

14/04/2024

Share Facebook X Pinterest LinkedIn

First Night Parrot genome sequenced

Scientists have sequenced the genome of Night Parrot, one of the world's rarest and most enigmatic birds, for the first time.

The breakthrough by researchers at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) – Australia's national science agency – is expected to provide valuable insights into the parrot's genetics and biology, potentially informing conservation strategies for this recently rediscovered bird, with a live parrot only photographed as recently as 2013.

Dr Leo Joseph, Director of CSIRO's Australian National Wildlife Collection, said: "The genome will enable us to explore the genetic basis of why the night parrot is nocturnal, a very unusual feature in parrots."

The research aims to learn more about the bird's navigation, sense of smell, bill shape, and its surprisingly poor night vision.



Night Parrot, described as the 'Holy Grail' of Australian birds, is one of the world's most enigmatic species (Elizabeth Gould).

Researchers plan to estimate past sizes of Night Parrot populations in Australia. The annotated genome will be compared with those of closely related species, shedding light on the reasons behind Night Parrot's scarcity and apparently limited distribution.

Dr Gunjun Pandey, who led the project, said: "This level of quality and detail just wasn't possible even five years ago."

The Night Parrot genome was sequenced from a deceased specimen found by Traditional Owners in the Pilbara region.

The bird's decline, thought to be down to environmental changes and predation by cats and foxes, has seen its range shrink to widely separated outposts in south-western Queensland and Western Australia.

Dr Pandey added: "The Night Parrot genome will open up numerous opportunities for further research to help conserve this species."

"This will empower scientists to develop a plan for saving the Night Parrot, which is the ultimate goal of sequencing the genome and making it publicly available."

Related Species

Night Parrot
Pezoporus occidentalis

Login to leave a comment

Return to List



Latest Rarities

View all sightings

Table with 2 columns: Date/Time and Species/Location. Includes sightings for Large Tortoiseshell, Spur-winged Lapwing, Glossy Ibis, and Green-winged Teal.

* Bird News Pro and Bird News Ultimate subscribers receive full sighting details.

Submit your sighting

Have you seen something interesting? Click Submit to share your rare bird sightings via our simple form.

Submit

Start Your Free Trial Today!

Latest Issue

On Sale: 25 April 2024

SUBSCRIBE

BUY NOW

BUY NOW iTunes

BUY NOW Google

BUY NOW Mac/PC

BirdGuides

- Sightings
Report a Sighting
Galleries
Species Guide
Sites
Records Archive

Content

- News
Reviews
Articles
Rarity Finders

Store

- Bookshop
BirdGuides Subscriptions
Free Trial
Renewals
Text Bundle Top Ups

Birdwatch

- About
Index
Latest Issue
Buy
Subscriptions
Renewals
Digital Edition

Help & Support

- Customer Service
Information
FAQ
Help Videos
Contact Us
Advertising

Policies

- Competition Terms
Cookie Policy
Privacy Policy
Terms of Sale
Terms of Use
Contributor Terms
Complaints Procedure
Subscriptions FAQ

Advertising Consent Options

