



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future



**SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT
THREATENED FAUNA RECOVERY TEAM**

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Recovery Team name	South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team (Western Ground Parrot, Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird, & Western Whipbird)
Reporting Period (Financial / Calendar Year)	Calendar year 2009

Current membership

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

		member.
12	Peter Mawson	Species and Communities Branch
Dates meetings were held	18-Feb-09, 23-Jun-09 & 25-Nov-09	
One to two paragraph summary of achievements suitable for WATSNU	<p>The 2009 calendar year saw two major developments in the conservation of South Coast threatened bird species. Firstly, the initiation of an integrated predator management program primarily focussing on minimising the threat of predation to the Critically Endangered Western Ground Parrot. Research of operational and monitoring methodologies will assist the management of habitat of other threatened bird species on the south coast in the future. Secondly, the establishment of a Western Ground Parrot captive management program to provide research and insurance as wild populations continue to decline.</p>	

List of actions undertaken by Recovery Team (from the actions in your Recovery Plan)	
Action 1 Continue to implement current area-based management actions relevant to one or more of the south coast threatened birds.	Baiting as part of the Western Shield program was conducted throughout habitat essential for threatened birds on the south coast four times during 2009. Strategic hand baiting also occurred on a smaller scale as much as monthly in some areas.
Action 2 Continue to census known sub-populations of all extant south coast threatened birds	<p>Western Ground Parrot censuses were conducted at the following sites in Fitzgerald River National Park during 2009: Wilderness Area FRNP (0 located), Wilderness Gate FRNP (estimated 2 birds located), Short Rd FRNP (3-5 birds). In Cape Arid National Park, there was an apparent increase in the number of birds heard calling at Pasley Track (excluding the area burnt in May 2008). A similar increase in calling was also recorded at Poison Ck (CANP).</p> <p>Noisy Scrub-bird censuses were completed for the Mt Gardner, Waychinicup, Mermaid and Bald Island sub-populations. The number of territories recorded on Mt Gardner continue to decline, and for the first time a plateau appears to have been reached in the Bald Island sub-population.</p> <p>There were no scrub-birds recorded from either the Porongurup (2006) or the Gull Rock (2007) translocations.</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 good year for both species during 2009 and a relatively stable population trend over the past few years.</p>
Action 3 Investigate and record responses of all target species to fire.	<p>Western Ground Parrots were recorded returning to the Short Road sub-population after not being recorded in this area during 2008, although they were not recorded to the previously occupied habitat on the western side of the track (burnt in 2006).</p> <p>Noisy Scrub-birds were not recorded within the Angove Water Reserve (sections burnt in 2001 and 2003), despite a couple of territories occupied over the past few years. There is still no sign of scrub-birds returning to the Lakes sub-population.</p>
Action 4 Map the area of 'habitat critical' and estimate population densities for each sub-population of each threatened taxon.	<p>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 census of the latter three species did not cover the entire Albany Management Zone.</p> <p>Shapefiles of Western Ground Parrot critical habitat have been provided for fire management purposes.</p>

Action 5 Investigate reported sightings of Western Ground Parrots from new locations	<p>There were no reliable sightings of Western Ground Parrots from new locations received during 2009.</p>
Action 6 Conduct surveys of potential Western Ground Parrot and Western Bristlebird habitat.	<p>Western Ground Parrot surveys were undertaken at Point Malcolm (Nuysland Nature Reserve) adjacent to Cape Arid National Park. Although no birds were recorded during this survey, reasonable habitat that had previously been occupied by Western Ground Parrots was noted.</p>
Action 7 Monitor changes in population size that can be determined under current monitoring protocols and refine these protocols to detect changes in small populations.	<p>Annual surveys of Western Ground Parrot subpopulations in the Fitzgerald River NP have shown a decrease in numbers over the past decade, with some populations not recorded in some years (i.e. Short Road 2008 and Wilderness area 2009). Monitoring in Cape Arid NP has been less frequent in this period and numbers 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 on Mt Gardner continue to decline from as yet unidentified causes.</p>
Action 8 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.	<p>Annual surveys continue to monitor the number of birds known to be occupied by Western Ground Parrots. In 2009, the analysis of video footage of a wild ground parrot feeding has resulted in the identification of a number of new flora species utilised by this bird.</p>
Action 9 Investigate how addressing factors that limit distribution may be used to increase the extent or density of populations of	<p>During 2009, a large scale integrated predator management trial was initiated on the south coast. Whilst it is currently focussing primarily on Western Ground Parrot habitat, it is hoped that positive results will allow similar predator management strategies to be implemented in areas of known habitat of the other threatened bird species and also to benefit future translocations of these species.</p>

all south coast threatened birds.	
Action 10 Document the response of all south coast threatened birds to fire management within the Fitzgerald Management Zone (FMZ) and Albany Management Zone (AMZ).	Monitoring of the area of previously occupied Western Ground Parrot habitat at Telegraph/Pasley Track in Cape Arid NP was undertaken during 2009. Whilst birds were not recorded within the burnt area, they were heard in adjacent areas that were not recorded during surveys immediately prior to the burn. Surveys were conducted at sites within Waychinicup National Park prior to prescription burns. There were no Western Ground Parrots recorded in these areas.
Action 11 Investigate ways to clarify the impact of cat predation on threatened species, especially on Western Ground Parrots.	The establishment of an integrated predator management trial program has seen 100km of sandplot transects established in Fitzgerald River National Park and Cape Arid National Park. These have generally identified a high density of feral cats in these areas. Remote cameras have been used to record movements and attempt to identify individuals.
Action 12 Monitor the types and abundance of invertebrates in core habitat areas of Noisy Scrub-birds.	Analysis of invertebrate samples collected during December 2008 at Jane National Park were completed in early 2009. Results indicated that the area appears to contain sufficient food resources to satisfy requirements for a translocation of scrub-birds in 2010.
Action 13 Continue to investigate the need and opportunities for, and where appropriate conduct, translocations for south coast threatened species.	Investigations and discussions regarding the potential for Noisy Scrub-bird translocation to Jane National Park (DEC Warren Region) continued throughout 2009. In May 2009, much of this park was burnt to reduce leaf litter to a level acceptable to protect landowners adjacent to the park. Site investigations in December 2009 revealed that this had not been detrimental to potential scrub-bird habitat identified in previous habitat and invertebrate surveys. If anything, the prescription burns have assisted the proposed translocation by minimising potential scrub-bird dispersal from this area.
Action 14 Conduct genetic research to resolve the status of the two Western Whipbird taxa.	Although there was no progression on genetic research of the Western Whipbird subspecies, a PhD candidate from Flinders University spent a few weeks on the south coast to research vocalisation of the two subspecies. Follow up to this research is likely to be undertaken during 2010.
Action 15 Foster and	The Friends of the Ground Parrot group was extremely active during 2009. Production by this group included the distribution

encourage Friends groups for south coast threatened birds.	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). The group have been instrumental in achieving funding from Exetel.
Action 16 Continue to encourage appropriate community membership on the recovery team.	Community membership on the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team during 2009 included John Blyth, Shapelle McNee, Brenda Newby, Anne Bondin and David Edmonds. Also, Alan Danks (former DEC South Coast Regional Leader Nature Conservation) joined the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team as a community member.
Action 17 Publish and distribute information to the public, landholders and scientific community relating to the management and recovery of south coast threatened birds.	South Coast Threatened Birds Newsletter.(in press) Friends of WGP newsletter. Intecol – presentation of spoken paper on adaptive management and south coast threatened birds. High School presentations BAWA newsletter
Action 18 Continue to facilitate participation by the community in recovery project activities.	Community participation has been facilitated during annual surveys of Western Ground Parrot and Noisy Scrub-bird sub-populations and potential habitat.
High Priority Actions Requiring Funding	
Task	Amount needed and what for
Continue investigations into techniques to facilitate integrated predator management on the South Coast.	\$617250pa (costs for operation of integrated predator program, which includes cat baiting, captive management and Western Ground Parrot monitoring). Breakdown of costs can be provided on request. Recurrent budget and other funds cover costs of Western Shield monitoring and monitoring of dibbler and chuditch populations. Continue monitoring predator activity levels via established sandpad transects in Fitzgerald River National Park and Cape Arid National Park (8 weeks x 4 people). Continue monitoring of established Western Shield transects and grids in Fitzgerald River and Cape Arid National Parks (4 weeks). Establish and monitor sandpad transects at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve and Stirling Ranges National Park (6 weeks).

	<p>Collar and track feral cats with GPS collars in Cape Arid National Park.</p> <p>Investigate the effect of climatic conditions on Eradicat bait toxicity.</p> <p>Deliver Eradicat baits to identified baiting cells within Fitzgerald River National Park, Cape Arid National Park and Nuysland Nature Reserve (subject to APVMA approval). Site specific ground baited during Spring 2010, aerially delivered during autumn 2011.</p> <p>Monitor threatened species (including Western Ground Parrot, Dibbler and Chuditch) pre-, during and post-baiting, including tracking collars on mammal species.</p> <p>Primary costs involve salaries/wages, transport, accommodation, travel allowance, materials (inc baits and tracking collars), plane hire</p>
<p>Progress with the Western Ground Parrot captive management program.</p>	<p>Establish and maintain aviaries for captive management.</p> <p>Research/establish facilities to progress to captive breeding.</p> <p>Continue to monitor/study/sustain captive individuals.</p> <p>Monitor source population of captive birds.</p>
<p>Facilitate on-going annual surveys of South Coast threatened bird sub-populations, particularly within Western Ground Parrot and Noisy Scrub-bird habitat.</p>	<p>Funded</p> <p>Noisy Scrub-bird: Bald Island</p> <p>Partially funded:</p> <p>Western Ground Parrot: Drummond/Wilderness Gate (FRNP), Short Rd (FRNP), Pasley/Telegraph (CANP) and Poison Ck (CANP).</p> <p>Unfunded</p> <p>Noisy Scrub-bird: Mt Gardner, Mermaid, Waychinicup, Lakes, Angove/Normans, Darling Range.</p> <p>Western Bristlebird: Mt Gardner, Mermaid, Waychinicup, Lakes, Angove/Normans.</p> <p>Western Whipbird: Mt Gardner, Mermaid, Waychinicup, Lakes, Angove/Normans.</p> <p>Primary costs involve salaries/wages, transport, accommodation, travel allowance, materials (inc batteries).</p> <p>Note: priority of unfunded work is Noisy Scrub-bird surveys of Mt Gardner.</p>
<p>Facilitate a translocation of Noisy Scrub-birds to Jane National Park (DEC)</p>	<p>Approx \$86 000 pa, includes recurrent budget contributions from South Coast and Warren Regions.</p> <p>Monitor source population pre- and post- capture.</p> <p>Preparation of facilities.</p>

Warren Region).

Capture of male Noisy Scrub-birds.

Transport and maintenance of individuals prior to release.

Monitoring of released individuals (radio-telemetry in first month, followed by aural survey)

Primary costs involve salaries/wages, transport, accommodation, travel allowance, materials (inc transmitters, batteries,)