

## POSTERS

**Title: Night Parrot: high complexity in an arid data zone**

**Authors: Allan Burbidge<sup>1</sup>, Mike Bamford<sup>2</sup>, Rob Davis<sup>3</sup>, Tegan Douglas<sup>4</sup>, Bruce Greatwich<sup>1</sup>, Neil Hamilton<sup>1</sup>, Nigel Jackett<sup>4</sup>, Jennifer Jackson<sup>1</sup>, Manda Page<sup>1</sup>**

**Institution: 1 -Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, 2 - Bamford Consulting, 3 - Edith Cowan University, 4 - BirdLife Australia**

The Night Parrot is an enigmatic and rare nocturnal species of the Australian arid zone that has, until recent years, eluded searchers, hence surrounding it in mystery and giving it the status of the 'Holy Grail' for bird watchers. Recent sightings of this little-known species in WA have raised its profile. However, conservation management is complex and made harder because of the lack of data relating to the biology and ecology of the species - it has a high profile, is very poorly known, occurs on multiple land tenures, and presumed threats are diverse (altered fire regimes, introduced predators, introduced herbivores, loss or degradation of habitat through deliberate disturbance and climate change). There are also multiple groups of stakeholders including, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Native Title claimants, , the mining and pastoral industries, and NGOs (especially AWC, BHA and BirdLife), along with bird watchers chasing the 'holy grail'. Management to date has involved liaison with land owners/managers, protection of sites from fire and predators, and formulation of guidelines for surveys, particularly for environmental impact assessment. There are also some intriguing questions: Why has the Night Parrot, which behaves like a critical weight range mammal, survived in a landscape that has suffered the highest rate of vertebrate extinction on the planet in recorded history? Did it decline along with the mammals and just hang on, or did the rumour of extinction result in Australian ornithology losing the skills required to find the species and really it has been there at about the same abundance all along?