



RED-SIDED ECLECTUS PARROT

PSITTACIFORMES
Family: Psittaculidae
Genus: *Eclectus*
Species: *roratus*
polychloros



Male on left, Female right

Range: Solomon Islands, Sumba, New Guinea & nearby islands, northeastern Australia and the Maluku Islands

Habitat: canopy of lowland rainforests

Niche: diurnal, arboreal, mainly frugivorous

Diet: fruits, wild figs, unripe nuts, flower and leaf buds, and some seeds

Life Span: Wild ~30 years

Sexual Dimorphism: extreme color differences in male and female

Location in SF Zoo: Bird String between Leaping Lemur Café and Koala exhibit

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS

The eclectus parrot is a stocky short-tailed parrot. The eclectus parrot is the most sexually dimorphic of all the parrot species; the male having a mostly bright emerald green plumage and the female a mostly bright red and purple/blue plumage. The upper mandible of the adult male is orange at the base fading to a yellow towards the tip, and the lower mandible is black. The beak of the adult female is all black. Adults have yellow to orange irises. The coloring of their plumage is visible in the ultraviolet spectrum, an adaptation which predators such as hawks and owls lack.

Weight: 13 – 19 oz

Length: 14 in

Wingspan:

The eclectus has an unusually long digestive tract and thus requires a high fiber diet. The eclectus parrots don't produce any feather dust, as they have oil glands rather than dust glands for preening.

They have a hook beak to rip the flesh of fruits and the hard shells of nuts. To help them climb trees and pick fruits, they have a zygodactyl foot.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

The Eclectus parrot is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List. Large populations of this parrot remain, and they are sometimes considered pests for eating fruit off trees. Some populations restricted to relatively small islands are comparably rare. Their bright feathers are also used by native tribes people in New Guinea as decorations. Eclectus parrots are one of the more popular birds kept in captivity.

COMMUNICATION & OTHER BEHAVIOR

Eclectus parrots are highly social and intelligent. Their presence is usually noted by their calls rather than by their brilliant but well-camouflaged colors.

COURTSHIP & YOUNG

This species nests within hollows in large, emergent rainforest trees. Suitable hollows are at a premium and the hen will vigorously defend her chosen nesting site from other females (perhaps even fighting to the death), remaining resident at 'her tree' for up to 11 months of the year, rarely straying from the entrance to her hollow and relying on multiple males to feed her via regurgitation. Up to five males will regularly provide food for each female, each competing with the others for her affections and the right to father her young.

Unlike other parrot species, eclectus parrots are polygynandrous—females may mate with multiple male and males may mate with multiple females. This unique breeding strategy may explain the pronounced sexual dimorphism of the eclectus.

Adult females with poor nest hollows often commit infanticide on the male, if they produce both a male and a female chick. Inadequate nest hollows have a habit of flooding in heavy rain, drowning the chicks or eggs inside.

Incubation: 28 – 30 days	Sexual Maturity: 2 – 3 years
# of Eggs: 2	Fledging: 11 weeks

MISCELLANEOUS

Their extreme sexual dimorphism is very unusual in the parrot family. The contrast between plumage of the male and the female is so marked that the two birds were, until the early 20th century, considered different species.

SOURCES:

The Handbook of the Birds of the World Vol IV © 1996, Lynx Edicions
Princeton Encyclopedia of Birds © 2009, Princeton University Press
<https://www.beautyofbirds.com/eclectus.htm>

created: 3/2017