

# Rainbow lorikeet

## *Trichoglossus haematodus*

### Notify Council

Please report any sightings of this species in the wild to Greater Wellington Regional Council in the first instance. Phone: 0800496734 or Email: [pest.animals@gw.govt.nz](mailto:pest.animals@gw.govt.nz)

### What does it look like?

Rainbow lorikeets are a long tailed, brightly coloured parrot of about 30cm length. They have a bright red beak and eyes, a blue head (the most obvious difference to the red headed eastern rosella) and belly, green wings, tail and back and an orange/yellow breast. They make distinctive screeching and chattering calls and are almost always seen in pairs or in flocks.

The species was introduced to New Zealand from Australia as cage birds and were illegally and deliberately released in the Auckland area in the 1990s. In New Zealand, rainbow lorikeets are mostly likely to occur in suburban parks and gardens, horticultural blocks, and forest edges. They are an Unwanted Organism, but may be kept legally as a caged bird.

### Why is it a problem?

Rainbow lorikeets are prolific breeders that feed mainly on pollen, nectar and fruit. Native honey eaters, like the Tui, Bellbird, and Hihi (Stitchbird), are at risk of competition from rainbow lorikeets as they utilise the same food sources. Native cavity nesters, such as Kaka, Kakariki, and Short-tailed and Long-tailed Bats, may be at risk from Rainbow lorikeets competing for their nest and roost sites. Rainbow lorikeets can carry diseases that can threaten the health of native bird species, and are a threat to commercial fruit growing industries.



### Control Methods

The rainbow lorikeet is an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act. Please report any sightings of wild birds as soon as possible to reduce the risk of breeding populations re-establishing. If you suspect a population has established contact MPI on the Exotic Pest & Disease freephone 0800 80 99 66.

From 2008 an eradication programme was managed under the National Interest Pest Response (NIPR) Programme led by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) in partnership with DOC. The aim of the NIPR rainbow lorikeet programme was to eradicate the birds from the wild. This was achieved in 2014. Continued monitoring by DOC ensures no further breeding populations become established in the wild.

**Exemption:** Rainbow lorikeets may be held in captivity in secure aviaries and cages, be bred and sold, but it is illegal to release them into the wild.

### Related Links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/2944/Rainbow-Lorikeet>  
Unwanted Organisms Register [https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species\\_id=26562](https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species_id=26562)  
Department of Conservation <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/animal-pests/rainbow-lorikeet/>

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### Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

### Report this Pest/Weed

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-council/contact-us/contact-form/>