

**South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team**  
(WESTERN GROUND PARROT, NOISY SCRUB-BIRD, WESTERN BRISTLEBIRD)

**Annual Recovery Team Report for 2003**

By

Alan Danks

For the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team.

The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team (SCTBRT) coordinates and oversees the implementation of recovery actions for the following 4 taxa of threatened birds: Western Ground Parrot (CR); Noisy Scrub-bird (VU); Western Bristlebird (VU); Western Whipbird (Western Heath sub-species) (VU). The Western Whipbird (Mallee Heath sub-sp) (P4) is still considered by the recovery team although it is no longer a threatened species

**MEMBERSHIP OF SCTBRT INCLUDES:**

Alan Danks (chair)	Regional Leader Nature Conservation, CALM Albany
Allan Burbidge	Senior Research Scientist, CALM Science
John Blyth	AManager, WATSCU
Sarah Comer	Ecologist, CALM Albany
Brenda Newbey	Birds Australia
Shapelle McNee	Independent consultant
Anne Bondin	Friends of the Western Ground Parrot
Brent Barrett	Western Ground Parrot Project Officer, CALM Albany
Kim Williams	Regional Leader Nature Conservation, CALM Bunbury
Karlene Bain	District Nature Conservation Co-ordinator, CALM Walpole
Ron Wooller	Murdoch University

**TEAM MEETINGS**

The full South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team met once in 2003. This meeting was held at the CALM office in Albany on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December.

Members of the Recovery Team convened a workshop with CALM Fire management staff in March 2003 to discuss fire management in the Two Peoples Bay-Manypeaks area. In addition members of the Recovery Team working on the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Plan met in October and November in Albany.

## **SIGNIFICANT RECOVERY ACTIONS:**

### **WESTERN GROUND PARROT**

- ◆ Following extensive wildfires in Cape Arid National Park in 2002/03, Fire Management Services supported an autumn survey for Western Ground Parrots in the limited unburnt habitat remaining in the Park. Western Ground Parrots were located in two key areas, the first records of these birds in the area for over ten years.
- ◆ Brenda Newbey conducted surveys of Western Ground Parrot in the Waychinicup-Cheyne Beach area on behalf of SCTBRT in autumn 2003. These surveys found the density of birds in the area had declined dramatically since 1998.
- ◆ The Recovery Team has been concerned about the status of the Western Ground Parrot and as a result of information from recent surveys the Recovery Team endorsed a submission to Threatened Species Scientific Committee in 2003 to change the status from Endangered to Critically Endangered.
- ◆ An application for Commonwealth Priority Project (NHT) funding for Western Ground Parrot through South Coast NRM group SCRIPT was successful. Funds totalling \$150 000 were obtained to complete surveys and undertake a trial translocation of Western Ground Parrots to Walpole.
- ◆ A Translocation Proposal for Western Ground Parrot was prepared and approved.
- ◆ A Western Ground Parrot Project Officer was appointed on a twelve month contract. Brent Barrett commenced work in October 2003, based in the Albany Work Centre.
- ◆ Surveys of Western Ground Parrots were conducted in the Fitzgerald River National Park (FRNP) as a precursor to the trial translocation. However, the density of birds at the proposed source site (Short Rd) were so low that the trial translocation was cancelled in favour of more extensive survey efforts. The survey area has been broadened to include all areas in FRNP where ground parrots have been recorded. Mapping of areas in FRNP as yet unsurveyed has allowed prioritisation of areas to be surveyed in 2004.
- ◆ Considerable assistance and support for Ground Parrot surveys has come from the Albany-based Friends of the Western Ground Parrot and as well as other volunteers.

### **NOISY SCRUB-BIRD**

- ◆ The series of translocations of Noisy Scrub-birds to the Darling Range begun in 1997 was completed in 2003 with the release of four females to singing males at three release sites. Over the six-year period a total of 60 males and 20 females were released at eight sites in the Darling Range. Surveys of release sites in spring 2003 found males singing in three of these sites.

- ◆ Surveys of Noisy Scrub-birds were carried out at Mt Gardner (Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve) and Bald Island. The Noisy Scrub-bird population on Mt Gardner has been monitored almost annually since the early 1970's. In 2003 a total of 152 singing males were heard - a slightly lower population index than in 2002. On Bald Island the Noisy Scrub-bird continues to do well, with 53 singing males counted in the 2003 survey.
- ◆ Post-fire surveys of Noisy Scrub-bird habitat burnt in the 2000 wildfires were monitored for signs of recolonisation. Some moist habitat around the lake margins is now supporting singing males, although there is no evidence of breeding.
- ◆ Recovery team members supported two student Honours projects in 2003. One studied Noisy Scrub-bird vocalisations, and the other involved a snapshot comparison of Noisy Scrub-bird food resources in the Darling Range and Mt Gardner.

### **WESTERN BRISTLEBIRD**

- ◆ Areas affected by the 2000 wildfires in the Albany Management Zone were also surveyed for Western Bristlebirds. Bristlebirds were heard calling in some damper habitat in the Angove Water Reserve and Boulder Hill area, but it is not known if any birds are breeding in these sites.
- ◆ Surveys of the Fitzgerald Track bristlebird population in the Fitzgerald River National Park were conducted in October 2003. Bristlebirds were recorded for the first time since the area was burnt in 1994 - but only in vegetation that had not been chained. The number of bristlebird territories recorded in this area was greater than when last surveyed.
- ◆ Surveys of translocation site in Nuyts Wilderness (Walpole-Nornalup National Park) were conducted in October 2003. A minimum of one bird was calling from within the area burnt by wildfire in autumn 2001.

### **GENERAL- ALL SPECIES**

- ◆ Work commenced on the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Plan. This will be a coordinated, multi-species recovery plan addressing both species-oriented recovery actions as well as aspects of area management related to recovery of the five extant taxa covered by the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team.
- ◆ Recovery team members worked with District and Regional staff and Fire Management Services to develop a Fire Management Strategy for the Two Peoples Bay-Manypeaks area. A burn prescription for the protection of Mt Manypeaks is being developed.
- ◆ Recovery team members contributed to the production of the annual South Coast Threatened Birds Newsletter.
- ◆ Recovery team members participated in the WWF ' Review of Landscape, Multi and Single Species Recovery Planning for Threatened Species (S.A. Moore & S. Wooller, 2003).