

# Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (South Eastern)

*Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*



There are five subspecies of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo in Australia and the south eastern variety is the smallest. It is estimated that there are less than 1,500 of this subspecies surviving, which means that they are in real danger of extinction.

Males and females of this species look quite different. The male's feathers are glossy black except for their bright red tail feathers. Females have duller brown-black plumage, yellow spots on their heads and necks and yellow-orange tail panels. Juveniles look like females until they reach three years of age, when males moult to their adult appearance. These birds are 50–60cm long.

## Diet

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos feed on seeds of brown and desert stringybark (*Eucalyptus baxteri* and *E. arenacea* respectively) and buloke trees (*Allocasuarina leuhmannii*).

## Breeding

They nest from spring to autumn in deep hollows in large eucalypts. The female lays only one egg per season and incubates it herself while her male partner brings her food. When hatched a chick needs to be cared for at the nest for three months before it can make its first flight, and, in this time, it is fed by the female with food collected mostly by the male. During the nesting season, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos are usually seen alone or in family groups of two to three birds, but at other times of the year they may gather in flocks of up to 200.

## Habitat

They are only found in south-eastern SA and south-western Victoria.

## Threats

Loss of feeding habitat is the biggest threat Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos currently face. Hollows for nesting and preferred food trees have been cleared for agriculture, forestry and development. The fact that their feeding and nesting habits are so specialised makes it difficult for them to adapt when their habitat is changed.

Fuel reduction burns can also lead to less seeds being available for them to eat. This means females have to leave the nest to find enough food which leads to higher rates of nest failure. Nest predators (e.g. possums) can also be a danger to these birds.



Map courtesy of Mapping Unit, Customer and Commercial Services.

Map is not intended to indicate spatial distribution of the species, only the bioregions in which the species is found.



## Fussy eaters! Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos will only eat the seeds of 3 tree species.

### Conservation

The Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo Recovery team are taking steps to protect these birds through actions such as replanting food trees, protecting old gum trees with hollows, and working with fire managers to minimise impact of controlled burns and wildfires on the cockatoo's food resources.

You can help the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo by:

- getting involved in replanting trees
- protecting dead and live trees with hollows
- planting locally indigenous food plants on your property
- participating in the annual cocky count in May.

## For further information

### Public enquiries

For more local information on any of the species in this resource please contact your nearest Natural Resource Centre office on:

**Eastwood:** (08) 8273 9100

**Gawler:** (08) 8523 7700

**Lobethal:** (08) 8389 5900

**Willunga:** (08) 8550 3400

### Education enquiries

For teachers wanting more information about environmental education resources and opportunities please contact the relevant NRM Education sub regional team on:

**Northern Adelaide:** (08) 8406 8289

**Barossa:** (08) 8563 8436

**Central Adelaide:** (08) 8234 7255

**Southern Adelaide:** (08) 8384 0176

**Southern Fleurieu:** (08) 8551 0524

