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**Historical article—****Paradise Parrot**CYRIL HENRY HARVEY JERRARD (written in 1924)

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'Whit! Whit!' The piercing but not unmusical notes caught my ear... I drew rein and followed with my eyes the two pretty little long-tailed and low-flying birds—parrots unmistakably—that after uttering their preliminary whistle of alarm, rose at my approach and flew from the roadside, where they had been feeding, to a tree not far off... I turned my... horse off the road and for half an hour quietly followed the little strangers as they moved from place to place, feeding on the ground or resting in the trees. They manifested no great fear of me, ...both very graceful in their shape and movements.

The male's plumage was a combination of delicate grey, black, crimson, scarlet, emerald and blue. In the female the brighter hues were subdued or lacking and protective green predominated. One feature both possessed in common, a shoulder patch—scarlet in the male, brick red in the female—which twinkled with the rapid movements of their wings in flight...

...at my second visit to the spot on December 15th (four days after my discovery), I had the satisfaction of seeing not only the adult pair, but also five or six young ones with them. The fact that the parents had been alone on December 11th indicated that in the interval, their brood had emerged from a nest somewhere in the vicinity. The young were easily distinguished as such by their plumage, which differed from that of either parent, though it rather resembled that of the female. All were busily feeding on the grass by the roadside. The young, for the most part, fed themselves; only once or twice did I notice the parents feeding them. Their manner of obtaining the grass seeds was both intelligent and pretty. Seizing the stalks at the butt, they bent them down and ran their bills along to the seed-head. Stouter stalks were climbed.

Parents and young remained near the same place for a fortnight longer. My absence... during this period prevented further study of them, and when I returned at the end of December, they had all disappeared. My next observation was made on March 25th, when the adult pair again graced the spot to which they seemed so attached. The young had no doubt dispersed to seek fresh woods and pastures new in the limitless bush about them. For a month the lonely little pair frequented, with remarkable constancy, the spot where they had first appeared, then as winter approached they again vanished.

...on October 16th the sharp little whistle and the twinkling scarlet epaulettes announced the presence of ...the dainty pair, at a new spot a mile from their former habitat. Here, as it proved, they had come to stay for the summer. From this time I watched them closely, determined, if they were breeding, to discover their nest... I had occasion, during the succeeding months, to pass the bird's habitat almost every week, while their predilection for feeding on the roadside further assisted me. Fortunately for them it was a little-used road, far remote from tourists, or they would have had little chance of escaping the fate that feathered rarities usually meet at the hands of some wanton pot-shooter or bird trapper. The predilection just referred to is, I think, worthy of comment. If a characteristic of the species, as it certainly was of my pair, it may have proved a factor in its destruction. It is a sad thing to say, but for birds whose superlative beauty rendered

them attractive to men who can only appreciate God's loveliest creatures when they are confined in a cage, or form part of a stuffed collection, best safety lies in fear, in shunning rather than seeking the ways of men. The Paradise Parrot, so far as I have known it, neglects this precaution, and rather courts notice by feeding and nesting in places (thoroughfares and gardens) that are particularly open to observation by man... some special quality of the grass food they find in the places referred to [probably] accounts for their being there so frequently. The habitat too contrasts with the caution manifested, as I shall describe later, in their... nesting operations.

My search for a nest was destined to be a long one and success... was largely due to the birds' choice of site. I had examined, again and again, scores of anthill mounds scattered over a fairly extensive scope of country surrounding the spot where I so frequently saw the birds. The nesting season, according to the scanty information available, was early spring. But summer was well on the way before my pair made any preparation for raising a family... on December 10th, I noticed, from the road, a tiny round hole in the side of a small anthill about fifty yards off.

It was only two inches deep and the little pile of dust beneath it showed that it had been freshly made... after the lapse of a few days, it was plain that the excavators were not proceeding with their work... The birds surely had not taken offence at my inspection, for I had been most careful not to touch their little hole. December, and with it the year 1921, closed and January was halfway through before the welcome indication of fresh detritus beneath the hole gave token that work had been resumed. After this, it proceeded unchecked and in less than a fortnight the tunnel had been carried in to the centre of the mound. The birds never worked while I was near their nest, so that I was unable to study their methods. This shyness was unexpected, as at other times they were rather tame. A two-hour wait on January 21st only resulted in my seeing one visit of the male bird to the ant mound. He alighted beside the nest hole, but refused to enter. The female was still more cautious. She sat in a neighbouring tree during her mate's inspection and flew off with him afterwards.

While this nest-making was in progress, a second pair of Paradise Parrots... appeared in the locality. I saw the two pairs together once but the second couple, I think, usually frequented a spot rather more than a mile from the nest of the first. This contiguity of habitat rendered it difficult to distinguish the two pairs apart, but the existence of old nests at both places points to the conclusion that two pairs were resident in the area and that both [females] bred there. They were probably closely related (parents and children). This would account for their choice of adjacent breeding sites and nests etc. The fact of the presence of two pairs, at least occasionally and perhaps regularly, in the area where I conducted my observations, should be borne in mind when reading these notes. This point may be reserved till I come to record later observations. All the time I could give the birds was for the present devoted to the nest whose history I hoped to record in notes and photographs.

...The shyness the birds had already manifested in regard to their nest was likely to make my study difficult, and more serious still, might spell failure to their breeding for the year. I... [deferred] the attempt to obtain photos until the young were hatched, for all birds are much less likely to desert a nest at that time, than at a previous stage when it contains only eggs. Moreover, human interference during incubation often results in spoiled eggs. In the case of this nest, of course, progress could only be guessed at. The tiny tunnel made investigation impossible. However, I gave five weeks for egg laying and incubation—the excavation having

apparently been finished at the end of January. During the last week in February, the hen was sitting close, as I proved by visiting the nest several times. Each time she flew out after I had waited for 10 or 15 minutes. The male apparently took no share in the incubation. A week later when I put my ear to the hole, I heard a faint chirp within. This I took to indicate the presence of young and decided at once to make my attempt to photograph the parents at the entrance.

Accordingly, on March 7th, I pitched my camp before the [mound] and levelled my 'gun' at the tiny entrance... The tent was a small cubical affair about 3 ft 6 ins in each of its three dimensions and made of old weather-beaten bagging. I had sewn it together at home so that its erection entailed only the cutting of four short stakes, pointing them and driving them into the ground at positions corresponding to the corners of the tent, which was then slipped over them from the top. A small aperture in front formed a loophole through which the photographic 'gun' was 'aimed' to the correct range (about 6 ft). These preparations for bloodless 'shooting' were made about noon. Then the new ornament to the landscape was left for a couple of hours in order that the parrots might familiarise themselves with it while I adjourned...

When I came back there was still no sign of the nest-holders and I went into hiding... It was a hot afternoon and my place of confinement was small and ill-ventilated... Ere an hour had passed, however, there came a magic sound that banished all sensations of discomfort and made me hastily draw the shutter of my camera and grasp the release, while simultaneously I peered through the interstices of my shelter.

The vivifying sound was the well-known 'qui-vive' note of the male Paradise Parrot. He was in a tree close to me, but I could not see him till, after a few minutes... he dropped to the fence just behind the nest and, after another challenging note or two, alighted... on the nest mound itself... I pressed the release, and at the slight click he hopped back on to the fence. But he was not really alarmed, and I had barely time to change the plate before he was back on the mound. I waited. The female had now come into view on the fence. The male approached the nest-hole, just where I wished him to pose, uttered a sweet inviting chirp to his mate and peered into the hole. In answer, as it seemed, to her [mate's] reassuring word, the female alighted on the summit of the mound... I 'fired' again, both birds posing for just the instant required...

This time the click of the 'gun' only made the male sit up and look hard at the loophole in my tent. The female looked very 'nervy', but her mate's attitude towards the mystery seemed to give her courage. Not daring to attempt plate-changing at that moment, I watched them... The female, suspicious as she was, was plainly under an urgent summons to attend to her duties within the nest and she hesitatingly moved to the entrance and then 'ducked' quickly into the dark tunnel, which barely allowed the passage of her slim body. No sooner was she safely inside than her mate flew away...

I wanted a photo of the female at the nest-hole before I left that day, so I waited... for her to emerge. After some considerable time a sharp whistle announced that the male had returned. He chirped once or twice in a softer tone and in a minute or two his dutiful mate emerged as hurriedly as she had entered and flew off with him. I missed altogether this time, so [waited] till the nest-keeper returned. She did so after a spell but was as disinclined to linger on her doorstep... This timidity as compared with her mate's boldness at the nest was rather unexpected, because contrary to rule, a female bird, particularly when she is plainer

than her mate, usually shows less fear than he about approaching the nest when men are about it. But as I shall show later, I think there is a special significance in the male Paradise Parrot's action at the nest.

At sundown I packed up my camera, leaving the... tent in position for future use, and went home... my ruse had so quickly and completely 'taken in' these cunning and wary birds...

I occupied the tent again on March 24th and 27th... the female... never quite overcame her suspicion of the camera lens (which of course only filled the loophole when I was in hiding) and the click of the shutter always synchronised with a start on her part that spoiled the picture. I was also noting the birds' behaviour and coming to the unwelcome conclusion that something had gone wrong within the nest. The first point to make itself clear was that I had antedated the hatching. The birds were not carrying food to the nest, the female alone entered, and her stay inside was always of considerable duration. For instance, on March 11th, two hours after I entered the tent, [the male] arrived, put his eye to the small doorway and chirped softly once or twice. A faint chirp from the interior answered, and [the male] flew off satisfied. Half an hour later he came back and repeated his sweet inviting notes, which this time received their answer in the emergence of [the female] from the nest. She had evidently been inside all the time I had been there.

The male, it was clear, took no part in the work of incubation. I never saw him enter the nest, though he almost invariably attended his mate both at her entry and emergence. I believe that this contributes to the safety of his [mate] and future family in no small degree. His courage in facing the camera I have already noticed, and the listening glance into the nest-hole before it is entered by his mate doubtless aims at the detection of a possible liar-in-wait within—a snake for example, which might have entered during the birds' absence. Again, his presence when the female is due to emerge after a spell of nest-duty averts a real danger to her. Should a cat or other predaceous animal have marked her entry and be ready to pounce on her as she comes out, the capture would be easy and certain were she to emerge alone. But with admirable caution, she waits for the all-clear signal softly given outside by her faithful spouse. We may be sure that a very different message would be conveyed to her if peril threatened.

I have dwelt at some length on the above... episode, the most striking point in connection with the nesting behaviour of the Paradise Parrots that my observations have revealed, because I regard it as a very important factor in Nature's protection of the species and because it presents such an interesting contrast to the behaviour of the brightly coloured male birds generally. Having just remarked on the expressive notes of the male to his mate in the dark nest-hollow, I... follow with some remarks on the various calls or notes of this parrot. Like its appearance and habits, they are very characteristic. Once heard, the sharp, alert little warning note that commences this article is always recognised afterwards. The female utters it as often as the male. The brisk alarm-note by which the birds so often call attention to their presence by a roadside I have described above. Male and female often utter it in quick succession as they take wing; the same brisk note generally apprised me of the arrival of my subjects when I was waiting in concealment at the nest. It then had an added sharpness...

In addition to the common call-notes, a real musical performance is produced by the male under the stirring impulses of springtime. I listened to this delightful [courtship] song early in October and admired both the musical excellence and

the fine spirit of the little singer. Whilst sprightly and harmonious notes issued from his throat, his long tail vibrated with the intensity of his effort. There was a colour in the song to match the garb of the singer. Gordon! Here is another 'bright bird' slandered by your too-famous line.

On March 27th, the fact that things had gone wrong in the nest was plainly apparent in the behaviour of the birds, its owners. Both came to the nest but the female, instead of entering as usual, sat quite dejectedly at the top of the mound for some time, while her [mate] peered with a bewildered air at once comical and pathetic, into the tunnel, emitting at the same time little questioning chirps... They both left the nest without having entered it, and I waited in vain for their return that day. When I next visited the spot, the nest had been deserted altogether. I waited till April 24th and then opened the mound. I felt that it was a very important investigation and exercised great care not to disturb the interior arrangements in digging through the outer crust of the anthill. The eggs, five in number, lay undisturbed. Before touching them, I photographed them *in situ*. Then I made the following notes: one of the shells was perforated, apparently by decay, and empty; the others were 'bad', containing only stinking fluid, with no sign of embryos; one or two I broke; the others I sent to Mr Chisholm.

The reason why the clutch had failed to hatch was not apparent. Previous to this investigation, I had felt that my operations might possibly have interfered with the later stages of incubation, but the condition of the eggs as just noted seemed to exculpate me. Incubation, if it had started at all, should have been well forward when I fixed my tent at the nest. Moreover, the birds showed so little fear from the start that the eggs could hardly have been left long enough to get cold. The hen may have been off them for a few hours in the middle of the day on March 7th, but the mound was exposed to a hot sun and the interior must have been as warm as an incubator. No other explanation of the failure suggests itself to me except that of infertility in the eggs, and an antecedent probability for this, to my mind, exists in the close inbreeding which necessity forces upon the survivors of an almost extinct species. After being decimated by causes unknown, this beautiful species, it seems, is being forcibly wiped out by the operation of one of Nature's remorseless laws of destruction.

Considerable mystery attaches to the disappearance of this once-common parrot from the landscapes that it once so adorned. Old bushmen who, in their youth, knew the lovely little denizens of the 'anthills', shake their heads when invited to account for its absence now. One doubtfully mentions foxes, another 'goannas' and another wild cats, but though each of these suggestions has some feasibility, neither separately nor together do they constitute a satisfactory explanation.

The one undisguisable fact, however, is that the advent of the white man has spelled destruction to one of the loveliest of the native birds of this country. Directly by our avarice and thoughtlessness, and indirectly by our disturbance of the balance so nicely preserved by Nature, we are undoubtedly accountable for the tragedy of this bird. Its superlative beauty, combined with a trustful disposition and the accessibility of the nest, rendered it an eagerly sought and easily obtained prize to collectors. It became famous in foreign aviaries at the time it was being depleted in its native home. Still it would doubtless have survived in the wilder tracts of bush but for the change that was gradually taking place everywhere in the wake of Man's settlement. Foxes and European cats, deadly foes to ground birds, were increasing faster than nature could arm their prey with the instinct to defeat these new foes. The predatory lizards (goannas), inveterate nest robbers, always were

increasing too, because the black man, whose 'meat' they had been, had either vanished or was subsisting on the white man's diet. The most fatal change of all for the grass-seed-eating Paradise Parrot was that the more nutritious of the native cereals, like the Oat or Kangaroo grasses, were dying out under overstocking by sheep and cattle. What still remained were not allowed to produce their seed. Droughts accentuated their food scarcity to the point of starvation and in particular, it has been definitely recorded that the 1902 drought absolutely wiped the 'ground parrot' out in some districts.

When all the above factors are taken into account, it must be admitted that the extermination of *Psephotus pulcherrimus* does not provide a very difficult problem. It is a relief to turn to the brighter consideration that, with all their handicaps, my birds have been able to survive from year to year, and that failure has not always attended their nesting attempts to breed. Though I have not found a second nest nor personally seen young birds since the occasions mentioned above, I believe that one or two broods have been reared since by one or other of the two pairs in the locality. During March and April 1923, I, and others, frequently saw a pair close to an old nest-site. Then, near this nest early in May, nine birds (described by the observer as all females except one) were seen feeding on a millet field from which hay had just been harvested. Most of the supposed females were probably young in their immature plumage and the presence of the whole family in the seed-strewn field is an interesting circumstance, showing that they are not slow to avail themselves of a new food supply provided by man.

I have noted during my study of *P. pulcherrimus* a peculiarity of the nesting habits. They sometimes commence to excavate a nest and then leave it after tunnelling a few inches. I have already referred to the delay that occurred at this stage in the case of the nest I photographed. The same year in October, my hopes were raised as a rather curious illustration of the absence of reasoning power in birds commonly described as 'intelligent' emerged in the course of my observations. In October 1922 I noticed that the parrots were commencing to excavate a nest-hole in a large anthill that had contained an old nest that I had previously opened up. In doing so, I had broken away a large part of one side of the mound and completely exposed the interior. It was thus an impossible site for a second nest. The birds, however, made the strange mistake of starting to tunnel on the uninjured side of the mound and worked to a depth of three inches before abandoning it. It was noticeable, however, that they (apparently) perceived their foolish mistake a little later and stopped before actually carrying their tunnel to the point where it would have mocked them by meeting the gaping breach. In another old nest mound that I opened, there were two tunnels a few inches apart, which led to one interior cavity. Whether this indicated that the nest had been used twice or whether the birds sometimes have a fancy to have two doors to their home, I am unable to decide.

At the beginning of the present year (1924)... on January 16th, after many a fruitless hunt, I discovered a freshly excavated, but still shallow hole, which was unmistakably the work of the Paradise Parrots that had been frequenting the spot for some time. A few days afterwards and before my next visit, a hailstorm of unusual severity passed across the place, and as the nest-hole made no further progress, and I and others saw the male bird alone several times afterwards, we feared that his... mate—inseparable from him before—had fallen a victim to the violence of the hail. Happily the reappearance of the [female] with her [mate] on May 23rd proved either that the supposed tragedy had not occurred or, if it had, that the widower had taken... a second [mate]. In any case, nothing came of the



hoped-for nest... [which] was not proceeded with and the full history of a successful nesting attempt by *Psephotus pulcherrimus* still remains to be written.

This is the first winter the birds have remained. The Paradise Parrots have not, as in previous winters, left their breeding ground in May. The rule that their summer habitat knew them not between the end of April and beginning of September has hitherto been invariable, but this year they have been seen in June and July and were seen together on July 8th. It may be more than a coincidence that their stay synchronizes with the non-departure of several other winter migrants, e.g. the cuckoo and the White-throated Warbler [Gerygone]. In both cases, some abnormality in the season may be accountable.

A short description of the natural features of the habitat may conclude this record. It is a ridgy area of granitic formation. The timber is open forest (mainly ironbark) with ring-barked areas. The ground is stony or sandy and provides suitable material for the labours of mound-building termites, whose nests (white or red according to the colour of the soil) plentifully dot the landscape. The mounds chosen by the birds to nest in seem always to be old ones deserted by their builders, and may be either white or red in colour. The grasses are the varieties usually found on such country—spear and wire grasses being much in evidence. There is a fair admixture of wild Oat or Kangaroo grass and a little of the Burnett Blue grass with Couch here and there. There is no herbage of value. The limits within which the birds have been seen by me or any of my informants are roughly a mile and a half by a mile. Within this area, I have found one nest in use, three or four old, and one or two unfinished nests.

### Postscript

I have called this record a postscript, but the title is apt only if the little community, whose history for four years I have... recorded in the foregoing notes, are destined to follow their once numerous race into extinction—then a postscript. But why should not a new history be made for them? Is there no escape from such a melancholy close to the history of our most beautiful bird? Why should not a new history of *Psephotus pulcherrimus* someday be written—a history that shall commence with the discovery of these survivors and relate that Australians have atoned for their former neglect by giving the birds a protection that is effective... by treating them and their nests inviolable, and... by placing them in proper sanctuaries secure from natural enemies and most importantly perhaps, providing for the mating of unrelated parents. Then it may be that their name of Paradise... shall attain a new significance. For, like the inhabitants of that happy garden, they may go forth to repopulate from the seclusion of their present refuge to replenish and adorn the spaces they so love.

**Extracts on the Paradise Parrot from Cyril Jerrard's Nature Journals, 1922–1928**

*Journal (Nature) Vol. II April 1922–July 1925*

**1922:**

**April 24.** Today I opened up the anthill parrots nest on the road near Manar, it having been deserted by the pair some weeks ago. I found it to contain 5 eggs pinkish-white  $7/8" \times 3/4"$ . There is little difference in the shape between the two ends; in fact two had both ends exactly alike so that it was impossible to distinguish between 'big' & 'little' ends. Two of them were perforated on side in contact with ground. None seem to contain embryos. One which I broke was 'bad', containing a milky stinking fluid. The intact ones also seem to be three parts full of fluid...

In making the nest the birds evidently do not carry material from the interior part of the mound, but leave the broken-up stuff to form the bed of the nest. Only the hard material of the outer crust, through which the entrance tunnel is driven, is deposited outside. The interior excavation is roughly circular 15" to 18" across and 7 or 8 inches high in the middle. There is no lining, feathers or dung in this cavity. The floor is level, and lower than the surface of the ground outside. The eggs lay almost under the centre of the mound. The tunnel was about 9" long, nearly horizontal, and entered the nest cavity to the top and to one side, so that the eggs could not have been seen or touched from the outside. In this as in the old nests I previously examined, the cavity is right at the bottom of the mound. Like them too this mound contains no white ants.

**December 6.** Today I watched *P. pulcherrimus* pair feeding on ground at roadside first at old Sheep Station at Cave Creek crossing where they flew across the creek and resumed feeding in the vicinity of the well. I was struck by the appearance of the female's tail which seemed very long and tipped with white. However after a time I made out that the unusual appearance was due to a loosened feather which was white and stuck out an inch or more beyond the rest of the tail.

**1923:**

**February 17.** I revisited the old nesting mound of *P. pulcherrimus* near Manar homestead this afternoon. It does not seem at present to be in use but I saw the pair of parrots 100 yds or so farther along the track towards Jingeri gate. They were feeding quietly on the ground, climbing grass stalks for seed, and as usual their presence was first betrayed to me by the sharp 'whit' I now know so well.

**April 24.** Two pairs of Paradise Parrots were seen at Manar today. They were feeding on the ground in a field on which a crop of millet hay has just been taken. No doubt they are gleaning a plentiful harvest of fallen seeds.

**April 30.** Mr Atherton tells me that 4 or 5 Paradise Parrots are now often seen about Manar homestead chiefly about the cultivation paddock and in horse paddock on the same side of the creek as the well.

**October 24.** Within the last few days Mr Atherton has seen a single male Paradise Parrot at his water troughs in the Manar 'Night-horse paddock'...

**December 4.** Mr Atherton has seen the Paradise Parrot pair twice lately—once at water in Night-horse paddock and a morning or two ago at the old haunt where I photographed their nesting nearly two years ago.

**1924:**

**January 18 to 31.** Heard from the Kunkel brothers that Paradise Parrots were once (in their lifetime) common at Fifteen-mile but none have been seen for 20 years.



**June 14.** Mr Atherton reports having seen a pair of Paradise Parrots at the old spot between two crossings of W.A. Gully on Boondooma Rd on May 23rd...

**July 3.** Mrs Atherton tells me she saw a fem. Paradise Parrot on the Manar cornfield a few days ago.

**July 10.** Two days ago Mr Atherton saw six Paradise Parrots on the Bald Mountain on Weir Road. It was a wet day and the birds were feeding alongside the track...

**July 23.** Mrs Atherton has lately seen several Paradise Parrots at the water near Manar...

**October 7.** Mr Atherton tells me Ted saw 5 Paradise Parrots at the old site at top of crossing of W.A. Gully this morning.

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**1925:**

**October 26.** Jacob Horn tells me has seen the Paradise Parrots several times within the last four months... as many as 5 together.

**December 24.** This evening shortly before sundown I saw a pair of Paradise Parrots on the Weir Weir Road just this side of the Cypress clump. They rose from the grass as I approached them, with their characteristic sharp call...

**1926:**

**February 24.** Paradise Parrots up to five in number & of both sexes now frequent at stubble field, from which millet crop has just been reaped, at Manar. There are a great number of other common parrots with them, all evidently relishing the fallen millet seed.

**March 29.** Mrs Atherton has seen three Paradise Parrots on millet stubble field at Manar within the last day or two.

**May 6.** Saw three Paradise Parrots (male and two females) on my Waringa selection today [part of Kingar Springs]. I was riding along the Por. 14 boundary fence near s.w. corner when the whistle of a parrot caught my ear. It sounded like *P. pulcherrimus* so I stopped & listened till I heard it again & saw several birds fly off the ground to alight again some distance off. I carefully approached them and [saw] clearly with... my little glasses a male... and two females feeding on the sparsely grassed crest of a red sandstone ridge. They were biting off the newly unfolded white fluffy heads of the 'feathertop' or 'jointed' grass. It was pretty to watch the dextrous way they seized the grass stalks by the butts & rapidly moved their bills along the seed-heads which were chewed for a second or two & then released. A small flock of Spotted-sided Finches [Diamond Firetails] were feeding near by on the grass-heads too, but they obtained their foods by jumping directly for the seed-head. Eventually the parrots flew away towards the boundary of Por. 15.

**November 20.** On Weir Weir Road near the clump of cypress pine on top of the hill I saw this evening two pairs of Paradise Parrots. Discovered the first pair by hearing the whistle of the male and suspected the proximity of a rival as his notes were particularly animated and frequent. Soon I heard an answering call not far off and saw the second pair fly up & perch for some time on a dead tree. The first pair were busy feeding on the ground by the roadside. Both pairs were in adult plumage.

**December 11.** Charlie Barrett told me that not long ago he saw a pair of Paradise Parrots at (one of them on an anthill) 1½ mile along the mailman's track through Boyndale. Mr Atherton tells me he has lately seen a female of this species at two different and widely separated places on his back country beyond Weir Weir.

**December 21.** A pair of Paradise Parrots has been seen about Manar lately.

**1927:**

**March 5.** Mr Atherton told me tonight that a few days ago he saw three Paradise Parrots on Brovinia Creek at Weir Weir.

**March 26.** Today on Por 16 Waringa (Raby's block) I saw a Paradise Parrot's nest-hole in a white-ant hill. I did not see any of the birds but evidently a pair has nested there recently—possibly may be nesting now, as the hole is fresh-looking without any cobwebs in the entrance. It is situated among some lately ringbarked trees on a small gully a few hundred yards off Waringa Creek about the middle of its course through Por. 16.

**September 24.** I looked at the Paradise Parrots on Raabe's [Portion 16, taken up by Jerrard] selection again today. It was clean-looking, free of cobwebs or other obstructions and may be in use, though I saw no sign of birds.

**November 14.** On 13th I saw a male Paradise Parrot at a new spot on Mason's Selection—a Spotted Gum and wattle ridge about half a mile from Manar fence. The red on abdomen did not extend to under base of tail, and the rest of the colours were less brilliant than usual. He was whistling a good deal and chasing after one or two other birds including a Drongo. Though I watched him more than a quarter of an hour I did not see him on the ground. He flew from tree to tree and appeared to be feeding on wattle seeds or something of the kind.

**1928:**

**May 4.** Mr Atherton recently saw a pair of Paradise Parrots at a new place about 3–4 miles along Weir Weir Road from Manar. They were on the ground, at a spot where a patch of cane-grass was burned late this summer.

**November 30.** A week or two ago young Lindley saw a male Paradise Parrot at the watertrough in W.A. Gully on Boynedale–Manar fence.

**December 18.** Examined the supposed old nest hole of *Psephotus pulcherrimus* in an anthill on Raby's property. The mound is now broken open at the bottom on one side and a large cavity, like that found in other nests I have opened, can be seen. The little entrance-tunnel is still uninjured. It is halfway up the mound and slants slightly downward. ■

**Editor's note:** Jerrard made his observations in the vicinity of Manar Station south-west of Gayndah, Queensland. The full, original text of Jerrard's hitherto unpublished essay (here slightly abridged and edited) is online at the National Library of Australia. See [www.nla.gov.au/pub/paradiseparrot/](http://www.nla.gov.au/pub/paradiseparrot/)

The article, and Jerrard's nature journals, came to light during Penny Olsen's research for *Glimpses of Paradise* (reviewed on pp. 102–108 herein), in which brief excerpts, with pertinent photographs and information, appear. A larger series of extracts from Jerrard's journals, selected by Penny Olsen, is also online at the NLA. Jerrard's material © NLA is published here with kind permission of Susan Hall (NLA), and Graham & Judith Jerrard. The painting by Gostelow (Plate 9, front cover) is also reproduced here with kind permission and assistance of Sylvia Carr and Sarah Schmitt (NLA).