

SOUTH COAST THREATENED BIRDS RECOVERY TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT

1996

by Kelly Gillen

for

The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team

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SUMMARY

The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team met for the first time on 10 December 1997. The Team was set up to maximise efficiency and minimise overlap between existing and proposed Recovery Teams for threatened birds in CALM's South Coast Region and in adjacent parts of CALM's Southern Forest Region.

Three threatened birds are currently covered by the Team - Noisy Scrub-bird (Recovery Plan being implemented), Western Bristlebird (Research Plan being implemented) and Western Ground Parrot (an Interim Recovery Plan for the Western Ground Parrot was written during 1996, and some recovery actions are underway). At a later date, the Western Whipbird will also be incorporated.

Separate reports for each of the three species are provided.

INTRODUCTION

The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team met for the first time on 10 December 1997.

In February 1996, a meeting was held at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve with the aim of forming a Recovery Team for the Western Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus flaviventris*). It became clear during this meeting that, should such a Team be formed, it would have many members in common with the existing Noisy Scrub-birds and Western Bristlebird Recovery Teams and that many of the issues discussed would be the same, as the three bird species occur in roughly the same places and many of the threats to their continuing survival are the same.

The concept of combining the three Teams to increase efficiency was further developed during discussions between the Director of CALM's WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit and South Coast Regional Manager. These resulted in a recommendation being put to CALM's Director of Nature Conservation that a new South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team be formed and that it coordinate the existing Noisy Scrub-bird Recovery Plan and Western Bristlebird Research Plan, develop an Interim Recovery Plan for the Western Ground Parrot and, at an appropriate time, commence the preparation of a Recovery Plan for the Western Whipbird.

Membership at the first meeting was:

Kelly Gillen (Chair)	CALM South Coast Region
Allan Burbidge	CALM Science and Information Division
Andrew Burbidge	CALM WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit
John Blyth	CALM WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit
Peter Cale	representing Noisy Scrub-bird volunteers
Alan Danks	CALM Albany District
Bruce Male	Threatened Species and Communities Section, Environment Australia
Brenda Newbey	Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union
Graeme Smith	CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology

Andrew Burbidge and John Blyth will in future be alternates and only one will attend meetings.

The Team considered that representatives were needed from CALM's Southern Forest Region and, should the Noisy Scrub-bird be translocated to the Darling range (see below) from CALM's Central Forest Region.

The Team has appointed 'species coordinators' as follows:

Noisy Scrub-bird	Alan Danks
Western Bristlebird	Allan Burbidge
Western Ground parrot	Allan Burbidge

Reports on the implementation of the Noisy Scrub-bird Recovery Plan and the Western Bristlebird Research Plan follow.

An Interim Recovery Plan for the Western Ground Parrot has been prepared and should be finalised early in 1997. A report on the IRP and progress with actions specified in the IRP is also provided.

WESTERN GROUND PARROT

ANNUAL REPORT

1996

by Allan H. Burbidge
for the WA South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team
(including the former Western Ground Parrot Recovery Team)

SUMMARY

Significant progress was made toward Ground Parrot recovery this year as a result of the appointment of a formal recovery team, input of money from the AMRAD funds and, perhaps most importantly, useful and positive collaboration between staff from South Coast Region, Southern Forest Region (Walpole District), Science and Information Division, WATSCU, Walpole National Parks Association and significant volunteer input. With respect to volunteer input, a number of people have assisted, but special thanks must go to Brenda Newbey, Shapelle McNee and Mary Hart.

Two significant events with respect to conservation and management of the Critically Endangered Western Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus flaviventris*) occurred in 1996. First, an Interim Recovery Plan was written, and second, money became available from CALM's AMRAD funds and elsewhere to carry out several urgent conservation measures.

1. Interim Recovery Plan

An Interim Recovery Plan (IRP) (Burbidge *et al.* in press) was written, and has been submitted for approval. The plan was written jointly by staff from CALM's Science and Information Division, South Coast Region, WATSCU and external specialists. The long-term objective of the IRP is to decrease the probability of extinction of the Western Ground Parrot. Over the time frame of this three year plan, specific objectives are to (a) improve the protection of known populations and any new ones that become known during the term of this plan, (b) obtain more accurate estimates of population size, distribution and trends, so that the effectiveness of management actions can be assessed, (c) improve understanding of habitat requirements, particularly with respect to fire regime, and (d) produce a formal recovery plan.

Recovery actions specified or discussed in the IRP cover eight areas:

1. Fire management
2. Predator control
3. Dieback Hygiene
4. Vesting in the NPNCA of land in Manypeaks area
5. Documentation of known populations and monitoring of trends
in population size/boundaries
6. Survey of areas possibly suitable for Western Ground Parrots
7. Taking birds for captive breeding or translocation
8. Production of an approved Recovery Plan

2. Progress on Actions Specified in the IRP.

During 1996, work began on several actions. Expenditure on these actions is outlined in Table 1. Important urgent works were done with respect to fire control at the Short Road site in Fitzgerald River National Park and at Waychinicup/Manypeaks. Predator control has been progressing under the Western Shield Program. The practice of dieback hygiene and the pursuit of the question of vesting in the Manypeaks area have been ongoing tasks for Regional staff. Population documentation and survey have been carried out by staff from SID, CALM Regions, consultants and volunteers from Walpole Nornalup National Parks Association and the RAOU.

Work in Fitzgerald River National Park in May has helped refine survey and census techniques, although the data are not yet fully analysed. One of the most interesting outcomes from this work was the finding that Ground Parrots from a long unburnt (35 years plus) area have re-colonised an adjacent area burnt in the 1989 fires. This is in contrast to previous records from this area where the species was only known from vegetation unburnt for at least 15 years. It is not known whether (successful) breeding is possible in vegetation of this age.

Studies in conjunction with Walpole Nornalup National Parks Association will assist in determining whether Ground Parrots still exist west of Albany, and will also help in identifying sites potentially suitable for possible future translocations.

Action	Spent in 1996	Notes
1. Fire management	\$6000	AMRAD \$4000, District \$2000
2. Predator control	ca. \$8500	Covered under Western Shield
3. Dieback hygiene	\$700	salaries
4. Vesting (Manypeaks area)	\$270	salaries
5. Population documentation and monitoring	\$7500	\$3000 from AMRAD funds
6. Survey	\$4320*	\$3650 from AMRAD funds
Sub-Totals	\$27 290	
CALM Corporate overheads (20%)	\$5460	
Totals	\$32 750	

Table 1: Summary of expenditure in 1996.

(Salaries of permanent officers are calculated as salary plus 35% salary overheads)

* Additional funds were obtained as a Community Conservation Grant by the Walpole National Parks Association to assist with this action.

Reference:

Burbidge, A.H., Blyth, J., Danks, A., Gillen, K. and Newbey, B. (in press). Western Ground Parrot Interim Recovery Plan 1996 to 1999. Dept of Conservation and Land Management, Interim Recovery Plan No. 38.