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Extreme heat not the only threat to Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

Saving the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo from extinction requires locals throughout the South West regions to mobilise according to Birds Australia project manager Raana Scott.

Populations of the unique bird are under pressure following the tragic death of at least 152 cockatoos from suspected heat stroke in the Hopetoun and Munglinup areas in early January.

"We get regular reports from Hopetoun locals of around 200-250 birds. This isn't an exact figure but we can definitely say that a significant proportion of the Hopetoun population has been affected by this event," Ms Scott said.

Now that the scientific tests have ruled out causes of death such as pesticides and chemicals, she said local communities had to ensure that the birds were not put under any more pressure- be it by land clearing for urban development; tree hollow competition from bees, galahs and corellas; shooting or road strike.

"All the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos that remain are of critical importance to the populations throughout the South West. We need to make sure that the remaining populations are as healthy and robust as possible to reduce the chance of stochastic events such as January 6 having such a devastating impact on the species."

Ms Scott suggested people could instigate local 'friends of' groups and help plant local natives so that the cockatoo could continue foraging, roosting and nesting. Birds Australia also needed volunteers to assist with nesting hollow repairs, roost monitoring and some administrative tasks.

Several research projects are due to start which will investigate species migration to and from nesting areas and communication methods, to build upon ongoing genetic work into population dynamics and genetic dispersal.

The results of these projects will give conservationists and local communities a better understanding of the species and allow for even greater strategic recovery efforts.

Provided the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project receives State NRM funding, Birds Australia with assistance from South Coast NRM and other NRM agencies will continue to work with landholders, local community groups and landcare agencies to strategically protect and enhance priority nesting and feeding sites.

Those wishing to report cockatoo sightings or find out more information should visit www.birdsaustralia.com.au/carnabys

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Raana Scott
Birds Australia
Project Manager- Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project
phone: 08) 9076 2203
mob: 0427707047
fax: 08) 9072 0499
PO Box 1801, Esperance, WA 6450
Unit 3, Suite B 113 Dempster St, Esperance
www.birdsaustralia.com.au

Background

Birds Australia Western Australia (BAWA) is a regional group of Birds Australia, a national organisation committed since its formation in 1901 to the conservation, study and enjoyment of Australia's native birds and their habitats.

The Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project has been operating since 2000, initially covering northern populations. Since 2006 recovery efforts have broadened to include the South Coast populations.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo are a highly visible semi-migratory species that rely on various vegetation types across geographically distinct areas throughout their annual cycle. Because of these habits, they rely on vegetation occurring on various land tenure across large tracts of land. The last 45 years has seen a dramatic decline in numbers, up to a 50% reduction. Accordingly, the species is classified as Endangered under the EPBC Act.

Major successes to date include the protection of over 1500ha of critical nesting and feeding vegetation across the species range. The project has identified many nesting sites and associated feeding sites and works closely with landholders to ensure remnant vegetation is protected to ensure that the vegetation remains viable into the future.

Over the last two years, Birds Australia volunteers and community members have contributed over 1,000 hours of their time to assist in nest monitoring.