

# The parakeet problem!



The bright green plumage and piercing squawk of the ring-necked parakeet has become an increasingly common sight around Mahé in recent years as the population of this introduced species has grown rapidly. But as farmers around the island have already discovered it can have a devastating impact on a ripening fruit crop. And should it spread to Praslin it poses an even greater threat to one of the most famous symbols of Seychelles' unique environmental heritage, the Seychelles Black Parrot.

Conservationists fear that a combination of the ring-necked parakeet's aggressive territoriality and the fact that it carries the PBFV virus, which is deadly to many parrot species, would make it an unstoppable threat to the black parrot, if it succeeds in making the short flight to Praslin.

Should the RNP ever become established there the effects could be catastrophic. The black parrot is restricted to the island of Praslin and is highly vulnerable to threats such as

introduced species, diseases and natural disasters. While the status of the RNP in many other countries makes effective action impossible, Seychelles is in a rare and fortunate situation that the RNP's range is still limited and eradication is a feasible option. If the species spreads to other islands the chance to eradicate this pest and threat to Seychelles' native biodiversity could be lost.

The ring-necked parakeet (RNP) has a broad native range in southern Asia and northern Africa. It is the most widespread parrot species in the world with introduced breeding populations in more than 35 countries on five continents. The RNP was introduced to Seychelles in the last 30–40 years via escaped cage birds.

Drawing from lessons learned in a number of other countries – such as Mauritius, where the ring-necked parakeet caused problems for the critically endangered endemic echo parakeet recovery – the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) and the Environment Department (ED) have teamed up to launch an eradication campaign, funded by the European Union, before it's too late!

## To Kill Or Not To Kill?

The green parakeets we are starting to see around more frequently are considered to be an invasive species by ecologists, but beautiful new birds in our landscape to many others.

**What is your opinion – should Seychelles eradicate the green parakeet?**

**Do some research to find out the facts, talk to others, and have a debate with your friends!**

