

# Dead Trees Included as Native Vegetation

## Native Vegetation Information Sheet No.28

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### BACKGROUND

Native vegetation in South Australia is protected by the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* (the Act) and the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2003* (the Regulations). The legislation prevents broad-scale clearance and minimises smaller-scale clearance; enhances and restores the State's native vegetation; and outlines certain procedures and assessments that need to be undertaken before any clearance of native vegetation can proceed.

Within the Act, 'native vegetation' includes all naturally occurring local native plants, from small ground covers and native grasses to large trees. It also includes both freshwater and saltwater vegetation and certain dead trees. Plants may be isolated or part of a larger group or community.

The Act recognises the importance of **habitat**. Hollows in dead trees can provide important nesting and roosting sites for native fauna. For example, Glossy Black-Cockatoos often nest in hollows in dead eucalypts on Kangaroo Island. Hollows are formed mainly in living trees by termites, which enter via the trunk. A dead tree with a rotten butt has the potential to expose suitable hollows once smaller branches have dropped.

Clearance of a dead tree that is defined and protected as 'native vegetation' may only occur through an appropriate exemption under a Regulation or by application to the NVC for consideration and approval.

### DEFINITION OF A 'DEAD TREE' UNDER THE NATIVE VEGETATION ACT

A 'dead tree' definition is given below but please note that this **definition only applies** to trees that are of a species indigenous to South Australia and occur naturally or have been planted in accordance with the Act, and then only **to trees that provide, or have the potential to provide, habitat for threatened species as listed under the Commonwealth's EPBC Act**.

A 'dead tree' therefore is deemed to be native vegetation under the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2003*, Regulation 3A, where:

- the circumference of the trunk of the tree at 300 mm from the base of the tree is
  - o in the case of a tree located on Kangaroo Island – 1 metre or more;
  - o in any other case – 2 metres or more; and
- the tree provides or has potential to provide, or is part of a group of trees or other plants (whether alive or dead) that provides, or has potential to provide, a habitat for animals of a listed threatened species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

### FAUNA SPECIES OF CONCERN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

In South Australia **four birds and one mammal listed as threatened species** under the Australian Government's EPBC Act **use, or potentially use, large dead trees as habitat:**

- **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo** (SE Form) *Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*
- **Glossy Black-Cockatoo** (KI Form) *Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus*
- **Regent Parrot** (SE Form) *Polytelis anthopeplus anthopeplus*
- **Princess Parrot** *Polytelis alexandrae*
- **South-eastern Long-eared Bat** *Nyctophilus corbeni*

**The following pages provide more information about these species, their distribution and potential use of dead trees as habitat.**

**Landholders are encouraged to leave any dead trees where possible, especially trees with hollows, as these also provide valuable habitat for other native fauna.**

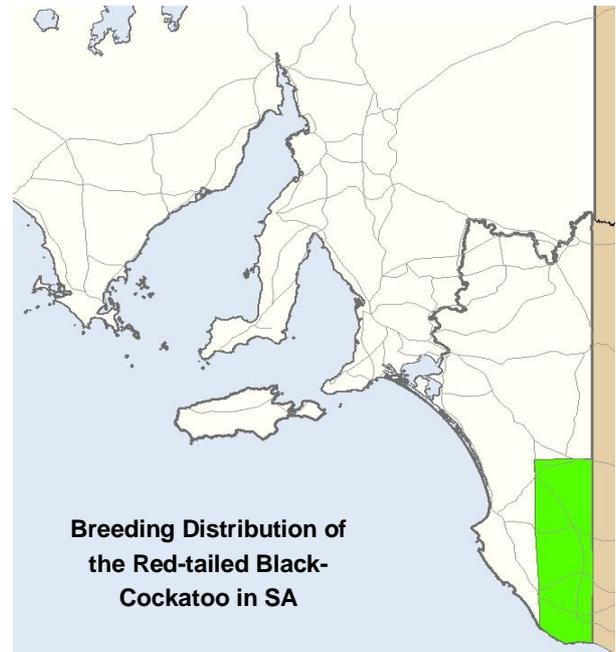
**RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO (SE FORM) *Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne***

This cockatoo breeds in eucalypt hollows in south-eastern South Australia and south-western Victoria. Most nests have been found in dead trees, especially Red Gums (*E. camaldulensis*) but also South Australian Blue Gums (*E. leucoxyton*) and Stringybarks (*E. baxteri* & *E. arenacea*). The Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo’s potential breeding habitat in South Australia includes dead trees with large hollows (>15cm diameter) in the area south of Bordertown and east of Lucindale.

In South Australia, **any dead Eucalypt south of Bordertown and east of Lucindale with a trunk circumference of two (2) metres or more and with hollows or a rotten butt is included as ‘native vegetation’ under the definition of the Act.**



Photo courtesy Wayne Bigg



**REGENT PARROT (SE FORM) *Polytelis anthopeplus monarchoides***

This parrot breeds in eucalypt hollows on the River Murray floodplain in South Australia and Victoria/NSW, upstream of Swan Reach. Many Regent Parrots have nested in dead Red Gums, especially Red Gums (*E. camaldulensis*) but also River Box (*E. largiflorens*).

In South Australia, **any dead eucalypt on the River Murray floodplain upstream of Swan Reach with a trunk circumference of two (2) metres or more and with hollows or a rotten butt is included as ‘native vegetation’ under the definition of the Act.**



Photo courtesy Peter Tucker



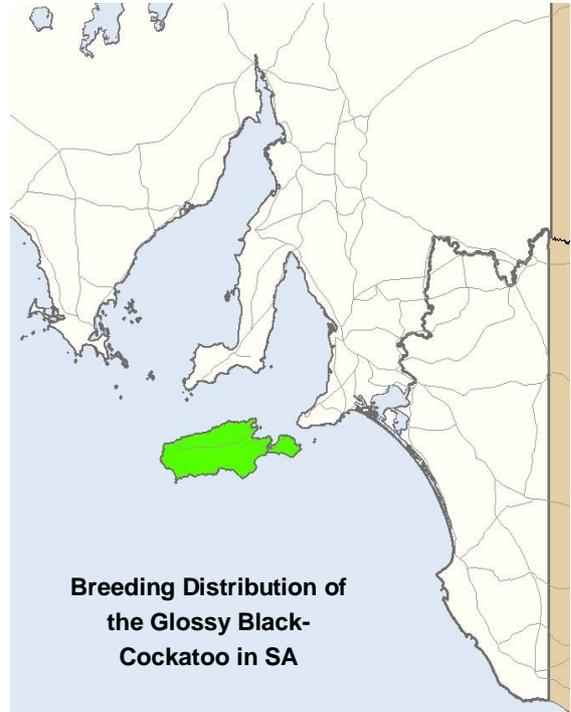
**GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOO (KI FORM) *Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus***

This cockatoo breeds in eucalypt hollows on Kangaroo Island. Often it nests in dead trees, especially Sugar Gums (*E. cladocalyx*) but also in SA Blue Gums (*E. leucoxyton*) and Red Gums (*E. camaldulensis*).

**Any dead eucalypt on Kangaroo Island with a trunk circumference of one (1) metre or more and with hollows or a rotten butt is included as ‘native vegetation’ under the definition of the Act.**



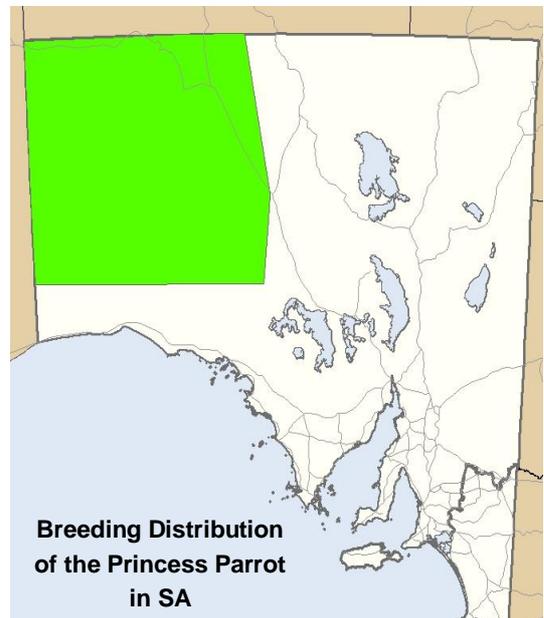
Glossy Black-Cockatoo female at nest.  
Photo courtesy Lyn Pedler.



**PRINCESS PARROT *Polytelis alexandrae***

This parrot occurs in central-western Australia, primarily in sandy deserts. In South Australia it has been recorded in the Great Victoria Desert west of Coober Pedy and north of Tarcoola.

In South Australia, **any dead tree west of Coober Pedy and north of Tarcoola with a trunk circumference of two (2) metres or more and with hollows or a rotten butt is included as ‘native vegetation’ under the definition of the Act.**



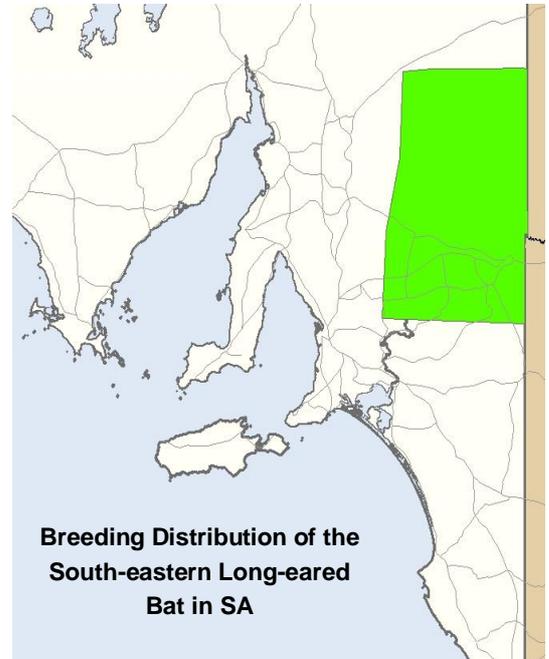
**SOUTH-EASTERN LONG-EARED BAT *Nyctophilus corbeni***

This bat roosts and breeds in eucalypt hollows or under bark in the semi-arid mallee woodlands of south-eastern Australia. In South Australia it has been found in large mallees, mostly Yorrell (*E. gracilllis*) and Red Mallee (*E. oleosa*), north of the River Murray and south and east of Yunta. It could also occur in similar habitats south of the River Murray.

In South Australia, **any dead tree south and east of Yunta and north of Swan Reach with a trunk circumference of two (2) metres or more and with hollows or a rotten butt is included as ‘native vegetation’ under the definition of the Act.**



South-eastern Long-eared Bat  
(Photo courtesy Terry Reardon.)



Breeding Distribution of the South-eastern Long-eared Bat in SA

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**FURTHER INFORMATION**

This information sheet provides general information about dead trees considered as ‘native vegetation’ under the definition contained within the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*. It also contains information about associated threatened fauna species and their identified habitat.

**Specific information or advice about dead trees and general native vegetation issues should be sought from the Native Vegetation Management Unit, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources on (08) 8303 9777 or email [nvc@sa.gov.au](mailto:nvc@sa.gov.au).**

Native Vegetation Management Unit, Department of Environment,  
Water and Natural Resources: GPO Box 1047 ADELAIDE 5001:  
phone 8303 9777: email [nvc@sa.gov.au](mailto:nvc@sa.gov.au)

[www.environment.sa.gov.au/nativevegetation](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/nativevegetation)



Native Vegetation Council



Government of South Australia