



## SYMPOSIUM 'REINTRODUCING MIGRATORY BIRDS'

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REASON FOR HOPE  
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### **Over-winter ranching and aided migration to help recover the orange-bellied parrot**

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The orange-bellied parrot is one of the world's most endangered birds. It is also one of only two migratory parrots. The species breeds in south-west Tasmania, Australia and each year migrates across the Bass Strait to the Australian mainland, where it spends the winter months in coastal habitats. The wild population is supplemented by annual releases from a conservation breeding program. In recent years, the return rate of birds has been declining alarmingly, and fewer than 20 individuals returned to the only known breeding site in 2017.

In an effort to improve annual survival, several new initiatives are being trialed. At the end of the breeding season, selected birds have been captured and either (i) held in captivity over-winter and released back at the breeding site at the start of the following season (ranching) or (ii) released into high quality mainland habitat within the winter range (aided migration). Here, I will outline the potential benefits of these approaches and detail some of the promising early outcomes, including the high survival and subsequent breeding success of ranched individuals. Both approaches may contribute significantly to aiding the persistence and future recovery of this remarkable species.