



## Chatham Island red-crowned parakeet

*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae chathamensis*

28 cm

CHATHAM ISLANDS ENDEMIC SUBSPECIES,  
RANGE RESTRICTED

**Other name:** Chatham Island red-crowned kakariki



Chatham Island red-crowned parakeet, Rangatira. Photo: Dave Crouchley (DOC).

### Identification

The Chatham Island red-crowned parakeet has bright-green plumage, with a crimson forehead and crown to above the eye, and a small red patch just behind the eye. There is a red patch on the side of the rump; the wing coverts and some of the outer flight feathers are edged with violet-blue. Sexes are alike, although the male is slightly larger with a heavier bill. The Chatham Island red-crowned parakeet is slightly larger than the New Zealand red-crowned parakeet (*C.n. novaezelandiae*). Parakeets are distinctive in flight, with their direct, rapid flight over the canopy or through trees, and their long tails. Their call is a rapid loud chatter.

### Distribution and ecology

Chatham Island red-crowned parakeets are endemic to the Chatham Islands. They are currently found on Chatham and Pitt Islands and Rangatira, and in small numbers on Mangere and Tapuaenuku. Red-crowned parakeets declined to very low numbers on Chatham Island by the late 1960s, and were mainly confined to the southern forests. Numbers appear to have



recovered in southwestern Chatham Island in response to ongoing possum and feral cat control. Red-crowned parakeets have been observed occasionally in fenced forest remnants in northern Chatham Island. They are also common on Pitt Island; however, their stronghold is on Rangatira which supports a large population.

Red-crowned parakeets use open habitats such as forest margins, scrub and grassland as well as forest. They feed on leaves, shoots, flowers and seeds, but also take invertebrates, nectar and fruit. Nests are built in holes in trees, or occasionally in rock crevices or under dense vegetation. Breeding ecology is similar to that of Forbes' parakeet.

### Threats and conservation

Ongoing deterioration of Chatham and Pitt Island forests caused by browsing mammals, predation by feral cats on Chatham and Pitt Island, and rat predation on Chatham Island continue to limit red-crowned parakeet population recovery. The population on Mangere was culled during the 1970s-90s to protect the nationally endangered Forbes' parakeet by reducing hybridisation. This programme was stopped in 1999 while ecological and genetic research was undertaken on the Mangere parakeets.

The legal protection of Rangatira, and measures implemented to ensure the island remains free of introduced pests, provide important protection for red-crowned parakeets in their stronghold. Protection of forest habitat on Chatham and Pitt Islands by fencing to exclude stock, and the control of possums (Chatham Island only) and feral cats will allow expansion of red-crowned parakeets into areas they formerly occupied.



Chatham Island red-crowned parakeet, Rangatira. Photo: Colin Miskelly.