

Red-breasted parakeets at Yew Tee estate

Subjects: Red-breasted parakeet, *Psittacula alexandri* (Aves: Psittaciformes: Psittaculidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Yew Tee estate, Choa Chu Kang Street 64; 27 June 2015; around 0830 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland in residential estate with highrise concrete buildings.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Seven red-breasted parakeets were observed feeding on the ripe fruits of an oil palm *Elaeis guineensis* (Arecaceae) on the road side (Fig. 1). Occasional screeching was heard from the feeding birds.

Remarks: The red-breasted parakeet is sexually dimorphic, the male has an orange-red bill, the female has a black bill (Yong et al., 2013). In Singapore, this introduced species has a well-established breeding population (Neo, 2012; Yong et al., 2013). It does well in urban parkland, and is shown here using an introduced plant (the oil palm) as a food source (Fig. 2). The birds apparently relish the oily kernel of the oil palm seed (Wee, 2007).

References:

- Neo M. L., 2012. A review of three alien parrots in Singapore. *Nature in Singapore*. 5: 241-248.
Wee Y. C., 2007. Hanging parrot, parakeets and oil palms. *Bird Ecology Study Group*. <http://www.besgroup.org/2007/03/14/hanging-parrot-parakeets-and-oil-palms/> [accessed 29 June 2015].
Yong D. L., K. C. Lim & T. K. Lee, 2013. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, Oxford, England. 176 pp.



Fig. 1. Four of the red-breasted parakeets feeding on the oil palm. Photograph by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 2. Male parakeet eating an oil palm kernel. Photograph by Tan Heok Hui

Contributor: **Tan Heok Hui**
Contact addresses: nhmthh@nus.edu.sg