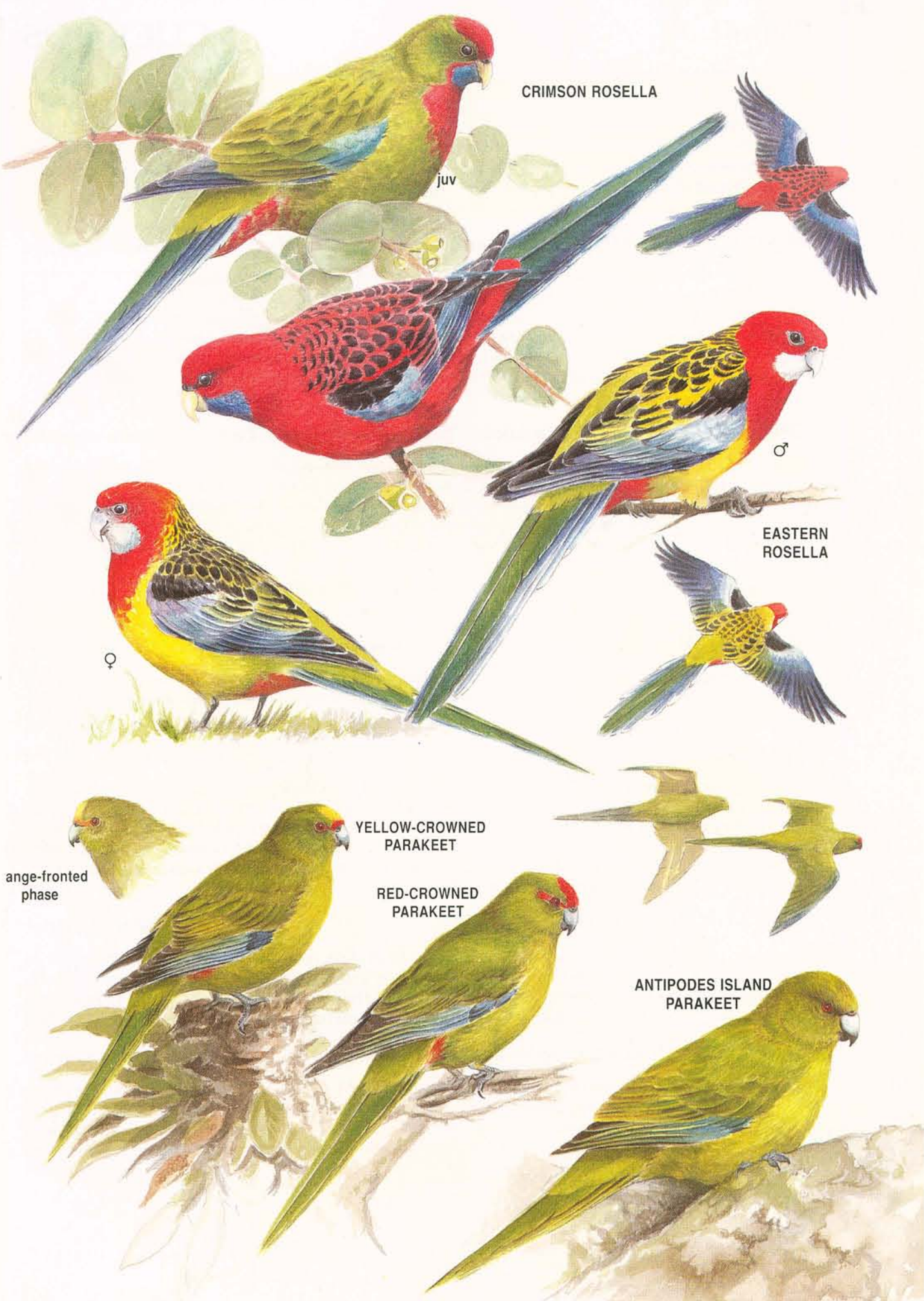
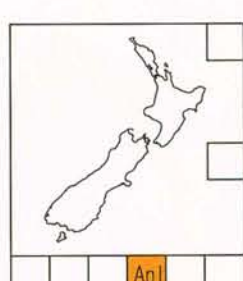


A large cosmopolitan family of often very colourful birds, but the NZ species are relatively drab, mainly green. All have a short bill with a horn covering (cere) enclosing the nostrils. The upper mandible is strongly curved, fitting neatly over the lower mandible. Their legs are short, and their feet have two toes pointing forward and two back.

**ANTIPODES ISLAND PARAKEET** *Cyanoramphus unicolor*

Locally common endemic

♂ 32 cm, ♀ 29 cm; 130 g. Visibly larger and plumper than other NZ parakeets. Entirely green head and body, except for blue on wing coverts and some flight feathers; underparts tinged yellow. **Habitat:** Tussock and scrub of Antipodes Is only. **Breeding:** Oct–Mar. [Sp 265]



**COCKATOOS and PARROTS**

Cacatuidae and Psittacidae

About 330 species worldwide; 10 breed in New Zealand. Five are endemic to New Zealand, 1 is native and 4 have been introduced.

Parrots are well known for their colourful plumage and are widely held in captivity.

All have a large head and eyes, a short neck, and a short, deep bill. Mainly herbivorous, although some also eat invertebrates. The upper mandible of the bill is strongly curved, sharply pointed, and hinged at the base so that the parrot can crack nuts or other

unyielding food. Parrots can use their bill as an extra limb, showing great agility at climbing. They have a large fleshy cere, surrounding the nostrils. Two toes are pointed forwards and two back, giving a strong grip. Parrots can hold food while shredding it and pass it to their mouth. Most parrots are gregarious, and many have loud, harsh voices. They mostly lay white eggs in holes in trees or in crevices in rocks.

**Reading:** Forshaw, J.M. & Cooper, W.T. 1978. *Parrots of the World*. Melbourne: Lansdowne.

**265. ANTIPODES ISLAND PARAKEET**

*Cyanoramphus unicolor* Plate 61

**Size:** Males 32 cm, females 29 cm; 130 g  
**Distribution:** Only at Antipodes Island and associated islets, including Bollons Island. They are most numerous in tall, dense tussocks and sedges, especially on lower parts of the islands, on steep slopes and along watercourses.  
**Population:** An estimate of 2000–3000 birds in 1978.  
**Conservation:** Protected endemic. At present there are no threats, but, with a very restricted natural range, they remain vulnerable to rats, should that predator ever get to the Antipodes. They adapt readily to captivity and are widely held in collections.  
**Breeding:** They nest in well-drained burrows in fibrous peat beneath vegetation, or in the thick, matted bases of tall tussocks. The burrow is often over a metre deep. Eggs are laid in October–January. In captivity, they lay 5–6 white eggs (27 x 23 mm), but in the wild only 1–3 newly fledged young are usually seen, and so the clutch may be smaller. The female alone incubates for c. 28 days. The

male helps by feeding the female and chicks by regurgitation. The young probably start breeding at 1 year old. They are probably quite long-lived; of 38 birds banded on Antipodes Island in 1969, two were recaptured 10 years later.  
**Behaviour:** Solitary or in family groups. They are sedentary and, although they can fly well, prefer to walk and climb through the vegetation, especially when feeding. With care, they can be approached closely. Their calls are similar to those of their ancestor, the Red-crowned Parakeet, but are lower-pitched.  
**Feeding:** They feed mainly on tussock and sedge leaves, holding them in one foot and chewing towards the tip, extracting the juices. They also eat seeds, berries and flowers, and fossick round the colonies of Rockhopper and Erect-crested Penguins for scraps of fat left on skua-killed penguin and petrel carcasses, and for remains of broken eggs.  
**Reading:** Taylor, R.H. 1975. *Notornis* 22: 110–121. Warham, J. & Bell, B.D. 1979. *Notornis* 26: 121–169.