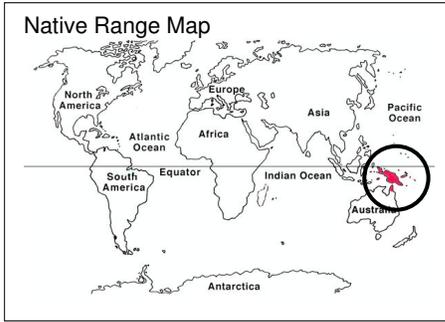


# Eclectus Parrot

## Native Range Map



Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Subphylum: Vertebrata  
Class: Aves  
Order: Psittaciformes  
Family: Psittacidae  
Genus: *Eclectus*  
Species: *roratus*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

## Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Eclectus parrots are found in Lesser Sundas, the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, and N.E. Australia. They are birds of lowland rainforests and clumps of tall trees.
- **Exhibit Location:** Zoo to You Collection

## Characteristics

- Both sexes are glossy, brilliant birds, but the male is bright green with blue and red patches, while the female is crimson red with a blue belly. His coloration helps him blend among the trees as he forages for food. Her colors help camouflage her as she sits in dark tree holes incubating eggs.
- Length: 14 inches; Wingspan: up to 28 inches; Weight: up to 16 ounces
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 40-50 years; **In Captivity** 80 years

## Behaviors

- These birds are strong fliers and on long flights they fly high above the forest canopy.
- They search for food during the day traveling in pairs or small parties, calling loudly. In the evening they engage in display flights before gathering in large groups of up to 80 birds to roost for the night.
- Eclectus parrots have 2 distinct calls: in flight, a harsh screeching is repeated 3 or 4 times; while feeding, they have a wailing cry or a mellow flute-like call.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** bird toys in and out of cage, tree branches with leaves set up in cage, climbing gym, sunflower seeds, steamed yam, pine nuts, daily handling, and demonstrations on and off zoo grounds

## Reproduction

- Eclectus parrots reach sexual maturity at 3 years of age. They have no specific breeding season and can breed all year long. During courtship, the male pursues one female and attempts to get her attention by making excited squawking calls.
- The nest is in a hole in the trunk of a tree standing near the edge of the forest or forest clearing. Two eggs are laid on wood chips lining the bottom of the hollow. The female sits on the nest and is fed at frequent intervals by the male. Only the female broods on the nest for 26 days, leaving about twice a day to be fed by the male. The young fledge (leave the nest) a little over 12 weeks after hatching.
- Observers have recorded groups of birds consisting of dominant pairs, each of which have helpers that are offspring from previous years or unpaired adult birds that come and assist in rearing of the young.

## Diet

- **In the Wild:** fruits, seeds, nuts, berries, leaf buds, blossoms, nectar
- **At the Zoo:** fruits, vegetables, monkey biscuits, variety of nuts, paradise pellets

## Conservation Status

- Status is common but declining in some areas due to over-trapping for the pet trade or habitat loss by deforestation.

- Few efforts are being made to conserve this beautiful parrot in the wild.
- Predators: man, hawks, falcons, monkeys, possums, wild dogs

### **Did You Know?/Fun Facts**

- The feet of parrots are unusual (zygodactyl). The 2 outer toes of the foot point backwards and grip in opposition to the 2 forward pointing inner toes. This provides them with an extremely powerful grasp, enabling them to hold and manipulate objects close to their beaks.
- Males and females are so different in color (sexually dimorphic) that they were once thought to be 2 different species.
- Newly hatched chicks are covered with short, thick bristles which are replaced with fluffy, gray down after 2 or 3 days. It is not until the gray down is replaced by the red or green feathers that the sex of the chick is known.
- There are 10 subspecies of Eclectus, with some differences in size and the females' plumage (feathers). However, the males of all the species are very similar.
- Eclectus parrots help to disperse seeds and probably pollinate some flowers.

### **Sources:**

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