

MITRED PARAKEET

Aratinga mitrata

Other: Mitred Conure, Mitered Parakeet

A.m. mitrata

naturalized (non-native) resident, recently established

Mitred Parakeets are native to e. Peru, Bolivia, and extreme nw. Argentina (Forshaw 1989, AOU 2002). Escaped birds and/or naturalized populations have been reported since the 1980s in Puerto Rico, Florida, and s. California (Lever 1987; Collins and Kares 1997; Garrett 1997, 1998; Butler 2005), and the species was added to the AOU Check-list as established in California and Florida by the AOU (2002). They feed on a variety of fruits and nuts and are considered a pest to agricultural endeavors. In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* a naturalized breeding population became established on Maui for at least 15 years (Runde and Pitt 2008), prompting its placement on the official Hawai'i Checklist by Pyle (2002). Breeding of escaped Mitred Parakeets may also have begun in the 1990-2000s on Hawai'i I and perhaps O'ahu, but confusion about identification persists on these islands due to similarity among Mitred, [Red-masked](#), and other *Aratinga* (see [Non-established Species](#) list) parakeets, which co-exist and have been reported to hybridize elsewhere (McCarthy 2006).

In 1986-1987 at least one pair of Mitred Parakeets escaped or was liberated from a large aviary in Huelo on the N coast of e. *Maui* (Waring 1998, Runde and Pitt 2008). Residents soon reported groups of 6-8 in a surrounding woodlot, and they had grown to about 30 by 1995, 60+ in 1999, and 150 in 2000 (Waring 1998, Gassmann-Duvall 2002). The initial group of parakeets roosted and nested on remote and inaccessible sea cliffs at Huelo Pt., where they were suspected of disturbing nesting seabirds (Runde and Pitt 2008). In 2002 a splinter group of four birds were observed nesting in a cave near Waipi'o Bay, 1.1 km W of the Huelo Pt. colony, and this group had expanded to 40 birds by 2006. During the late 2000s birds from the two groups joined at dawn to forage in fruit and nut trees primarily between Huelo and Ho'olawa Valley and upslope to 1300 m elevation, and sporadically W as far as Peahi Gulch and E to the Ke'anea Peninsula (Runde and Pitt 2008). Due to possible disturbance to seabirds, damage to agricultural (and potentially native) crops, and potential to spread noxious plants (Kishinami 2001, Runde and Pitt 2008), control efforts were initiated in 2000 and 2007 and specimens sent to BPBM (184567-570, 185093-097; [HRBP](#) 5862 of specimens). These individuals have plumage consistent with the more widespread *A.m. mitrata* than with *alticola* of c. Peru (Forshaw 1989, Clements 2007; PP examination, BPBM).

On Hawai'i I, six Mitred Parakeets were first reported 29 Jul 1988 near Kea'au and 2 Nov 1989 above Kailua-Kona. By 1999-2006, a flock of 30-40 free-flying *Aratinga* parakeets were being observed in Kona and along the coast S to Ho'okena Beach and N to Anaeho'omalua Beach, were identified by different observers as consisting primarily of either Mitred or [Red-masked](#) parakeets, with two Red-fronted Parakeet (see [Non-established Species](#) list) also mentioned. At least eight Mitred Parakeets were also reported Aug 1997-Feb 1998 near the Kahena Ranch Reservoir in the Kohala Mountains. On O'ahu an individual observed in Moanalua, nw. Honolulu 6 Feb 1988 was reported as a Mitred or Red-masked parakeet. An observation of five Mitred Parakeets in Kapiolani Park reported on the Honolulu [Christmas Bird Count](#) 17 Dec 1989 was later corrected to

Red-masked Parakeets (Ord 1995). In Mar 1997 a group of two adults and three dependent young parakeets observed here were identified as Mitred Parakeets. By 1999 small flocks of parakeets were being reported at Kapiolani Park (but see [Red-masked Parakeet](#)). Establishment of Mitred Parakeets on other islands besides Maui awaits further documentation proving that they co-exist among the better-documented [Red-masked Parakeets](#) on these islands.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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