

'Chewings'

SA GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOO RECOVERY PROGRAM
NEWSLETTER: No. 29 - March 2010

WHATS NEW?.....

First off...Sorry for the long gap between newsletters. Quite a bit has taken place since the last issue in Nov. 2008 starting with a change in Project Officers. Eleanor Sobey left the project for new endeavours in January 2009 and I (Mike Barth) took over the role in May 2009. For those of you I haven't met....a bit of background on me.....



Mike learns the ropes during climbing training in November.

I've been involved with threatened bird recovery work for over 15 years now and I'm originally from California. I married an Australian and moved to Australia just over 6 years ago. I've worked with California Condors, Peregrine Falcons and Western Ground Parrots and have assisted with a variety of other wildlife projects over the years. The GBC project has been wonderful so far and I've been enjoying the Kangaroo Island lifestyle with my wife and two young boys.

BREEDING SEASON 2009

The following update is from Lynn Pedler's 2009 Breeding Season Report:

Nest monitoring in the 2009 breeding season found at least 62 nest attempts. These were in 53 nest sites (including 24 artificial hollows). At least 28 juveniles survived to fledgling (left nest) in 2009.



A banded nestling ready to go back in the nest hollow.

Nestlings were banded in 22 nests including 10 in artificial hollows. A further 6 nestlings were seen or heard in two artificial hollows and four unclimbed natural nests.

Of the 28 juveniles produced in the 2009 breeding season, 9 were seen during the census period. 6 were unbanded and 3 banded juveniles were identified.

Nest failures were found in 26 nests, mostly with eggs. The outcome of 8 nests was not determined. Re-laying (further nesting attempts) occurred in at least 7 nests, two

of which appeared to have had 3 successive unsuccessful clutches laid.

Five previously unknown natural nests were found and protected from possums. Another tree was protected where cockatoos investigated a hollow but further activity was not confirmed.

ANNUAL CENSUS 2009

The following update is from Lynn Pedler's 2009 Census Report:

A much reduced **minimum total of 236 Glossy Black-Cockatoos was found during the 2009 annual census.** The previous census (2008) found **340 – 360 Glossy Black-Cockatoos.** This is due to the almost complete absence during the census period, of two of the six main flocks from all known feeding and roost sites (Stokes Bay and Middle River flocks).

Portions of both flocks were eventually located in habitat areas adjacent to those usually occupied suggesting local shifts in feeding and roost sites possibly related to impacts of prolonged dry conditions on food availability. While there is no direct evidence of higher than usual adult or juvenile mortality, the small number of dependant juveniles found and low proportion of juveniles marked as nestlings identified during the census period is of concern, and may relate to wet weather in the post-fledging period and/or food availability.

Thus, as there is insufficient information to indicate whether growth or losses have occurred the population estimate from the previous census (2008) remains unchanged at **340 – 360 Glossy Black-Cockatoos on Kangaroo Island.**

Fieldwork during October was carried out by the project biologist (Lynn Pedler), the project officer (Mike Barth) and involved over 20 volunteers. A big THANKS to all those who assisted!



A nestling still with down.



A pair of adults with young during the census.



HABITAT RESTORATION

Over 650 drooping sheoaks and a dozen sugar gums were planted at Western River in July 2009 on a property just west of Western River Cove to supplement a 2008 planting in the same locale.



Volunteers are still smiling after planting over 650 sheoaks on steep terrain at Western River

In addition, 250 drooping sheoaks were given away to 15 American River residents in June from the post office to help offset losses from residential development in the area. 1000 sheoaks were planted in the Nepean Bay / Western Cove area by private landowners. A dozen Sugar Gums were planted in Latham CP amongst some older planted sheoaks near the Lookout.

Volunteers will be needed in June/July 2010 to help plant drooping sheoaks at a range of sites on KI. The KI Planting Festival will be held from 2-4 July at Cygnet Park Sanctuary and will be planting 3,000– 4,000 sheoaks amongst 100,000 other native plants.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Monitoring Disease - Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (Pbfd)

As part of an investigation into potential disease threats to Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoos, small samples of nest material were collected from the floors of natural and artificial nest hollows during nest maintenance work in Sept 2009. A total of 23 samples were collected from 18 artificial and 5 natural hollows and were sent to Dr. Shane Raidal at Charles Sturt University, NSW to test for presence of Pbfd. Test results are still pending.

The status of the disease within the KI GBC population is unknown at present, but it is widespread within mainland cockatoo populations. It's likely to be carried by galahs and/or corellas visiting KI from the mainland.



Torran Welz from the koala management team scales the "Cliff" nest during nest maintenance in September while Wally Meakins offers ground support.

Population Viability Analysis

A population viability analysis (or pva) was conducted during the first half of 2009. A pva is a process of identifying the threats faced by a species and its habitat to evaluate the likelihood that the species and its habitat will persist for a given time into the future. 13 years worth of data were used in the population modelling.

A draft report submitted to the recovery team in July indicates that the KI GBC population is:

- acutely sensitive to reduced adult survival, moderately sensitive to severe fires and somewhat sensitive to disease outbreak.
- not currently limited by carrying capacity. (This model estimated current carrying capacity for KI at **653** birds).

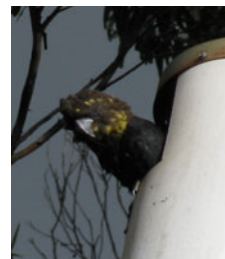
The authors recommended continued monitoring and management in the coming decades to assure the species' survival on KI.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nest Monitoring 2010 - (Feb. - Aug.)

The 2010 GBC breeding season is in full swing now with over 25 active nests currently being monitored. We're in need of volunteers to help search for and monitor nests across Kangaroo Island. We leave Kingscote late in the afternoon, monitor a nesting area until dark and return to Kingscote after dark.

We can tell what stage a nest is at by the adult behaviours we see at and around a nest hollow. If a male arrives and calls the female out of the hollow, then we can assume she is either on an egg or a newly hatched chick. If both parents return at once and the female enters the hollow after being fed by the male, then we can assume there is a larger chick in the nest hollow. Remember, only the female incubates the egg and feeds the chick in the nest hollow. The male's role is to provide the female with food every day by regurgitating a portion to her.



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

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

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The Glossy Black-Cockatoo Recovery Program is managed by the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) and is currently funded by the South Australian state government NRM through the Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board.

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