



Department of
Environment and Conservation
Our environment, our future



ANNUAL REPORT THREATENED SPECIES OR COMMUNITIES RECOVERY TEAM

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Name	South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team (Western Ground Parrot, Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird, & Western Whipbird)
Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)	Calendar year, 2007

Current membership

Member		Representing
1. Chair	Alan Danks	Regional Leader, Nature Conservation, DEC South Coast Region, Albany.
2. EXEC OFFICER	Sarah Comer	Regional Ecologist, DEC South Coast Region, Albany.
3.	Allan Burbidge	Principal Research Scientist, Wildlife Research Centre, DEC, Wanneroo.
4.	John Blyth	Ex WATSCU, now community representative
5.	Cameron Tiller	Conservation Officer (Threatened Species), DEC South Coast Region, Albany.
6.	Abby Berryman	Western Ground Parrot Project Leader, DEC South Coast Region, Albany.
7.	Brenda Newbey	'Friends of the Western Ground Parrot' Coordinator.
8.	Shapelle McNee	Consultant, Community member
9.	Anne Bondin	Albany Birdwatchers Group, Community member
10.	David Edmonds	District Veterinarian (Denmark), Community member.

Dates meetings were held 14-Feb-07 & 18-Jul-07

Changes to Team Members Mike Barth was replaced by Abby Berryman in the position of Western Ground Parrot Project Leader during December 2007.

Status of Plan The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Plan is currently being assessed. It has been suggested by the Recovery Team that we

	continue to use this plan as a guiding document despite it not yet being formally endorsed.
Aim	Reduce the impact of threatening processes and ensure that there are viable populations of all extant avian taxa in suitable habitat throughout their former range, so that they can be removed from threatened species lists, or remain unlisted, and intensive management is no longer necessary for their survival.
Assessment of Aim	Attempts to reduce the impact of threatening processes made. Monitoring of existing and search for new populations conducted. No negative change to the status of any species covered by this Recovery Team.

TASKS CARRIED OUT AGAINST ACTIONS

Action	Participants	Funding	Date	Task (include project report)
a). Continue to implement current area-based management actions relevant to one or more of the south coast threatened birds.	DEC South Coast Region	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Baiting as part of the Western Shield program was conducted throughout habitat essential for threatened birds on the south coast four times during 2007. Strategic hand baiting also occurred on a smaller scale as much as monthly in some areas.
b). Continue to census known sub-populations of all extant south coast threatened birds	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		<p>Western Ground Parrot censuses were conducted at the following sites during 2007: Wilderness Area FRNP (estimate of 1-2 birds located), Wilderness Gate FRNP (10-15 birds), Short Rd FRNP (3-4 birds), Hamersley FRNP (0 birds), Poison Ck CANP (20-30 birds) and Pasley/Telegraph (100+ birds).</p> <p>Despite considerable search effort in the Drummond Track area (FRNP), there were no nests located. This was also the first year since 2004 that no chick was seen or heard in this study area.</p> <p>Censuses of Western Bristlebirds were conducted in conjunction with Western Ground Parrots within the Wilderness area (FRNP) during spring 2007. In this area, bristlebird numbers appear to have increased and the ground parrot population appeared to decline.</p> <p>Noisy Scrub-bird censuses were completed for the Mt Gardner, Waychinicup, Mermaid, Darling Range and Bald Island sub-populations. Results indicate that Mt Gardner appears to display classic 'carrying capacity' curve. Partial censuses were conducted at the Angove-Normans and Manypeaks sub-populations.</p> <p>A single singing Noisy Scrub-bird was heard at the Sixty One Form / Willowdale Rd junction in the Darling Range.</p> <p>Censuses for Western Bristlebird and Western Whipbird (western heath subsp.) were conducted in conjunction with the scrub-bird censuses within the Albany Management Zone. Results suggest a relatively stable population over the past few years.</p>
c). Investigate and record responses of all target species to fire.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		<p>A post-fire survey was conducted for the Western Ground Parrot at Short Rd (FRNP) during June 2007, with very few birds (3-4??) heard on the east side of the road in a strip last burnt in 1989. Recordings were made and calls were found to be different from Drummond Tk population (only 8km away).</p> <p>Two male Noisy Scrub-birds were heard in the Porongurup National Park post-fire – one at Cockatoo Creek and the other immediately north of the Castle Rock recreation area within the creekline.</p> <p>Four scrub-bird nests were located within Atrichornis Gully on the southern slopes of Mt Manypeaks during September 2007. One of these nests was considered to have been</p>

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				created during the 2007 breeding season, one had not been completed and the other two were assessed as completed 2006 nests. Although we have no indication of the success of these breeding attempts, it at least suggests that scrub-birds attempted to nest/breed only 18 months post-fire.
d). Map the area of 'habitat critical' and estimate population densities for each sub-population of each threatened taxon.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Estimate of 20-30 ground parrots present in the Poison Ck (CANP) sub-population during June 2007 but no extension to the range occupied in 2005. For the entire FRNP, only 12 ground parrots could be confirmed in 2007. Further results discussed elsewhere.
e). Investigate reported sightings of Western Ground Parrots from new locations	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Fieldtrips were conducted to follow up possible Western Ground Parrot sightings in the Stirling Ranges and D'Entrecasteaux National Park. Potentially suitable habitat was located on the south side of the Stirling Range (west of Chesterpass Rd). No ground parrots were seen or heard, although Elegant Parrots were common. No birds were located during the D'Entrecasteaux surveys in autumn 2007.
f). Conduct surveys of potential Western Ground Parrot and Western Bristlebird habitat.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Surveys of previously identified potential ground parrot habitat were conducted within the area covered by the Bell Track prescription burn prior to the burn. No ground parrots were heard. Most suitable habitat within the Waychinicup NP was mapped (most recent record of ground parrots was in late 2003). Surveys conducted within the Jurien Bay area (including Badgingarra NP, Nambung NP, Coomallo NR & Leseur NP) but no ground parrots heard.
g). Monitor changes in population size that can be determined under current monitoring protocols and refine these protocols to detect changes in small populations.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Since the Manypeaks wildfire in 2004/05, annual Noisy Scrub-bird censuses of the sub-populations surrounding the fire scar have shown distinctive changes in size. In particular, the 2007 census of the Waychinicup sub-population revealed another decrease in size since an initial 'jump' immediately after the fire. This may be indicative of birds moving back into areas as they regenerate.
h). Monitor numbers of birds and sample vegetation at sites known to be occupied by Western Ground Parrots and/or Western	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Work towards this recovery action has progressed. Analysis of video footage of a Western Ground Parrot feeding (recorded during 2006) has enabled the positive identification of 20+ plant species targeted by the bird and provided information of the

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Bristlebirds, to facilitate understanding of dietary requirements and habitat preferences in relation to fire age and vegetation structure for these two species.	Centre.			feeding habits of this species. There remains a number of plant species that have not yet been identified from this footage.
i). Investigate how addressing factors that limit distribution may be used to increase the extent or density or populations of all south coast threatened birds.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Ian Harris (consultant) is preparing a report to look at fauna-friendly crossings to be used for Noisy Scrub-bird areas that will be affected by the Larego expansion route in the Darling Range. This report is to be presented in March 2008.
j). Document the response of all south coast threatened birds to fire management within the Fitzgerald Management Zone (FMZ) and Albany Management Zone (AMZ).	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		A prescription burn, conducted during spring 2007, established a considerable firebreak between the Mermaid and Waychinicup Noisy Scrub-bird sub-populations. This area will be monitored over the next few years to determine movement patterns of birds through the burnt area. Planning for prescriptions to reduce fuel loads on Manypeaks continued throughout 2007.
k). Investigate ways to clarify the impact of cat predation on threatened species, especially on Western Ground Parrots.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Cat trapping was conducted in the Short Rd / Drummond Tk transect for one week during May 2007. Only one cat was caught during this period, although perhaps more significantly 8 male chuditch were trapped. Capsules to be used for insertion into baits for the next round of rhodamine uptake trials (as opposed to the direct insertion of dye into baits) were not yet stable for autumn non-target trials, so the second non-target trial has been delayed until Autumn 2008. Fourteen cats were captured surrounding the Western Bristlebird translocation release site in the months immediately prior to their release. This area is baited for foxes under Western Shield on a quarterly basis and supplementary baiting conducted by district staff has increased to every two months. Draft cat sterilisation legislation was drafted and presented to City of Albany in May 2007. The council were prepared to adopt the Geraldton legislation, but decided that more 'power' was required to meet their objectives. Work continues to provide the appropriate legislation.
l). Investigate if song analysis can assist with understanding of the social organisation of	DEC South Coast Region, DEC	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		During 2007, Abby Berryman completed her PhD on scrub-bird vocalisation. This work has provided valuable insight into song grouping, and helped to identify the individual

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Noisy Scrub-birds.	Wildlife Research Centre.			birds that survived the Porongurup wildfire.
m). Monitor the types and abundance of invertebrates in core habitat areas of Noisy Scrub-birds.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		During 2007, invertebrates were sampled from sites within the 2004/05 Manypeaks fire boundary to monitor the regeneration of these areas with regard to suitability as Noisy Scrub-bird habitat.
n). Continue to investigate the need and opportunities for, and where appropriate conduct, translocations for south coast threatened species.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of the Ground Parrot Group and volunteers	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		<p>Preliminary habitat assessments were conducted within the Warren Region to identify potential future translocation sites for the Noisy Scrub-bird. Discussions were initiated with Regional and District staff to determine preferential sites with regard to that areas work plans and priorities.</p> <p>A translocation of 5 male Noisy Scrub-birds to Gull Rock NP was conducted during July 2007. These birds were monitored daily for a number of weeks, with transmitters lasting up to four weeks.</p> <p>Three Western Bristlebirds, sourced from Mt Gardner, were released near the Banksia Camp Rd west of Walpole in November 2007. One bird moved approximately 1.5km whilst the other two appeared to pair up and remained close to the release site. All birds lost weight during aviary care despite apparently feeding well.</p> <p>Health screening of translocated Noisy Scrub-birds and Western Bristlebirds was conducted during their period of captivity. The scrub-bird blood samples failed to produce any results due to the degeneration of cells, but their faecal sample revealed no significant bacterial growth and no parasites were detected. Blood samples taken from the bristlebirds revealed indications of stress likely associated with time spent in aviary. There were no parasites detected in the bristlebird blood smears or faecal cultures.</p> <p>An attempt to capture Western Ground Parrots to trial translocation methodologies was unsuccessful.</p>
o). Conduct genetic research to resolve the status of the two Western Whipbird taxa				Ron Johnstone has collected material from one Western Whipbird at Nyabing, and another sample from a bird at Ravensthorpe to be used in the genetic research. Results from this research during 2007 have not yet been documented.
p). Foster and encourage Friends groups for south coast threatened birds.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		The Friends of the Ground Parrot group was extremely active during 2007. Production by this group included the distribution of their 2-monthly newsletter, and operating a stall at the 2007 Albany Agricultural Show. Money raised from the sales of ground

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	Centre.			parrot merchandise (including t-shirts, postcards, etc) was used to purchase a mini-discman for use by the Project team.
q). Continue to encourage appropriate community membership on the recovery team.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Community membership on the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team during 2007 included John Blyth, Shapelle McNee, Anne Bondin and David Edmonds.
r). Publish and distribute information to the public, landholders and scientific community relating to the management and recovery of south coast threatened birds.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, and Friends of the Ground Parrot Group	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Newsletters were published by the Friends of the Ground Parrot group every 3 months, and the annual South Coast Threatened Birds Newsletter was published and distributed. A spoken paper was presented at Australasian Ornithological Conference on scrub-bird vocalisations, and a poster presented on the ground parrot project.
s). Continue to facilitate participation by the community in recovery project activities.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc		Anne Bondin provided a summary to the Recovery Team of the Gull Rock NP Community Working Group article which gave the scrub-bird translocation a good report. There were over 1820 volunteer hours contributed by the community to assist South Coast Threatened Bird Recovery Project activities.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR		
Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)	2008 Calendar Year	
Goal	Priority	Participants
Continue to implement area-based management actions relevant to one or more of the south coast threatened birds.	High	DEC South Coast Region
Continue to census known sub-populations and any new sub-populations that are located of south coast threatened birds.	High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of Ground Parrot Group and volunteers.
Continue to map the area of extent and estimate population densities for each sub-population of all extant taxa.	High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of Ground Parrot Group and volunteers.
Continue to distribute information and educational materials to the public, landholders and scientific community relating to the management and recovery of south coast threatened birds.	High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, and Friends of Ground Parrot Group.
Monitor established sub-populations of Noisy Scrub-birds within the Albany Management Zone (AMZ).	High	DEC South Coast Region and volunteers.
Monitor the locations of recent Noisy Scrub-bird translocations (ie. Darling Range, Porongurups and Gull Rock) to determine the effectiveness of this program.	High	DEC South Coast Region and volunteers.
Investigate reported sightings of Western Ground Parrots from new locations and conduct surveys of potential habitat for Western Ground Parrot and Western Bristlebird.	Medium/High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of Ground Parrot Group and volunteers.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR		
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Goal	Priority	Participants
Continue to investigate and monitor the responses of south coast threatened birds to fire.	Medium/High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of Ground Parrot Group and volunteers.
Continue to investigate the need and opportunities for translocations for south coast threatened birds.	Medium/High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, Friends of Ground Parrot Group and volunteers.
Encourage Friends of Ground Parrot and other community involvement in south coast threatened birds recovery project activities.	Medium/High	DEC South Coast Region and DEC Wildlife Research Centre.
Follow up investigations of identified Western Ground Parrot priority survey areas within the Mid-West Region.	Medium/High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, DEC Mid-West Region
Continue surveys for potential Noisy Scrub-bird translocation sites within the Warren Region.	Medium/High	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Warren Region.
Proceed with Western Whipbird DNA/genetic research.	Medium	DEC Wildlife Research Centre.
Continue monitoring and providing feral cat control to site of 2007 Western Bristlebird translocation at Walpole.	Medium	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Warren Region
Resurvey Western Bristlebirds in the Fitzgerald Track area.	Medium	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre, and volunteers.
Investigate the use of automatic (remote) recording devices for use in the monitoring and	Medium	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research

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Goal	Priority	Participants
search for south coast threatened bird populations.		Centre.
Investigate the potential for using dogs to enhance the effectiveness of Western Ground Parrot surveys.	Medium	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.
Investigate/establish research program for Noisy Scrub-bird genetics study.	Medium	DEC South Coast Region & Curtin University