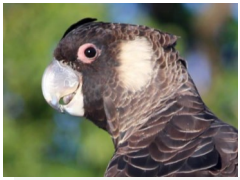
Carnaby's Black Cockatoo

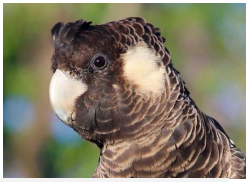
Endangered

Shire of Victoria Plains

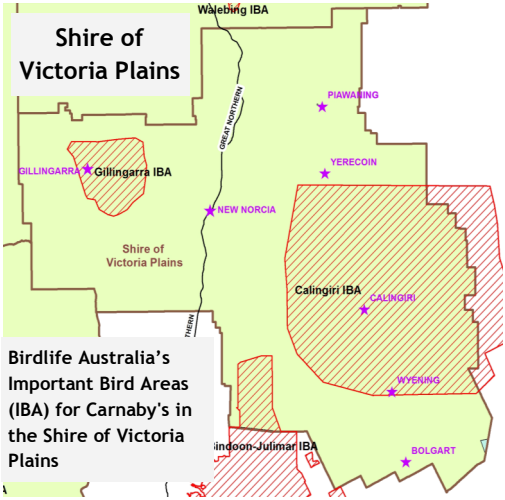
Carnaby's Black Cockatoos *(Calyptorhynchus latirostris)* are found only in Western Australia and are an iconic species of the State. Unfortunately this bird species is threatened with extinction as there are only a maximum of 11,000 left in the wild. In Aboriginal Noongar culture, the *ngoolark* is a sacred Totem bird and they refer to Carnaby's as a 'harbinger of rain'.



Male



Female



Birdlife Australia's Important Bird Areas (IBA) for Carnaby's in the Shire of Victoria Plains

What do they look like?

Carnaby's black-cockatoos are large, raucous black cockatoos with white patches on their cheeks and white bands on their tails. They have strong short bills designed to cope with the hard nuts and seeds that form their diet.

Males have red eye rings and black bills whereas females have grey eye rings and a lighter grey or bone-coloured bills.

Where do they live?

Carnaby's black-cockatoos are found in southwest Australia from the Murchison River across to Esperance and inland to Coorow and Lake Cronin.

The Shire of Victoria Plains is a significant location for Carnaby's as they come here to breed and feed in the Wandoo and Salmon Gum Eucalypt woodlands.

Designed by Moore Catchment Council

Funded by State Natural Resource Management Program & Royalties for Regions

Carnaby's Black Cockatoo ecology

Carnaby's black-cockatoos are a very mobile species with movements throughout the year determined by nesting and feeding needs. From early summer through autumn to winter the cockatoos live in higher rainfall coastal or near coastal areas in large flocks. July is the beginning of the move back out to the Wheatbelt in search of suitable nesting hollows. The nesting season lasts from late winter through spring and into early summer when the cycle begins again.

The female cockatoo lays two eggs every year but usually only one chick is raised. During the incubation period and while the chick is very young the female only leaves the hollow for short periods during which time she is fed by the male. He must find enough food during this period to sustain them all. When the chick is older the female joins in the search for food.

Twins ! A rarely seen sight

Up to 12km is a reasonable distance for cockatoos to fly from the hollow in search of food and they are assisted in their navigation between sites by corridors or patches of vegetation. If feeding sites and nesting trees are too far apart, chicks will not survive.

CONSERVATION STATUS

Australian Government: ENDANGERED
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Western Australia: ENDANGERED
Wildlife Conservation Act 1950

Threats to Carnaby's Black Cockatoo

Carnaby's have Federal and State protection as an endangered species.

Threats to their survival include:

- Feeding and breeding habitat loss from clearing for roads, urban and recreational developments, and agriculture;
- Competition for remaining breeding hollows from bees and other birds;
- Lack of awareness and information to the community, landowners and local governments on Carnaby issues and conservation.

Carnaby's habitat - what do they need to survive?

In the Shire of Victoria Plains, during the nesting season Carnaby's Black Cockatoos occur in remnant eucalypt woodlands, predominately Salmon gum or Wandoo (White Gum). They feed in heathland called Kwongan heath, on different types of banksia, grevillea, and hakea species. They also feed on seeds of eucalyptus species, and introduced species such as wild radish and pines.

Native breeding trees

Salmon Gum (left) is found on heavier clay country whereas Wandoo (right) is found on loam/ sandier country. Trees need to be at least 120-200 years old to produce hollows useful for the Carnaby's. A lot of the big old breeding trees have been cut down during clearing so competition for hollows is fierce.

Native high priority forage plants for Carnaby's Black Cockatoo

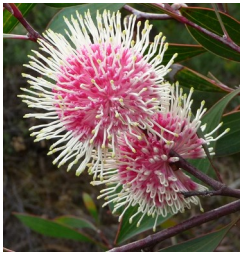
Food includes the flowers, nectar and seeds of Banksia, Hakea, Eucalyptus, Corymbia, Grevillea, also seeds of non native Pinus sp. Below are some species suited for the Shire of Victoria Plains.

Carnaby's eating Marri honky nuts *(Corymbia calophylla)*

Honeypot Dryandra *(Banksia nivea)*

Slender or Candle Banksia *(B attenuate)*, Acorn Banksia *(B prionotes)* & Swamp Banksia (B littoralis)

Fuchsia Grevillea *(Grevillea bipinnatifida)*



Sea urchin Hakea *(Hakea petiolaris)*

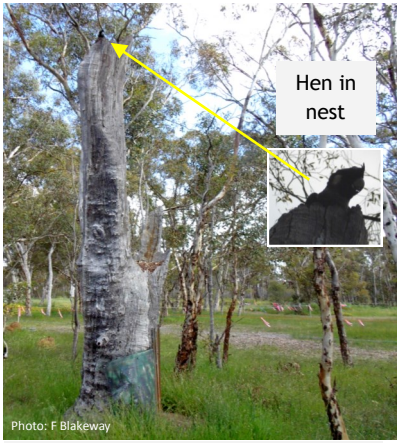
Honeybush *(Hakea lissocarpha)*

Parrot bush *(Banksia sessilis)*

What you can do to help

Whether you are a big landholder, someone who has a small garden or just a visitor to the Shire, there are several things you can do to help the Carnaby's survive into the future.

- ☺ Protect and conserve known nesting and feeding habitat by fencing or excluding stock, protecting woodlands against firewood collection, leaving old or dead trees standing and ensuring appropriate fire management, & control weeds in native remnant vegetation.
- ☺ Protect and repair damaged (where necessary) known natural hollows; Help control competitive species such as galahs and feral honeybees
- ☺ Revegetate around known feeding and nesting habitat with appropriate local species.
- ☺ Install artificial nests in known breeding areas. Designs include the wooden nesting log and the DPaW popular plastic pipe 'Cockietube'.
- ☺ Help the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo by reporting any activities that you see that are likely to harm them or their habitat to the Department of the Environment or WA's Department of Environmental Regulations.
- ☺ Become a Birds Australia volunteer or join your local Landcare group such as Moore Catchment Council. Take part in the Great Cocky Count in April. Join a Carnaby group such as Kerkhof Carnaby Group in Moora.



Active natural nest in Wandoo stump recently repaired by Kerkhof Carnaby Group

Artificial nesting logs constructed by Kerkhof Carnaby Group

Moore Catchment Council has a long term project to create habitat and raise awareness of Carnaby's Black Cockatoo including highlighting detrimental threats and ways to help them survive.

Please contact MCC on 9653 1355 or mooreecc@bigpond.com for more information.

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All photos R Walmsley unless indicated. Information from: http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/factsheet-carnabys-black-cockatoo-calyptorhynchus-latirostris