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"Alec Chisholm and the Extinction of the Paradise Parrot"

McGregor, Russell

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Rediscovered in 1921 after several decades of feared extinction, the resurrection of the Paradise Parrot was brief. Within a few decades more, the parrot was actually extinct, making it the only mainland Australian bird species known to have suffered that fate since colonisation. This article explores the reasons for the paucity and ineffectuality of attempts to preserve the species in the interwar years. By examining the contemporary state of ornithological knowledge on endangered species and the limited repertoire of conservationist strategies then available, the article extends our understanding of early twentieth-century discourses on avian extinction in Australia. It also offers an assessment of the conservationist efforts of Alec Chisholm, an amateur ornithologist who had a major role in the rediscovery of the Paradise Parrot and in subsequently publicising its plight. (Abstract)

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