



Variegated Parakeet



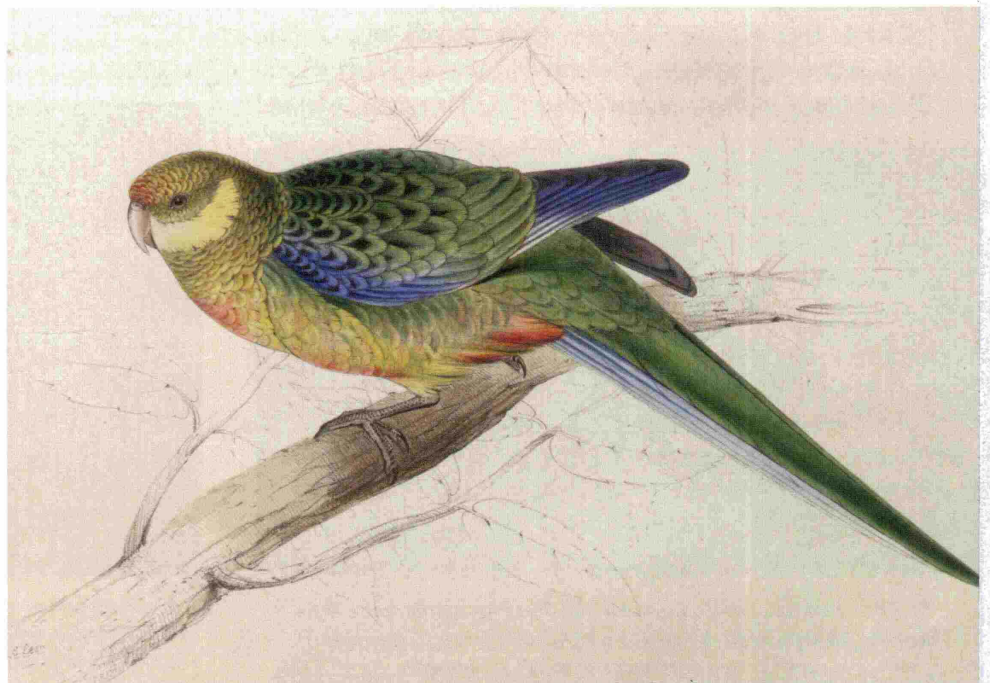
PLYLOLOPHUS LEADBEATERI.
Leadbeater's Cockatoo.

Leadbeater's Cockatoo



HALOPTILUS NOVE-HOLLANDIAE.
The Dutch Parakeet.

New Holland Parakeet



Stanley Parakeet

Edward Lear's Parrot Paintings

a Review of Lear's "Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae"

Enjoy the vivid beauty of parrots as never before with this fine-feathered Octavo Edition of a rare collection of ornithological plates by Edward Lear.

London, 1832 • Octavo Edition, January 2003

Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots

Edward Lear

isbn 1-59110-008-9

CD, US \$25

Edward Lear's album of parrots contains the finest illustrations of the family ever produced: it is also a stylistic monument in the history of the depiction of birds. Lear turned his hand to many things in the course of his long life—landscape painting, nonsense verse, and the illustration of birds and reptiles. The nonsense verse is Lear's most widely known achievement; but the limericks and their companion sketches are above all the inventions of a landscape painter who still preserved a hand attuned to the forms of reptiles and birds.

Lear's work as a natural history draftsman lasted little more than the decade of the 1830s, until his eyesight became too weak for the detail of feathers and scales. The Psittacidae is his finest achievement. Lear conveyed with telling sympathy the carriage of a bird, the grasp of the claws, the tilt of the head, its grave, curious, or quizzical expression (noteworthy beaks later reappear as remarkable noses on the limerick people, who are as distinctive as his parrots for their idiosyncratic posture and curious poses). Lear was exceptionally sensitive to the structure and function of features such as the parrot's beak and the turtle's jaws (the latter is evident in his lithographs of turtles and tortoises in Thomas Bell's *A Monograph of the Testudinata*, also available in an Octavo Edition).

Edward Lear's *Psittacidae* was drawn, lithographed, and published on a shoestring by the artist himself in a tiny edition. The copy reproduced in this Octavo Edition is from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Every page of Lear's masterpiece of ornithological illustration is presented in stunning detail.

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[Editor'd Note: My dear readers, almost all of you love bird books but none of you, I fear, can afford (or even find for sale) an original 1832 edition that is found only in a few museums and royal collections and is, indeed, priceless. You can get a nice 1978 facsimile edition for about \$1600 but if you really want to see the extraordinary art work – the magnificent parrot paintings of Edward Lear – I highly recommend this Octavo CD edition. The whole book is available page by page on this CD and it is a great joy to flip through the pages, turn back to a favorite, zoom in on the detail, and just absorb the great beauty of the parrots so many of us love. I have the CD and enjoy it no end. You should have it also. S. Dingle] ❖

