

RED-MASKED PARAKEET

Psittacara erythrogenys

Other: Red-Masked Conure

monotypic

naturalized (non-native) resident, recently established

Red-masked Parakeets are confined to the dry coastal zone of w. Ecuador and nw. Peru (Forshaw 1989) and are not known to have been introduced or escaped to the wild (Long 1981, Lever 1987), until recently in s. California (Garrett 1997) and in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, where a colony has become established on O'ahu and possibly Hawai'i I. Confusion and possible hybridization between Red-masked, [Mitred](#), and [Scarlet-fronted](#) parakeets has prevented a clear assessment of population development and trends of these species in both California and Hawaii. But they appear to have established an increasing population for well over 15 years on O'ahu and Hawai'i I, affording inclusion in our primary list, although not yet considered by the AOU (1998-2016). Red-masked Parakeet was moved from genus *Aratinga* to *Psittacara* by AOU (2014). The species is listed as Near Threatened by BirdLife International (BLI 2016).

On *O'ahu*, the first reports of Red-masked Parakeet were of one that escaped from a theme park in upper Manoa Valley sometime in 1987 and of one at Blaisdell Park on E Loch of Pearl Harbor 2 Jan 1988 (*E* 48:40). In Dec 1988 five Red-masked Parakeets were documented in Kapiolani Park and this group had expanded to 18 birds by Dec 1994 (Ord 1995). By the 2000s-mid 2010s, Red-masked Parakeets (often accompanied by 1-2 [Blue-crowned Parakeets](#) or hybrids) were observed roosting in a wooded area on Black Point (1 km E of Diamond Head) and departing daily at sunrise in a largely cohesive flock over Wailupe and Kahala and into the upper Aina Haina Valley to forage; a few would also head toward Honolulu (*cf.* [HRBP](#) 5869-5872, 6733-6734). Maximum flock sizes at both localities between 2001 and 2016 indicated an increasing population: 21 in 2001, 30 in 2002, 62 in 2004, and 53-55 in 2005-2016. During 2004-2006 a female Red-masked Parakeet nested with a male [Blue-crowned Parakeet](#) and produced 7 wild hybrids during these three years, and up to 4 hybrids were noted with the flock of Red-masked 12 Feb 2010. In 2010-2016, Blue-crowned Parakeets or hybrids were not reported with the flock of Red-masked Parakeets but a separate flock of Blue-crowned Parakeets, probably unrelated, was being observed at Turtle Bay on the N O'ahu coast.

On *Hawai'i I* a flock 30-40 *Psittacara* parakeets observed in 1988-2003 around Kailua-Kona have been identified as consisting of [Mitred](#), Red-masked, and/or [Scarlet-fronted](#) parakeets (see above). In Dec 1999, a small flock of 5-6 parakeets observed several times in downtown Kailua-Kona were identified as Red-masked Parakeets to the exclusion of Mitred Parakeets; it is probable that reports of Mitred Parakeets involved juvenile Red-masked Parakeets, juveniles being difficult to identify. During the 2000s-mid 2010s the flock and the number of reports of *Psittacara* parakeets in W Hawai'i I continued to expand, primarily from downtown Kona and the Kaloka Mauka subdivision above Kona. Many photographs taken of these birds (e.g., [HRBP](#) 5873-5874, 6735-6740) were of Red-masked Parakeets, and we thus now consider this species established on Hawai'i I. High counts during the 2010s were of 50-80 birds (80 on the slopes above Honokahau on 25 Oct 2015). Occasional reports of Red-masked Parakeets from Maui in the 1990s-2000s (e.g., *E* 68:1) likely pertained to misidentified [Mitred Parakeets](#).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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