

= Australian ringneck =

The Australian ringneck (*Barnardius zonarius*) is a parrot native to Australia . Except for extreme tropical and highland areas , the species has adapted to all conditions . Traditionally , two species were recognised in the genus *Barnardius* , the Port Lincoln parrot (*Barnardius zonarius*) and the mallee ringneck (*Barnardius barnardi*) , but the two species readily interbred at the contact zone and are now considered one species . Currently , four subspecies are recognised , each with a distinct range .

In Western Australia , the ringneck competes for nesting space with the rainbow lorikeet , an introduced species . To protect the ringneck , culls of the lorikeet are sanctioned by authorities in this region . Overall , though , the ringneck is not a threatened species .

= = Description = =

The subspecies of the Australian ringneck differ considerably in colouration . It is a medium size species around 33 cm (11 in) long . The basic colour is green , and all four subspecies have the characteristic yellow ring around the hindneck ; wings and tail are a mixture of green and blue .

The *B. z. zonarius* and *B. z. semitorquatus* subspecies have a dull black head ; back , rump and wings are brilliant green ; throat and breast bluish @-@ green . The difference between these two subspecies is that *B. z. zonarius* has a yellow abdomen while *B. z. semitorquatus* has a green abdomen ; the latter has also a prominent crimson frontal band that the former lacks (the intermediate shown in the box has characteristics of both subspecies) . The two other subspecies differ from these subspecies by the bright green crown and nape and blush cheek @-@ patches . The underparts of *B. z. barnardi* are turquoise @-@ green with an irregular orange @-@ yellow band across the abdomen ; the back and mantle are deep blackish @-@ blue and this subspecies has a prominent red frontal band . The *B. z. macgillivrayi* is generally pale green , with no red frontal band , and a wide uniform pale yellow band across the abdomen .

The calls of the mallee ringneck and Cloncurry parrot have been described as " ringing " , and the calls of the Port Lincoln ringneck and twenty @-@ eight have been described as " strident " . The name of the twenty @-@ eight parrot is an onomatopoeic derived from its distinctive ' twentee @-@ eight ' call (or ' vingt @-@ huit ' , from an early French description) .

= = Taxonomy and naming = =

The Australian ringneck was first described by the English naturalist George Shaw in 1805 . It is a broad @-@ tailed parrot and related to the rosellas of the genus *Platycercus* ; it has been placed in that genus by some authorities , including Ferdinand Bauer .

Currently , four subspecies of ringneck are recognised , all of which have been described as distinct species in the past : (As of 1993 , the twenty @-@ eight and Cloncurry parrot were treated as subspecies of the Port Lincoln parrot and the mallee ringneck , respectively) .

Several other subspecies have been described , but are considered synonyms with one of the above subspecies . *B. z. occidentalis* has been synonymised with *B. z. zonarius* . Intermediates exist between all subspecies except for between *B. z. zonarius* and *B. z. macgillivrayi* . Intermediates have been associated with land clearing for agriculture in southern Western Australia .

The classification of this species is still debated , and molecular research by Joseph and Wilke in 2006 found that the complex split genetically into two clades ? one roughly correlating with *B. z. barnardi* and the other with the other three forms ; *B. z. macgillivrayi* was more closely related to *B. z. zonarius* than to the neighbouring *B. z. barnardi* . The researchers felt it was premature to reorganise the classification of the complex until more study was undertaken .

= = = Subspecies = = =

= = Behaviour = =

The Australian ringneck is active during the day and can be found in eucalypt woodlands and eucalypt @-@ lined watercourses . The species is gregarious and depending on the conditions can be resident or nomadic . In trials of growing hybrid eucalypt trees in dry environments parrots , especially the Port Lincoln parrot , caused severe damage to the crowns of the younger trees during the research period between 2000 ? 3 .

= = = Feeding = = =

This species eats a wide range of foods that include nectar , insects , seeds , fruit , and native and introduced bulbs . It will eat orchard @-@ grown fruit and is sometimes seen as a pest by farmers .

= = = Breeding = = =

Breeding season for the northern populations starts in June or July , while the central and southern populations breed from August to February , but this can be delayed when climatic conditions are unfavourable . The nesting site is a hollow in a tree trunk . Generally four or five white oval eggs are laid measuring 29 mm x 23 mm , although a clutch may be as few as three and as many as six . Fledgling survival rates have been measured at 75 % .

= = Conservation = =

Although the species is endemic , the species is considered not threatened , but in Western Australia , the twenty @-@ eight subspecies (*B. z. semitorquatus*) gets locally displaced by the introduced rainbow lorikeets that aggressively compete for nesting places . The rainbow lorikeet is considered a pest species in Western Australia and is subject to eradication in the wild .

In Western Australia , a licence is required to keep or dispose of more than four Port Lincoln ringnecks . All four subspecies are sold in the Canary Islands and in Australia , and they are traded via the CITES convention . The sale of the Cloncurry parrot is restricted in Queensland . The Australian ringneck can suffer from psittacine beak and feather disease , which causes a high nestling mortality rate in captivity .