



ENDANGERED!



CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO

How can a bird often seen in flocks of one hundred or more flying over Perth be endangered? The answer is loss of breeding habitat.

The Carnaby's black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*), also known as the short-billed black-cockatoo, only occurs in the south-west of Western Australia. It moves each year from its breeding sites in the Wheatbelt to coastal areas, where it over-summers. In the Wheatbelt, the cockatoos breed in large hollows in eucalypts such as salmon gum and wandoo and feed on seeds and insects in heathlands. Near the coast during the non-breeding season, they also feed mainly in heathlands.

Dr Denis Saunders of CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology studied Carnaby's cockatoo for many years. He found that it is endangered mainly because of land clearing in the Wheatbelt. Not only has this reduced the availability of hollows for breeding, it has also destroyed nearby heathlands, which are vital for feeding. The lack of eucalypt regeneration and the deterioration of hollows in old trees continue to reduce the number of suitable nest hollows. In coastal areas, much of its non-breeding habitat has also been cleared,

especially on the Swan Coastal Plain. Fortunately, the cockatoo has adapted to feed on some introduced plants, especially pines. Near Perth, it can often be seen feeding in pine plantations, but further problems may arise when these plantations are significantly reduced in area in the future.

Another cause of decline is poaching—it is a highly prized cage bird and is taken illegally from the wild. Often trees are cut down or the hollows severely damaged when young and eggs are taken, making them unsuitable for future breeding attempts.

In 1999, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) received matching funding from the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) to help it prepare a recovery plan for Carnaby's black-cockatoo. A recovery team was set up with members representing Birds Australia, farmers, Perth Zoo, the Western Australian Museum, CSIRO Wildlife & Ecology and CALM. The recovery plan is now finalised and an application has been

made to the NHT for assistance to implement it.

The most important action is to locate and protect the best remaining breeding areas, to be termed 'priority areas'.

Other recovery actions include managing feeding habitat in non-breeding areas, monitoring bird numbers, involving the community in species conservation and captive breeding. Captive breeding will include stock held at Perth Zoo and birds held and bred by licensed aviculturists, as once the species can be bred successfully by bird fanciers, the incentive for poachers to collect birds illegally will be much diminished.

Community involvement in recovering Carnaby's black-cockatoo is vital, as many breeding sites are on private property or on narrow road and railway reserves. If you know of cockatoo breeding sites, please contact your local CALM office.

With the effective implementation of the plan, we should be able eventually to reverse the decline of this well-known bird so that the characteristic wailing call of Carnaby's black-cockatoo can always be heard in Perth and elsewhere in the south-west.

Andrew Burbidge

Photo - Babs & Bert Wells/CALM

Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

LANDSCOPE

VOLUME FIFTEEN NUMBER 3, AUTUMN 2000



F E A T U R E S

THE BEST OF THE SOUTH-WEST

CAROLYN THOMSON-DANS.....10

ISLE OF CATS

DAVE ALGAR AND ANDREW BURBIDGE.....18

LOST JEWELS IN THE BUSH

MIKE O'DONOGHUE & KEN ATKINS.....23

COSMIC IMPACTS IN THE KIMBERLEY

JOHN GOLDSMITH.....28

NAME THAT PLANT

NEVILLE MARCHANT.....35

LOOKING THROUGH THE SURFACE

NICK D'ADAMO, PETER DANS, DES MILLS & SANDRA TOBY.....41

MAKING ROOM FOR NATURE

PENNY HUSSEY.....48

R E G U L A R S

BUSH TELEGRAPH.....4

ENDANGERED

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO.....47

URBAN ANTICS

KINGS IN GREEN CASTLES.....54

Executive Editor: Ron Kawallilak**Managing Editor:** Ray Bailey**Editor:** David Gough**Story Editors:** Mandy Clews, Verna Costello, Sandra Toby, Carolyn Thomson-Dans, Mitzi Vance**Scientific/technical advice:** Andrew Burbidge, Ian Abbott, Neil Burrows, Paul Jones and staff of CALMScience Division**Design and production:** Tiffany Aberin, Maria Duthie, Sue Marais**Illustration:** Gooitzen van der Meer**Marketing:** Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (08) 9334 0296 Fax: (08) 9334 0498**Subscription enquiries:** ☎ (08) 9334 0481 or (08) 9334 0437

Colour Separation by Colourbox Digital

Printed in Western Australia by Lamb Print

© ISSN 0815-4465 All material copyright. No part of the contents of the publication may be reproduced without the consent of the publishers.

Please do not send unsolicited material to *LANDSCOPE*, but feel free to telephone the Editor.Visit *LANDSCOPE* online on our award-winning Internet site NatureBase at <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au>Published by
Department of Conservation and Land Management,
Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington, Western Australia

One of the best selling books from CALM has recently been fully revised. See 'The Best of the South-West' on page 10.



A new weapon against the scourge of feral cats was recently tested on Hermite Island. See 'Isle of Cats' on page 18.



In the far north of WA, there is evidence of not one, but two cosmic impacts. See 'Cosmic Impacts in the Kimberley' on page 28.



Satellite imagery is helping us to fight maritime pollution. See 'Looking Through the Surface' on page 41.



A unique network links volunteer groups and regional herbaria with the CALM flora database. See 'Name That Plant' on page 35.

C O V E R

Western Australia is aptly described as the Wildflower State. Some 12,500 different species are known from the wild, with a huge range of colours, shapes and characters. But many species once found are lost again, and it's always an event when a species thought to be extinct is rediscovered. See 'Lost Jewels in the Bush' on page 23.

Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky

