

# 'Chewings'

GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOO NEWSLETTER: No. 28 - November 2008

## IN SUMMARY...

The census is over, the first results are in.....our population is still on the increase! The most hectic part of the year for staff on the Recovery Program is over, with the breeding season wrapped up, and the conclusion last Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October of the annual population census. It has been a good year, with all our standard activities—nest monitoring, pest bird control, revegetation, and nest maintenance—occurring without mishap. Some exciting new projects have also been initiated, and will be carried out over the next 12 months (see Pg 2).



Watching the speedy recovery of the vegetation after the December 2007 fires has also been encouraging, and flock counts in the regions affected have also shown that the immediate impacts of the fires on the Glossies has been minimal.

## BREEDING SEASON 2008

It was a long breeding season this year (Jan-Sept). The first nesting attempt was recorded by a Commercial Tour Operator group on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, and the last nestling is only just about to fledge. This gives a breeding season of almost nine months, which perhaps helps compensate somewhat for the less productive breeding biology characteristics of the Glossy: only one egg is laid per nest, and a large proportion of eggs each year are infertile. This year approximately 21% of known eggs were infertile or otherwise failed to hatch. Although the breeding report is still being finalised, approximate figures for the season have been derived from our nest monitoring data. Overall, around 63 nest attempts were recorded, of which 25 (40%) were successful (nestling fledged), 33 (52%) failed,



and 5 (7%) were unknown. A total of 20 nestlings were banded, however, sightings of unbanded juveniles during the census indicates that the total number is higher. Although these totals are similar to last year, partially due to a constant search effort, we have had some good indications that the breeding success is increasing.

## STILL ON THE UP – CENSUS OCTOBER 08

Enticed by the lure of Freddo frogs, small teams of volunteers headed out each afternoon to count the flocks as they came in to roost. Led by Lyn Pedler, volunteers were stationed at strategic locations in each flock region, so that Glossies coming from all directions could be counted. Some counts were relatively easy, with the Glossies flying over cleared land in one or two large flocks. For other counts the Glossies were harder to pin down, either staying in dense vegetation so that a clear count was difficult, or roosting in small, hard-to-find locations.



With some follow-up counts at dawn to confirm numbers, all the flocks were located and counted. And the grand tally? Lyn is still doing the number crunching, however we have a rough estimate of approximately 333 individuals.

Photos: 1. Ellie trials the arborist climbing method for nest maintenance; 2. Volunteers monitor nests at De Mole River; 3. Lyn Pedler (centre left) explains the strategy for counting a flock at Middle River; 4. It's not all hard work—a volunteer comfortably awaits the arrival of a flock at Stokes Bay.



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This is an increase of around 6% on last year's minimum population count of 315, and is a larger increase than previous years.

## REPLANTING AFTER THE FIRES....



In an effort to replace some of the feeding habitat lost in the December 2007 fires, 500 sheoaks were planted in a cleared area on the steep slopes of the Western River region in July this year. The Western River region was the most heavily impacted, with approximately 46% of the Drooping Sheoak lost in the fires. The revegetation is appropriate ecologically as habitat modelling, based on slope and geology, suggests that these slopes were

originally predominantly sheoak. This revegetation occurred on private land which was cleared a number of years ago, and will hopefully reduce the amount of tunnel erosion and weed infestation that is occurring on the site. More sheoaks will be planted in the coming years on this site.



An additional 1800 sheoaks were also planted during June-August at a number of priority sites across the Island, including American River, Western Cove, and Duck Lagoon.



Photos: 5. Western River revegetation; 6. Our hard working volunteers; 7. & 8. Western Cove (Nepean Bay) revegetation—property owner Robert Ayliffe on right; 9. & 10. Glossies—the reason for all our hard work!

## CURRENT PROJECTS

**Population Viability Analysis:** Several new projects are currently underway as part of the Recovery Program. A 'population viability analysis' (or pva) will be conducted over the next six months. A pva is a process of identifying the threats faced by a species and evaluating the likelihood that the species will persist for a given time into the future. A large database of information has been collated by the Recovery Program over the last 13 years, and this information will feed into the pva. The resulting analysis will help guide management actions in the coming years.

**Monitoring of Fire and Sheoak:** In order to increase our understanding of the impact of, and response to fire by sheoak, a number of monitoring sites are being established across the Island. Information gathered at these sites over time will inform how we carry out fire management practices, including prescribed burns.

**Managing Development Pressures:** As mentioned in the previous issue, updating of habitat mapping was carried out at American River to ensure its accuracy. This mapping showed that there have been some significant changes to the spatial distribution and extent of habitat since it was last mapped in 1998. These changes relate to both changes in mapping techniques, and also changes related to clearance, natural regrowth, and active revegetation. The new mapping will now be used to calculate the amount of habitat at risk to subdivision and development, and will also help the Recovery Program to identify any areas which may be suitable for either formal protection, and areas for revegetation to help combat habitat lost in the township area.



The SA Glossy Black-Cockatoo web site can be found at: [www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/glossyblack.html](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/glossyblack.html)

To find out more about the Glossy Black-Cockatoo Recovery Program, or make a donation to the Glossy Black Rescue Fund, contact:

Eleanor Sobey: phone: (08) 8553 2381  
Email: [sobey.eleanor@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:sobey.eleanor@saugov.sa.gov.au)



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