

SHORT NOTE

First record of *Psittacara erythrogenys* (Psittacidae) in Colombia

Primer registro de *Psittacara erythrogenys* (Psittacidae) en Colombia

Eliana Fierro-Calderón ^{1*} | Karolina Fierro-Calderón ²

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ABSTRACT

The red-masked parakeet *Psittacara erythrogenys* was originally distributed in the forests of Ecuador and northwestern Peru, mainly below 1500 m of elevation. Due to pet trade, this parakeet has current stable breeding populations in the United States, Spain, Chile, and Puerto Rico. We describe the first record of the species in Colombia in March 2018, as well as other observations from the city of Santiago de Cali.

Keywords. Introduced species, pet trade, urban birds, urban ecology

RESUMEN

El perico caretirrojo *Psittacara erythrogenys* se distribuía originalmente en los bosques de Ecuador y el noroccidente de Perú, principalmente por debajo de los 1500 m de elevación. Debido al tráfico ilegal, actualmente este perico tiene poblaciones reproductivas en Estados Unidos, España, Chile y Puerto Rico. A continuación, describimos el primer registro de la especie en Colombia en marzo de 2018, así como otras observaciones de la ciudad de Santiago de Cali.

Palabras clave. Aves urbanas, ecología urbana, especies introducidas, tráfico ilegal

^{1*} Asociación Calidris, Carrera 24 # 4-20. Cali, Colombia. eli.fierro@calidris.org.co

² Universidad ICESI, Calle 18 # 122-135. Cali, Colombia. kavafiana@yahoo.com

* Corresponding author



The red-masked parakeet *Psittacara erythrogenys* Lesson, 1844 is native to western Ecuador and northwestern Peru (Best *et al.* 1995, Juniper and Parr 1998). It occurs in a variety of habitats including humid forest, deciduous forest, sparsely vegetated desert, intensely farmed areas, and towns (Juniper and Parr 1998). The species is mainly found below 1500 m of elevation but seasonal movements have been recorded up to 2500 m in Ecuador (Kalodimos 2013). This parakeet is considered near threatened due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and trapping for the pet trade (BirdLife International 2018). Currently, this species is naturalized in Grand Cayman Islands, with breeding populations in Spain, Chile, Puerto Rico, and United States in the states of Hawaii, Florida, and California (Santos 2006, Runde *et al.* 2007, Kalodimos 2013, Aves de Chile 2019, Mori *et al.* 2019). In some of these locations, the number of individuals has increased dramatically, as it is the case in San Gabriel Valley, California, where the population boomed from 25 individuals in 1997 to 130–180 individuals in 2002 (Mabb 1997). As well, the population counted for two individuals in 1993, 10 in 2006, 35 in 2017 in Barcelona, Spain (Santos 2006).

In Colombia, the first record of *P. erythrogenys* was on March 3th 2018 in Santiago de Cali (3°26'19.3" North, 76°32'23.2" West). One of the authors (KFC) observed one individual with a group of native parrots (Psittacidae), *Ara severus* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Brotogeris jugularis* (Müller, 1776), in La Herradura Park at the Miraflores neighborhood (see the photograph in <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S47829879>). The species was identified by sending the photograph to several experts, confirming its identity using online resources and Restall *et al.* (2006). Since then, the authors have seen the species at least fifteen times in the same neighborhood, usually, one individual flying west with groups from two to 32 *A. severus* between 16:00 and 18:00 h. The *P. erythrogenys* is smaller (33 cm long; Juniper and Parr 1998) than *A. severus* (50 cm; Ayerbe 2018) and has a solid red mask covering the forecrown, crown, lores, and cheeks. On February 2019, an experienced ornithologist recorded three individuals of *P. erythrogenys* at the Cali river area (3°27'02.9" North, 76°32'22.1" West), approximately 1.5 km north from La

Herradura, and at least one individual at El Ingenio Park (3°23'10.3" North, 76°31'44.4" West) approximately 2 km south (F. Estela, pers. com.).

Santiago de Cali is the capital of Valle del Cauca state in southwest Colombia, located in the inter-Andean valley of the Cauca River. The urban area extends 120.9 km² approximately at 1000 m of elevation and the average temperature is 25 °C. At least ten species of parrots inhabit the city and the population dynamics of these local species have changed during the last two decades due to habitat transformation and introduced species (Naranjo and Estela 1999, Muñoz *et al.* 2007, Palacio *et al.* 2017). The presence of a novel species, *P. erythrogenys* in Santiago de Cali raises the question: What will be the consequences of its introduction for the native parrots and other bird species? We assume that the most probable explanation for its presence in the city is an introduction associated with illegal trade, given that the species is classified as near threatened in its native range due to pet trade (BirdLife International 2018). Moreover, no other records of the species exist between Ibarra in Ecuador and Santiago de Cali in Colombia (<https://ebird.org/species/rempar>). Yet, we cannot rule out the possibility that this species arrived in the city due to the natural movement of some individuals.

Negative impacts of non-native parrots on native biodiversity include competition for nesting sites with native birds and other animal species, damages to natural plants, crops and human facilities, and transmission of diseases (Menchetti and Mori 2014). Despite the increasing number of countries where *P. erythrogenys* is established and the rapid increase in the number of individuals in these localities, to our knowledge, no studies have assessed the impact of this parakeet on native species. Santiago de Cali seems to have the right conditions for the establishment of a population, and the presence of at least three confirmed individuals increases the probability that the species reproduces locally. Yet, the high diversity of parrots inhabiting in Santiago de Cali in contrast with the low diversity occurring in other countries where the species has settled and flourished may influence the ecological impact of this parakeet.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

KFC recorded the species for the first time; EFC kept track of subsequent records and wrote the first draft of the paper; both authors review and write the final paper.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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