

South Australian Glossy Black- Cockatoo

A gradual recovery

The South Australian subspecies of Glossy Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus*) is currently listed as endangered under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972. At present it is restricted to Kangaroo Island and prior to the implementation of the recovery project the population was estimated to be 200 individuals and declining. In 1995 a recovery plan was implemented and this downward trend has since been reversed.



The SA Glossy Black-Cockatoo requires high quality Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) woodland for foraging and large

hollow-bearing eucalyptus for roosting and nesting habitat. The chief cause of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo's decline in the 1900s was the large-scale clearance of old, large gum trees and important sheoak feeding habitat to make way for farming.

The long term objectives of the current Recovery Plan are:

1. To ensure that a viable breeding population of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo persists in South Australia;
2. To shift the status of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo from Endangered to Vulnerable within 25 years (by 2028);
3. To expand the current distribution of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo to include its former range on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Recovery Plan actions are:

- Action 1: Survey and monitor the population
- Action 2: Monitor nesting and find new nests
- Action 3: Protect and maintain natural and artificial nest hollows
- Action 4: Minimise the impacts of other bird species
- Action 5: Protect and re-establish habitat on Kangaroo Island
- Action 6: Protect and re-establish habitat on Fleurieu Peninsula
- Action 7: Promote and facilitate community participation

Population Monitoring

Current Status - Endangered

With the benefit of several years of observations, biologist Lynn Pedler has shown that the number of Glossy Black-Cockatoo young has increased as a result of recovery efforts. The increase in population size has most likely resulted from increased nesting success, due to protection of nest trees from possums and to the provision of around 80 artificial nest hollows.

Analysis of flock sizes during the annual population census indicates that the population has increased gradually, from less than 200 birds in 1996 to an estimated 340 - 360 birds in 2009.

Recruitment

Glossy Black-Cockatoos have a low reproductive rate with a maximum of one young fledged per year. Plumage observations made during the 2005 census indicate that the population has a strong component of juvenile/immature birds, with at least one fifth of the population less than three years old. Most of these birds have been banded as nestlings.

Observations of banded individuals indicate that about half of fledged young survive their first year. After the first year, mortality rate is thought to be low. The birds' lifespan is unknown.

Nest Failure

Earlier research indicates that predation of eggs and young chicks by the Common Brushtail Possum was a major cause of nest failure. Exclusion of possums from nest trees with iron collars has increased nest success from 23% in nests that were unprotected in 1996 (Garnett et al. 1999), to an average of 49% in 1997–2003, when all nests were protected.



Infrequent monitoring of active nests means that it is often hard to determine the causes of nest failure. Observations over six seasons showed failure of the egg to hatch was responsible for around 20% of nest failures. Other known causes of failure included: flooding of the nest hollow; predation by Common Brushtail Possums; predation/competition for hollows with nesting Galahs (first recorded on Kangaroo Island in 1913); Little Corellas (first recorded in 1969) and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

*Ref: Garnett, S.T., Pedler, L.P., and Crowley, G.M. 1999. The breeding biology of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami* on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. *Emu* 99: 262-279.*

A Community Effort

Each year from January to September, volunteers assist project staff with location and monitoring of active nests. Up to 50 volunteers play a vital role in the annual population census held every October.

Landholders are encouraged, through financial assistance, to fence off feeding and nesting habitat and to revegetate priority areas. Annual plantings of Drooping Sheoak have resulted in over 120 hectares of new feeding habitat, while over 450 ha of feeding and nesting habitat have been protected by fencing and heritage agreements. Greening Australia has assisted with large-scale revegetation projects.

Newsletter

"Chewings" is a newsletter produced bi-annually for anyone interested in the South Australian Glossy Black-Cockatoo Recovery Program. The newsletter provides interesting facts about the Kangaroo Island population and news regarding volunteer and revegetation activities associated with the program.

<http://users.adam.com.au/kic01/glossy/gbc.html>

Program Support

- Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board
- Nature Foundation SA

Contacts

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