



The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia

Princess Parrot Princess Alexandra Parrot Rose-throated Parrot

(*Polytelis alexandrae*)

Article supplied by Des Dowling

This undoubtedly is one of Australia's most beautiful parrots with its superb pastel colouring in shades of blues, pinks, olive greens and greys.

They are long, slender, and high flyers in the wild. The cock bird has a bright blue crown and a long tapering tail and as it matures, a spatule appears on its primary feather.

Habitat

These birds are nomadic chasing food in the shape of grass, plants, seeds, Casuarina, Spinifex, mulga, eucalyptus and acacia. They habitat the dry inland deserts areas of central Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and Northern South Australia.

They fly high and fast over long distances across hilly ridges, dry creek beds and rough mountainous areas.

They usually breed in larger eucalyptus along old watercourses. However, they are very scarce and in fact, very few Australians have actually seen this bird in the wild, although many "birdos" have been searching for years.

Aviary Breeding

Princess Parrots breed freely in captivity and are the pride of many breeders right around the world. They prefer a large aviary with space to fly, which keeps them healthy and active.

They will breed in a colony or in single pairs but seem to get breeding stimulation from each other. They are gentle and easy going, not aggressive and are happy to share with any of the *Neophema* group. They will often go back for a second brood; September to November is their best breeding period.

They lay four to seven eggs and seem to handle a full nest of youngsters without any problems. Their placid nature makes them an ideal aviary bird. They take 21 to 24 days to hatch and the young take five to six weeks to fledge. The hen does most of the incubation and feeding with the cock bird feeding the hen. A nest depth of 70 to 80cm is preferred. If using a nest box or log, a fairly large nest space is desirable in order to allow six or seven young birds to be comfortable. It may even be preferable to hang the box or log at an angle to allow the youngsters to spread out.

As usual good food is essential for healthy birds and the normal parrot seed mix is standard, but they do like fruit such as apples, greens and sprouted seed and corn are welcome during the breeding season.



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Health

These birds like going to ground to pick up seed and coarse sand and this often allows worms to have easy access to the birds stomach so worming twice a year is important. Produce stores and Vets usually have suitable worming medicines.

Clean water is also important.

Colour Mutations

A very beautiful blue mutation has been around for several years and is very popular with many bird breeders chasing stock.

In addition, both yellow and white birds have been bred and they are absolutely wonderful birds. They are still in short supply and expensive but their future seems assured.

As Pets

These birds can be hand raised quite freely and make friendly and endearing pets. Although not big talkers, their inquisitiveness and easy going ways win many hearts and make them sought after as pets.

They have a long life around 25 years.

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