

## MITRED PARAKEET

*Psittacara mitrata*

Other: Mitred Conure, Mitered Parakeet

*P.m. mitrata*

### **naturalized (non-native) resident, recently established**

Mitred Parakeets are native to e. Peru, Bolivia, and extreme nw. Argentina (Forshaw 1989, AOU 2002). Escaped birds and/or naturalized populations have been reported since the 1980s in Puerto Rico, Florida, and s. California (Lever 1987; Collins and Kares 1997; Garrett 1997, 1998a; Butler 2005), and the species was added to the AOU Check-list as established in California and Florida by the AOU (2002). They feed on a variety of fruits and nuts and are considered a pest to agricultural endeavors. In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* a naturalized breeding population became established on Maui for at least 15 years (Runde and Pitt 2008), prompting its placement on the official Hawai'i Checklist by Pyle (2002). Breeding of escaped Mitred Parakeets may also have begun in the 1990-2000s on Hawai'i I and perhaps O'ahu, but confusion about identification persists on these islands due to similarity among Mitred, [Red-masked](#), and other *Psittacara* parakeets (see [Non-established Species](#) list), which co-exist and have been reported to hybridize elsewhere (McCarthy 2006). Mitred Parakeet had been placed in *Aratinga* until moved to genus *Psittacara* by AOU (2014).

In 1986 or 1987 at least one pair of Mitred Parakeets escaped or was liberated from a large aviary in Huelo on the N coast of e. *Maui* (Waring 1998, Runde and Pitt 2008). Residents soon reported groups of 6-8 in a surrounding woodlot, and they had grown to about 30 by 1995, 60+ in 1999, 150 in 2000 (Waring 1998, Gassmann-Duvall 2002) and 150-200 in 2002 (Radford and Penniman 2015). The initial group of parakeets roosted and nested on remote and inaccessible sea cliffs at Huelo Pt., where they were suspected of disturbing nesting seabirds (Runde and Pitt 2008). In 2002 two pair splintered off and were observed nesting in a cave near Waipi'o Bay, 1.1 km W of the Huelo Pt. colony; this group had expanded to 40 birds by 2006. During the late 2000s birds from the two groups joined at dawn to forage in fruit and nut trees primarily between Huelo and Ho'olawa Valley, upslope to 1300 m elevation, and sporadically W as far as Peahi Gulch and E to the Ke'anea Peninsula (Runde and Pitt 2008). Due to possible disturbance to seabirds, damage to agricultural (and potentially native) crops, and potential to spread noxious plants (Kishinami 2001, Runde and Pitt 2008), control efforts were initiated in 2000, with some specimens sent to BPBM (184567-570, 185093-097; [HRBP](#) 5862 of specimens). Through 2014 at least 199 parrots were removed, leaving approximately 20 in the wild then (Radford and Penniman 2015) and "a handful" still remaining in the wild at the end of 2016 (A. Radman, pers. comm.). The collected individuals have plumage consistent with the more widespread *A.m. mitrata* than with *alticola* of c. Peru (Forshaw 1989, Clements 2007; PP examination, BPBM).

On Hawai'i I, six Mitred Parakeets were first reported 29 Jul 1988 near Kea'au and 2 Nov 1989 above Kailua-Kona. By 1999-2006, a flock of 30-40 free-flying *Psittacara* parakeets was being observed in Kona and along the coast S to Ho'okena Beach and N to Anaeho'omalu Beach, were identified by different observers as consisting primarily of either Mitred or [Red-masked](#) parakeets, with two Red-fronted Parakeet (see [Non-established Species](#) list) also mentioned. At least eight Mitred Parakeets were also

reported Aug 1997-Feb 1998 near the Kahena Ranch Reservoir in the Kohala Mountains. It is possible that all of these reports of Mitred Parakeets could have pertained to juvenile [Red-masked Parakeets](#). On O'ahu an individual observed in Moanalua 6 Feb 1988 was reported as a Mitred or Red-masked parakeet and an observation of five Mitred Parakeets in Kapiolani Park reported on the Honolulu [Christmas Bird Count](#) 17 Dec 1989 was later corrected to Red-masked Parakeets (Ord 1995). In Mar 1997 a group of two adults and three dependent young parakeets observed here were identified as Mitred Parakeets. Occurrence of Mitred Parakeets on other islands besides Maui awaits further documentation proving that they are not juvenile [Red-masked Parakeets](#).

#### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

#### [Literature cited](#)

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