

FEEDING ECOLOGY OF THE ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET
PSITTACULA KRAMERI, IN POLONNARUWA

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The natural food of Rose-ringed Parakeets has been described² by numerous authors as consisting of fruits, berries, seeds, buds and flowers. While, many others have reported them feeding on economic crops such as wheat, mustard, maize, sisso seed, paddy, peas, and also the seasonal occurrence of these items in the stomach contents.

Information on the feeding of Parakeets was obtained by field observations at Polonnaruwa Sanctuary, using the line transect method¹. Records of the food item were also noted.

The monthly values, although showing considerable variation were significant ($f = 3.14$, d.f. 11,60 $p < 0.01$). The feeding activities showed three clear peaks; in March - June, August, and October - November.

The feeding pattern observed may be explained by (a) availability of paddy in the fields, (b) availability of food in the forest, (c) nutritive requirements of the Parakeets or (d) a combination of all these factors.

Accordingly the peak in March - June and October - November may be due to the non availability of paddy in the fields and/or the high nutritive requirement of breeding birds. The peak in August is suspected to be due to the nutritive demand for moulting.

The low numbers of Parakeets in the forests in January - February and September coincide with the availability of paddy in the fields. The general pattern of feeding in the forest does not show any relationship to the availability and abundance of natural foods.

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References

1. Driscoll, P.V. (1977) Comparison of bird counts from pine forests and indigenous vegetation *Aust. Wildl. Res.* 4 281 - 88
2. Forshaw, Joseph M. (1981) *Parrots of the world*. David & Charles (Publishers) Ltd.