

short period from November to January when conditions are optimal for breeding.

LITERATURE CITED

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PARAKEET HYBRIDISATION

On 24 December 1978 I was on Little Barrier Island in a photographic hide at a nest hole I believed to be occupied by parakeets. This nest hole was in a kauri (*Agathis australis*) of 60 cm d.b.h. some 230 m above sea level in unmodified forest described as "kauri forest with beech and rata as important elements" by Hamilton (1961, *Little Barrier Island (Hauturu)*, DSIR Res. Bull. 137).

At about 10 a.m., a male Yellow-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus auriceps auriceps*) came to a perch beside the nest hole and gave a chattering call. After a few seconds a parakeet came so rapidly out of the nest hole that I could not see what species it was before it disappeared from view. A few minutes later it returned to the nest with equal speed. By 4.30 p.m., I had determined that a Red-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae novaezelandiae*) was leaving the nest in response to the Yellow-crowned Parakeet's calls. To make further observations, I cut peepholes in all sides of the hide.

At 9.58 the next morning the male Yellow-crowned Parakeet approached the nest chattering. At 10.10 the female Red-crowned Parakeet left the nest, and the two birds flew to a branch some 12 metres away behind the hide. I observed that the female begged for food and was fed by the male. At 10.16 the female returned to the nest.

It is not known whether this pair raised young. Aviculturists who have seen but not bred hybrid parakeets from Red-crowned × Yellow-crowned matings report that the progeny vary in size and may be distinguished by "a variable mottling of red and yellow on the crown" (A. G. Dobbins, pers. comm.) or a "flame-coloured crown" (J. Lobb, pers. comm.).

Extensive parakeet hybridisation in the wild is known on Mangere Island in the Chatham Group and on the Auckland Islands, where the habitats have been modified (C. A. Fleming, pers. comm.; Taylor 1975, *Some ideas on speciation in New Zealand parakeets*, *Notornis* 22: 110-121). There appear to have been no previous records of inter-specific breeding among parakeets in unmodified situations on New Zealand's main islands.

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