

Blue-crowned hanging parrot tucking pieces of leaf among throat feathers

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Subject: Blue-crowned hanging parrot, *Loriculus galgulus* (Aves: Psittaciformes: Psittacidae).

Subject identified by: Tan Hui Zhen.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens, around Eco Lake; 24 August 2019, 1805 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observer: Tan Hui Zhen.

Observation: A male individual was first observed perched on a *Tristaniopsis obovata* tree (identification from signage). He had a piece of leaf embedded among his red throat feathers (Fig. 1). The parrot was using his bill to tear small pieces of leaf from the leaves proximal to his perch (Fig. 2). After tearing off a small piece of leaf, the parrot proceeded to tuck it among the red feathers on his throat (Fig. 3). This behaviour was repeated several times until there were multiple pieces of leaf stuck among the bird's throat feathers (Fig. 4). The parrot then flew off.

Remarks: The blue-crowned hanging parrot is an uncommon resident in Singapore that inhabits a range of habitats (Wang & Hails, 2007). This species has been recorded in many instances to cut nesting material and tuck them into contour feathers such that they can be carried to the nest (Buckley, 1968; Chuah et al., 2018; Prestwich, 1947; Wells, 1999). Leaves, bark and wood chips as well as artificial material like newspapers have been known to be cut by this species for use as nesting material (Buckley, 1968).

The contour feathers of hanging parrots (genus *Loriculus*) have microscopic hooks to secure materials placed among them (Dilger, 1964) at various body parts (Meade-Waldo, 1913). This method of transporting nesting material has also been observed to be used by other congeneric species, as well as African lovebirds, *Agapornis* spp. (Buckley, 1968). In Singapore, blue-crowned hanging parrots have been observed utilising the leaves of mango (*Mangifera indica*) and longan (*Dimocarpus longan*) trees as nesting material (Chuah et al., 2018).

References:

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Fig. 1. Frontal view of parrot with a piece of leaf tucked among his throat feathers.



Fig. 2. Parrot tearing small pieces of leaf from the edges with his bill.



Fig. 3. Parrot tucking a piece of leaf among feathers on his throat.



Fig. 4. Note the multiple pieces of leaf among the red throat feathers.

Photographs by Tan Hui Zhen