknowledgement of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this nation and their ongoing connection to culture and country. We acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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