

Ecoplan NEWS

Issue 56 Summer 2006

Time of Birak and Bunuru in the Nyoongar calendar



WA's black cockatoos need your help!

TWO Western Australian Projects are collecting baseline information on black cockatoos to help reverse the downward population trend for these birds. The participation of volunteers in the project surveys is vital in supporting this research for future conservation planning.

'Great cocky count' – can you help on Sunday 12 February?

By Bansi Shah

The charismatic Carnaby's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*) – once numerous in WA – is now listed as Endangered.

The species has declined 50 per cent in the past 45 years, with one of the main contributing factors being land clearing. Since 2001, Birds Australia, as a member of the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Recovery Team, has operated the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Recovery Project to raise awareness of the cockatoos' plight, identify and monitor breeding sites within the wheatbelt and improve breeding and feeding habitat.

A new project now aims to determine the population and spatial distribution of birds on the Swan Coastal Plain and identify critical habitat requirements. This critically important baseline information is currently lacking, and will assist with conservation planning in the rapidly developing Swan region. Key partners in this project are presently Birds Australia, WWF-Australia, and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

Habitat requirements

Carnaby's cockatoos are believed to breed mostly in the wheatbelt, returning to coastal and near-coastal areas from late-December to July. The birds feed on a large variety of plants including Proteaceae (banksia, dryandra and grevillea), marri nuts and introduced species – notably pines. The long-term survival and recovery of this species is inextricably linked to the survival of its habitat – both in breeding areas in the wheatbelt and non-breeding areas such as the Swan Coastal Plain.

'Great cocky count' volunteers needed

Your help is needed to estimate the population of Carnaby's cockatoos on the Swan Coastal Plain by assisting with scientific surveys. The first survey will be on Sunday 12 February and will involve

Female Carnaby's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*) showing the characteristic grey eye ring (male pink) and pale horn-coloured beak (male black). (Photos: Bansi Shah and Dave Manson)



looking for cockatoos, counting birds, observing their flight direction and monitoring their activity at particular locations. For good estimates of the population on the Swan Coastal Plain, we require as many volunteers as possible across a wide area.

We ask volunteers, including Friends groups, to get involved and survey local parks, reserves and home gardens.

You too could be a part of the 'great cocky count' if there is a patch of bush near you!

The project will also identify critical feeding habitat, and record food preferences. If you see a Carnaby's cockatoo feeding on plants on the Swan Coastal Plain, contact us to obtain a food plant record form. Vegetation surveys will also be conducted to estimate food resources on the Swan Coastal Plain. If you are interested in undertaking counts of banksia flowers and/or transects through pine plantations, please join the volunteer team.

With increasing public awareness and support, and future conservation planning based on good information, there is still hope that Carnaby's cockatoos will again blacken the sky as they fly overhead.

Don't forget, Carnaby's cockatoo needs your help on Sunday 12 February 2006. Contact Bansi Shah, Swan Coastal Coordinator, Birds Australia on 0427 707 047 or email b.shah@birdsaustralia.com.au.

Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Recovery Project



Birds Australia