

Western Ground Parrot Captive Management Project

Progress Report April 2010

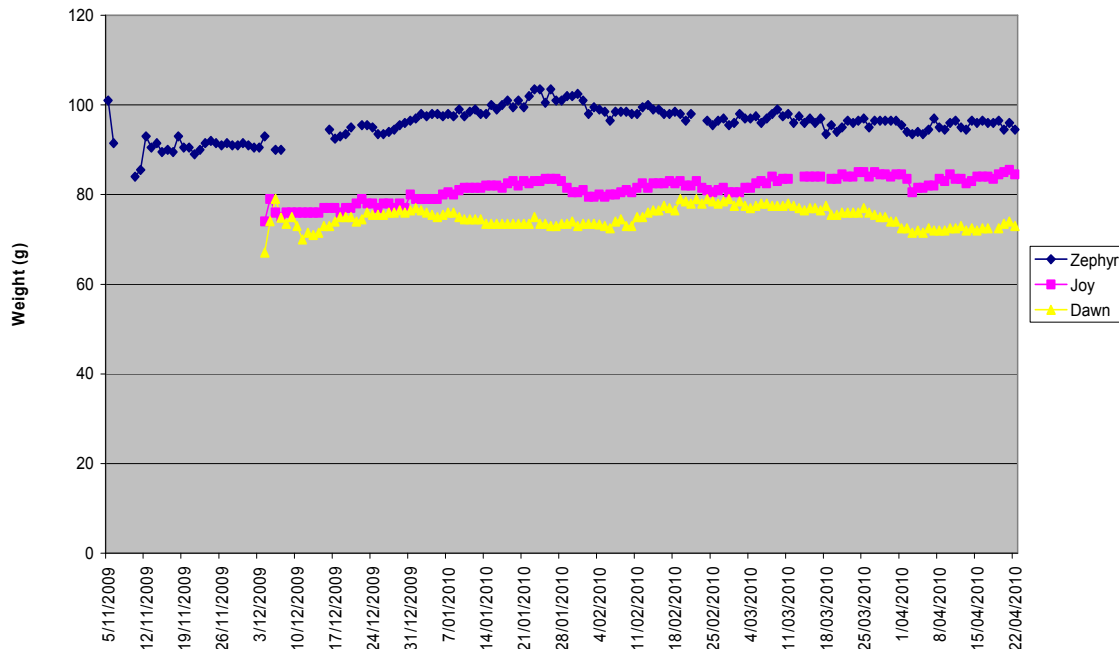
Update on the captive birds

The three captive birds have continued to do well this month. Their weights remain within the normal range and they have been feeding well on both the seed and the native vegetation. This month Dawn has been looking very bright and active. After looking unwell late last month, she seems to have made a good recovery with no further signs of poor health observed. She had lost some weight but in recent weeks her weight has stabilised. She has been eating well and appears to have plenty of energy.

At the beginning of the month Zephyr was captured so that we could clip his wings. Although Zephyr's wings were clipped when he was first introduced into the aviary, he had since moulted and the wing feathers had grown back. Zephyr has always flushed when we feed him, even though we don't enter the aviary itself but place the food through an access hatch. Because his wing feathers had regrown he was capable of flying faster and higher and ran the risk of injuring himself, although the aviary is lined with a soft inner shell to minimise any impacts. Since clipping his wings, Zephyr's flights have been much slower and safer and the chance of him injuring himself has been greatly reduced. While we had Zephyr out of the aviary we also took the opportunity to clean the aviary and put in fresh vegetation.

We monitor the birds' weights on a daily basis and we are gradually building up a clearer picture of how their weights fluctuate over time (see graph below).

Captive WGP weights



Population monitoring

Jeff Pinder and a team of volunteers carried out a 10 day survey of the Drummond site in Fitzgerald River National Park this month. Very few WGP calls were heard, and it is estimated that there are between one to three birds in the area. When WGPs are in low numbers, surveying for them is particularly challenging. WGPs are rarely seen and only usually call in the hour before sunrise and the hour after sunset and we detect the birds by listening for these calls. However, when WGPs are in low numbers they seem to call less frequently, making it even more difficult to survey them.

Jeff and volunteers departed on a survey trip to Cape Arid National Park on the 27th and the results of this trip will be in the next report.