



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)
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Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)	Calendar year, 2008
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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	30-31-Jan-08 & 23-Jul-08
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Changes to Team Members	No changes to Recovery Team members during 2008
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Status of Plan	The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Plan is currently being
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	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	Throughout 2008	Baiting as part of the Western Shield program was conducted throughout habitat essential for threatened birds on the south coast four times during 2008. 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	Throughout 2008	<p>Western Ground Parrot survey was conducted at the following sites during 2008: Wilderness Area FRNP (estimate of 2-4 birds located), Wilderness Gate FRNP (6-12 birds), Short Rd FRNP (0 birds), West River FRNP (0 birds), Poison Ck CANP (20+ birds) and Pasley/Telegraph (100+ birds, although 40-50 disappeared after fire in May).</p> <p>Survey of Western Bristlebirds within FRNP identified dispersal patterns affected by fire over a 15 year period.</p> <p>Noisy Scrub-bird survey was completed for the Mt Gardner, Waychinicup, Mermaid, sub-populations and the slopes of Mt Manypeaks. Although the results from Mt Gardner were quite low, the trend over the past 10 years appears to display classic 'carrying capacity' curve. Partial survey was conducted at the Angove-Normans and Manypeaks sub-populations.</p> <p>Single singing Noisy Scrub-birds were heard at both Castle Rock car-park (Porongurup National Park) and east Herald Gully (Gull Rock National Park) following translocations in 2006 and 2007 respectively.</p> <p>Surveys for Western Bristlebird and Western Whipbird (western heath subsp.) were conducted in conjunction with the scrub-bird survey within the Albany Management Zone. Results suggest a good year for both species during 2008 and a relatively stable population trend 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	Throughout 2008	<p>Surveys of Western Ground Parrot in the Pasley/Telegraph Tk sub-population during April provided an estimate of 100+ birds. During early May, an escaped prescribed burn affected this area. Post-fire surveys revealed that 40-50 birds had disappeared after the event. Further investigations are required to identify whether these birds relocated to adjacent areas of 'suitable' habitat.</p> <p>Only one male Noisy Scrub-bird was heard in the Porongurup National Park during 2008, immediately north of the Castle Rock recreation area within the creek-line. The bird recorded in the Cockatoo Ck area during 2007 was not heard during 2008.</p> <p>All slopes of Mt Manypeaks were surveyed during 2008. This revealed 107 Noisy Scrub-bird territories within the 2004/05 wildfire scar.</p>

TASKS CARRIED OUT AGAINST ACTIONS				
Action	Participants	Funding	Date	Task (include project report)
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	Throughout 2008	Population estimates were made as part of census work done on Western Ground Parrots (FRNP and CANP), Noisy Scrub-birds, Western Bristlebirds, and Western Whipbirds (western heath subsp.) (AMZ) although the census the latter three species were not of the entire AMZ.
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	Throughout 2008	No reliable sightings of Western Ground Parrots from new locations were received during 2008.
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	Throughout 2008	<p>Western Ground Parrot surveys were undertaken at West River (Cocanarup Timber Reserve) adjacent to the FRNP. The area had been identified as potentially suitable in July 2007 but closer examination found it to be less suitable than previously thought. No Western Ground Parrots were found.</p> <p>Further surveys of Northern Sand-plain region dependent on success of funding application by DEC Jurien.</p> <p>Western Bristlebirds were recorded opportunistically during Western Ground Parrot survey of the Wilderness Zone of Fitzgerald River NP in March 2008 and many of these records represent new areas of habitat.</p>
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	Throughout 2008	<p>Annual surveys of Western Ground Parrot subpopulations in the Fitzgerald River NP since 2003 provide have shown a general decrease in numbers, with some populations (e.g. Short Road) disappearing entirely. Monitoring in Cape Arid NP has been less frequent in this period and numbers, particularly at Pasley Track were found to be higher than expected. More frequent surveys in this subpopulation will allow fluctuations in numbers to be detected more easily.</p> <p>Numbers of Noisy Scrub-birds in Waychinicup subpopulation continue to decline while numbers in the adjacent areas of the Manypeaks subpopulation climb, indicating birds are still returning to the area after the 2004/5 wildfire.</p>

TASKS CARRIED OUT AGAINST ACTIONS				
Action	Participants	Funding	Date	Task (include project report)
h). Monitor numbers of birds and sample vegetation at sites known to be occupied by Western Ground Parrots and/or Western Bristlebirds, to facilitate understanding of dietary requirements and habitat preferences in relation to fire age and vegetation structure for these two species.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc	Throughout 2008	Sampling of flora species done at Poison Creek Road, Cape Arid NP in area where Western Ground Parrots known to be breeding and regular surveys had been carried out. Flora samples have been collated although further confirmation of species identity is required. A number of flora species remain unidentified from video footage taken of a feeding Western Ground Parrot in 2006.
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	Throughout 2008	Ian Harris (consultant) presented his report on fauna-friendly crossings for Noisy Scrub-birds in the area affected by the proposed Larego expansion route in the Darling Range in March.
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	Throughout 2008	Census work for Noisy Scrub-birds found no birds in area burned during prescribed burning in 2007 between Mermaid and Waychinicup subpopulations. However, new territories were found in the area adjacent to the burn in the Mermaid subpopulation, indicating a possible movement of birds to this area in response to the burn. A continued decline of Noisy Scrub-bird territories in the Waychinicup subpopulation continues to be matched by an increase in numbers in the adjacent Manypeaks subpopulation, perhaps indicating a return of refugees from the 2004/5 wildfire.
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	Throughout 2008	The second non-target uptake trial for cat-baits (using rhodamine capsules) has been delayed again until autumn 2009. In November 2008, the City of Albany passed legislation for the compulsory sterilisation of domestic cats and the bill will go before the Minister for Local Government for final approval.
l). 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		Wet pitfall collections were made from two and four sites on Mt Gardner in May and December 2008 respectively to compare with Jane NP (Warren Region) as part of a translocation suitability assessment. Trials of vials vs. cups were carried out during both sampling periods.
m). 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	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc	Throughout 2008	Preliminary suitability assessments for Noisy Scrub-bird translocations were carried out at three locations in the Warren region (Giants Block, Jane NP and Pine Creek) including invertebrate pitfall sampling. Results of pitfall sampling informed a second round of sampling at Jane NP, which was deemed the most suitable site of the three for

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	Ground Parrot Group and volunteers			a translocation of Noisy Scrub-birds.
n). 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 have not yet been documented.
o). Foster and encourage Friends groups for south coast threatened birds.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc	Throughout 2008	The Friends of the Ground Parrot group was extremely active during 2008. Production by this group included the distribution of their 2-monthly newsletter, and operating a stall at the 2008 Albany Agricultural Show. Money continues to be raised from the sales of ground parrot merchandise (including t-shirts, postcards, etc).
p). Continue to encourage appropriate community membership on the recovery team.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc	Throughout 2008	Community membership on the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team during 2008 included John Blyth, Shapelle McNee, Anne Bondin and David Edmonds.
q). 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	Throughout 2008	Two spoken papers on Western Ground Parrots and one on the Noisy Scrub-bird were presented at the Australasian Wildlife Management Society Conference in Fremantle in November 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. Western Ground Parrot project staff gave presentations at two primary schools on the south coast. Talks were given to staff at Perth Zoo and members of the Walpole-Nornalup National Parks Association. A talk was also given on behalf of the project the Conservation Council's Great Greenie Gobfest on Woody Island in October.
r). Continue to facilitate participation by the community in recovery project activities.	DEC South Coast Region, DEC Wildlife Research Centre.	DEC / South Coast NRM Inc	Throughout 2008	Western Ground Parrot survey trips and Noisy Scrub-bird census work continue to involve considerable volunteer participation. In 2008 there were 1,862 volunteer hours contributed by the community to assist South Coast Threatened Bird Recovery Project activities.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR			
Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)		2009 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			
Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)		2009 Calendar Year	
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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Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)	2009 Calendar Year	
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