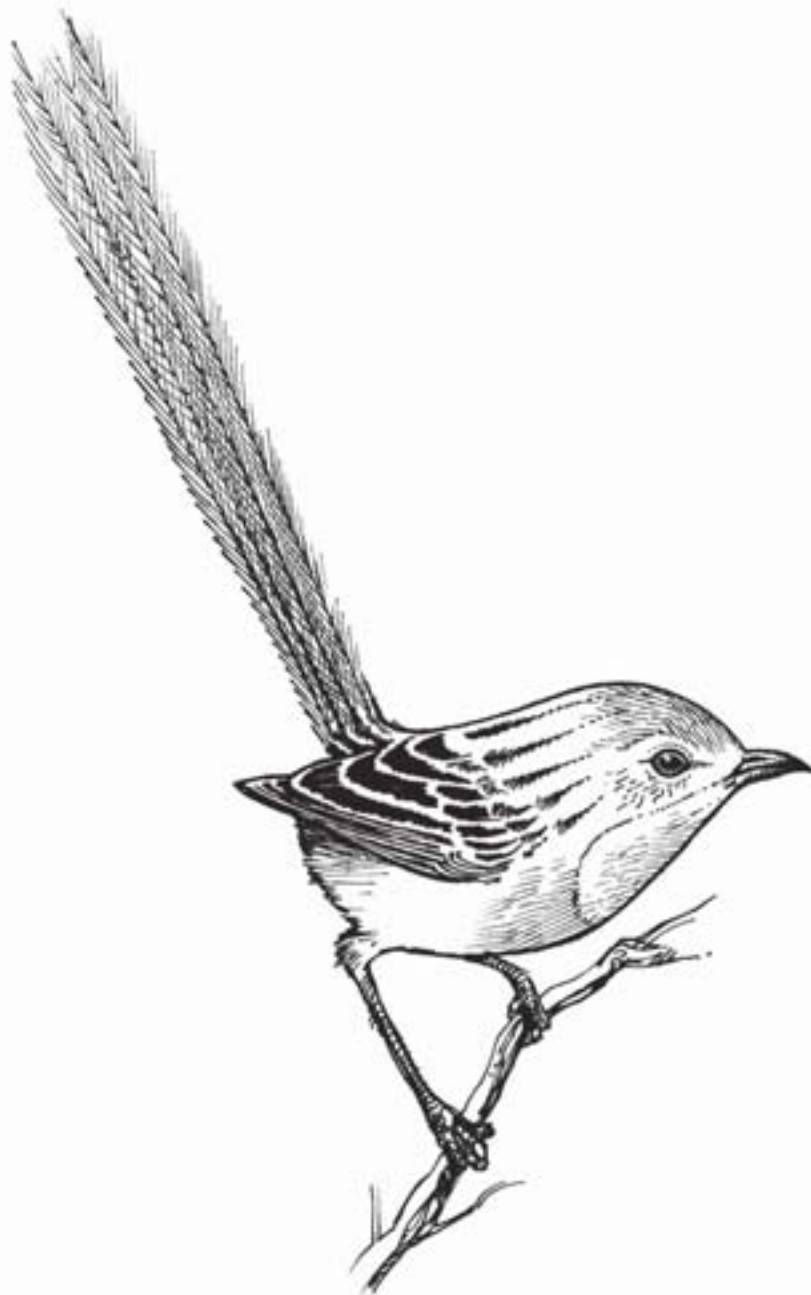


Ark on Eyre - Information Sheet

No. 9

Southern Emu-wren



75 Liverpool Street
PORT LINCOLN
South Australia 5606

PO Box 22
PORT LINCOLN
South Australia 5606

Tel. (08) 8688 3111
Fax. (08) 8688 3110



Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Heritage



9 Southern Emu-wren

Ark on Eyre - Information Sheet

No. 9

Southern Emu-wren

Description

The shy Eyre Peninsula sub-species of the southern emu-wren has a long stick-like tail comprised of only six feathers, resembling emu feathers, hence its name.

On Southern Eyre Peninsula these small birds are found predominantly in cutting grass swamps and coastal heath habitats and are poor fliers, unable to cross the cleared land that separates these patches. They are considered an endangered species.

The male has a grey-brown upper body with black striations and a tan crown with paler under parts. The female is similar, but her brow, throat and breast are all buff coloured.

Southern emu-wrens feed in the middle of dense vegetation on moths, spiders, caterpillars, beetles, weevils, wasps and ants.

Decline

The decline of this sub-species is almost solely due to the ongoing practice of land clearing activities such as burning, draining and grazing of cutting grass swamps, and the grazing of and unrestricted vehicular access to coastal heath are the current threats. The remaining small populations are now vulnerable due to their isolation.

A helping hand needed

Southern Eyre Birds Incorporated plans to survey potential sites in order to determine the locations of remaining populations.

Private landholders are encouraged to protect their cutting grass swamps and be aware that these plants are important for dryland salinity control. Cutting grass swamps are also important habitat plants for a variety of waterfowl and at least seven Australian skipper butterflies. The Chrysoticha Skipper (*Hesperilla chrysoticha nava*) has only been found near Pt Lincoln and Coffin Bay.

Ark on Eyre - the future

Protecting cutting grass swamps and coastal heaths by fencing them off from stock and vehicles as well as not burning off these areas, will help the Eyre Peninsula southern emu-wren survive.

