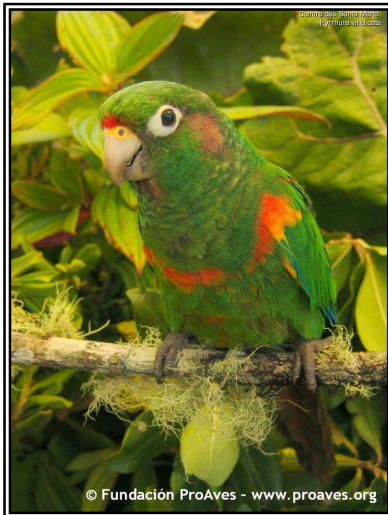


## SANTA MARTA PARAKEET – PYRRHURA VIRIDICATA – CONURE DES SANTA MARTA

**BIOMETRICS:** Length: 25cm



**DESCRIPTION:** Santa Marta Parakeet is endemic to Colombia and endangered species.

Adult is mainly green, flecked and marked with red, yellow and orange on upper and under wing coverts, and also on belly.

In flight, we can see the blue primaries and the dull reddish undertail coverts.

Head is green, with narrow red frontlet. Ear coverts are purplish-brown. Eyes are dark brown with greyish to whitish bare ocular area. Bill is pale horn coloured. Legs and feet are dark grey.

Both sexes are similar.

**VOICE:** Santa Marta Parakeet utters screeching calls similar to those of other Pyrrhura. In flight, it gives coarse “pik-pik” or pik...pik...pik”.

**HABITAT:** Santa Marta Parakeet lives within restricted range. It may be fairly common in humid montane forests, including margins. It also may be seen in grassy slopes with scattered shrubs. This species can live up to 2000 to 2500 m of elevation, and probably higher.

**RANGE:** Santa Marta Parakeet is found in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Magdalena, in northern Colombia.

Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta forms coastal range, with high snow-covered peaks which can be seen from Caribbean coasts at 60km. It is an ecoregion, an island of montane forest surrounded by a sea of dry forests where are found many endemic plant and animal species. (Ref: National Geographic Society).

**BEHAVIOUR:** Santa Marta Parakeet is resident in its range, performing some seasonal movements and altitudinal dispersions.

It is usually in noisy flocks of about 20 birds, performing erratic flight across open areas, from one forest to another.

They alight in treetops, and after a short pause, they clamber slowly along branches, calling softly.

Santa Marta Parakeet is shy. If disturbed while feeding, a flock dashes out noisily from tree, and sometimes, they wheel about and return to the same place.

They forage in groups which separate in smaller flocks during the day. They roost and nest in pairs, or in groups of 3 to 4 birds, in natural cavities in palm trees.

**FLIGHT:** Santa Marta Parakeet flies fast in tight flocks. They fly often through the trees, while uttering screeching calls. They often fly in twisting groups.

**REPRODUCTION:** Santa Marta Parakeet nests in natural cavities in palm trees (*Ceroxylon ceriferum*). Breeding season starts in December and continues until June. Birds visit cavities 4 to 5 times per day before nesting.

Reproduction success is relatively low, due to predation by other bird species. We can find clutches with 4 to 5 chicks, staying in nest during 6 to 7 weeks. Nest is often guarded by individual, up to 4 birds.

**DIET**: Santa Marta Parakeet feeds mainly on fruits and flowers. Its main food is constituted by the flowers of a Euphorbiaceae (Croton bogotanus). This bird species can feed on 12 different vegetal species.

**PROTECTION / THREATS / STATUS**: Santa Marta Parakeet is globally endangered, with small local populations (60 to 120 birds), heavily threatened by habitat loss.

Artificial nests are installed in San Lorenzo, about 48 nest-boxes, in the Nature Reserve El Dorado, in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Santa Marta Parakeet occupied its first nest-box, installed in a Wax Palm, at about 7 m above the ground. It was occupied by 4 birds, probably two pairs, and chicks hatched.

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**Photograph by Fundación ProAves [www.proaves.org](http://www.proaves.org)**

**Text by Nicole Bouglouan**

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