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## Red-masked Parakeet    *Aratinga erythrogenys*

The Red-masked Parakeet is native to the coastal scrub of southwestern Ecuador and northeastern Peru. Its habitat in South America is not well known (Forshaw 1973, de Schauensee 1970), although Parker et al. (1982) list it as common in dry forest and riparian thickets.

The Red-masked Parakeet is a fairly recent addition to the avifauna of south Florida. However, it appears to be increasing in numbers, and large numbers of immatures are seen in the flocks. In Florida it occurs in suburban neighborhoods where it feeds on a variety of fruits. It is also a frequent visitor to feeders. It is a gregarious species and forms mixed flocks with several other species of *Aratinga* parakeets. At least 2 large flocks of Red-masked Parakeets have been established in Miami since the early 1980s (B. Neville, pers. obs.).

Red-masked Parakeets were confirmed breeding in 2 quadrangles in Dade County, with lesser evidence of breeding found in 2 additional quadrangles. At the present time, breeding activity has been observed only in Dade County, but small flocks have been observed in Boca Raton in Palm Beach County (B. Neville, pers. obs.) and in 1991 2 birds appeared in Winter Park, Orange County (H. W. Kale and B. Pranty, pers. commun.).

Nesting in the wild has not been described (Forshaw 1973), but in captivity, the species will use nest boxes. Two (Vriends 1984) to 4 (Forshaw 1973) eggs are laid and incubated solely by the female for from 26 days (Vriends 1984) to 1 month (Forshaw 1973). The young leave the nest from 6 weeks (Forshaw 1973) to 50 days (Vriend 1984) after hatching, and the adults continue to care for the young for several months after fledging (Vriends 1984). The face of the immatures is green, and the red mask of the adult is gradually acquired (Forshaw 1973).

Bruce Neville

# Red-masked Parakeet

