

FORAGING ECOLOGY AND HABITAT USE OF THE SWIFT PARROT ON THE SOUTH-WESTERN SLOPES OF NEW SOUTH WALES

SIMON J. KENNEDY¹ and ANTHONY E. OVERS²

¹Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Bendigo, Victoria 3550

²New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Queanbeyan, New South Wales 2620

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The foraging ecology and habitat use of the Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor* was investigated in the south-western slopes region of New South Wales in May 1999. An extensive search of known and potential habitats was conducted in the study area.

A total of six Swift Parrot sites was located during the study period, all of which were in open forest and woodland dominated by Mugga Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* or Mugga Ironbark-Grey Box *E. microcarpa* association. Both eucalypt species were used by Swift Parrots for foraging resources. Swift Parrots were mainly observed foraging on the nectar of Mugga Ironbarks. They also foraged on other carbohydrates on Grey Box. Swift Parrots foraged in the largest trees in the landscape. Swift Parrot records from the study area in other years indicate that woodlands dominated by White Box *E. albens* are also of importance.

The Swift Parrot is capable of locating small patches of suitable habitat in a highly fragmented landscape. A significant proportion of the non-breeding Swift Parrot population is reliant on the south-western slopes of New South Wales in some years. The results here demonstrate that appropriate management of Mugga Ironbark-Grey Box communities is a priority for Swift Parrot conservation in this region but further work is needed to ascertain the possible importance of other vegetation communities such as White Box woodland.