

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo Census

26th & 27th May, 2012



Volunteer Field Guide

Preamble

The following field guide has been provided to assist volunteers in the census of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (YTBC) in the Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR) Region. Its purpose is to ensure that all participants who undertake the project have the basic skills required to perform the census accurately and safely, complying with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Guidelines.

Aim of the Census

The 2012 census continues on from last year's census and aims to provide an estimate of the population size of YTBC in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR) region. An accurate population size estimate will provide a foundation for future population changes to be measured and allow informed management decisions to be made.

Last year's census indicated the current population size of YTBC in the region is approximately 2000. However, because this estimate is based on a single census, we plan to validate last year's results by performing the census again in 2012.

General Instructions for Volunteers

The 2012 YTBC Census will take place on the 26th and 27th of May across the AMLR, including the Southern Fleurieu region. On each day the census is to be undertaken, the times prioritised for searching are the early mornings and late afternoons as these are the most active times for the movement of YTBC flocks. During the middle of the day flocks are usually camped at a feeding site with minimal and often discreet movement. Observations recorded at any time of the day will be greatly appreciated. If you are only available for a day or half day, or even just a few hours, please ensure that you inform us of the times you will be available for survey.

In the morning volunteers are recommended to stay close to areas with a high density of food sources (such as Aleppo and Radiata pines and Hakeas) or by vantage points with a broad range of vision at their allocated sites. During the day when YTBCs are less active, volunteers are encouraged to actively investigate the proximity of their locations either by surveying the area by car or by going for a stroll; as you may come across a flock feeding nearby. Flocks found feeding provide the best opportunity for measuring an approximate sex ratio (see "How to Distinguish Between the Sexes" - page 5) as they will remain fairly

stationary and within a good view to observe beaks and eye rings. Alternatively flocks flying overhead will allow the best opportunity for an approximate count as obstructions such as foliage cover will not be of a hindrance.

Volunteers will be asked to survey in specific locations to increase the likelihood of recording every large YTBC flock in the region. Each of these locations has been inspected and selection was based on one or more of the following prerequisites:

1. Recent observations of YTBCs at that location
2. Observations of YTBCs during the 2011 Census at that location
3. Excellent vantage point
4. A safe location for observations
5. The presence of an appropriate food source for YTBC

Each location has been placed on a roadside or in a location with public access. Please ensure that you do not enter private lands unless you have permission from the landholder. Conservation Parks, National Parks, and Forestry Reserves are available for public access, though are not to be driven in unless otherwise sign posted and should not be entered in days of total fire ban.

Safety Instructions for Volunteers

The activities that will be performed by participating volunteers will purely be bird watching which, depending on the location may entail several hazards. We have therefore identified a number of hazards that may be encountered and outlined a number of actions that should be taken to minimise any risk.

1. Working along roadsides – ensure that vehicles are parked at a safe distance from the edge of the road (SA road rules denote a parking distance of at least 10 metres from an intersection) and that caution is always given when opening doors, crossing roads, and entering traffic. All surveying should only take place a safe distance from the road verge.
2. Walking on unsteady terrain – ensure appropriate footwear and personal protective equipment is worn on the day. Also be wary of effects such as tunnel vision which may take effect whilst trying to observe YTBC populations and becoming complacent as to where one is walking.
3. Working in fluctuating weather – as the survey is planned for May, the temperature can alternate from hot to cold and from sunny to raining very quickly during the day. Ensure that you are properly prepared for each extreme with sun block, rain jackets, warm clothing, etc.

4. Working alone – if you are working alone on the day, it is essential that you assign somebody such as a friend or family member whom you can notify where you are and what time you're expected to return, and make regular check-ins to inform them of you're whereabouts. Also that way if a problem is to arise, and you don't check-in, help can be sent out as quickly as possible.
5. Walking around and underneath pine trees – if a plantation of pine trees is located at your position and YTBCs are foraging there is a risk of being struck by falling pine cones and branches. As the YTBCs feed on the pines they will chew off the cones and sometimes the branches they are attached to as well. Avoid walking directly under feeding birds.
6. Working around native flora – be wary that bushland habitats can contain prickly vegetation and branches that may cause cuts and abrasions. In some areas of dense vegetation, protective eyewear is recommended.

Finding Your Locations

Each volunteer will be emailed a close-up aerial photographic map depicting their location and surrounding landmarks to assist in locating their assigned site, selecting a good vantage point, and identifying surrounding areas that you may wish to investigate.

The GPS information for your assigned locations has also been provided. . If a GPS is not readily available, Google Maps should be proficient enough, though note that many of the smaller roads and tracks may not appear. To search for a GPS point on Google Maps the following website works quite well: <http://leware.net/geo/utmgoogle.htm>

NAME	LOCATION DESCRIPTION	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
SITE_001	Corner of Rarking Road and Talisker Road, Talisker	35° 36' 59.32" S	138° 9' 41.33" E	54	242904	6054878

To search for your location using this website, simply enter in either the degrees of latitude and longitude in the pink section or the easting, northing and appropriate zone (in this region it is 54) in the yellow section. Hitting display will open your location in Google Maps allowing appropriate directions to be made.

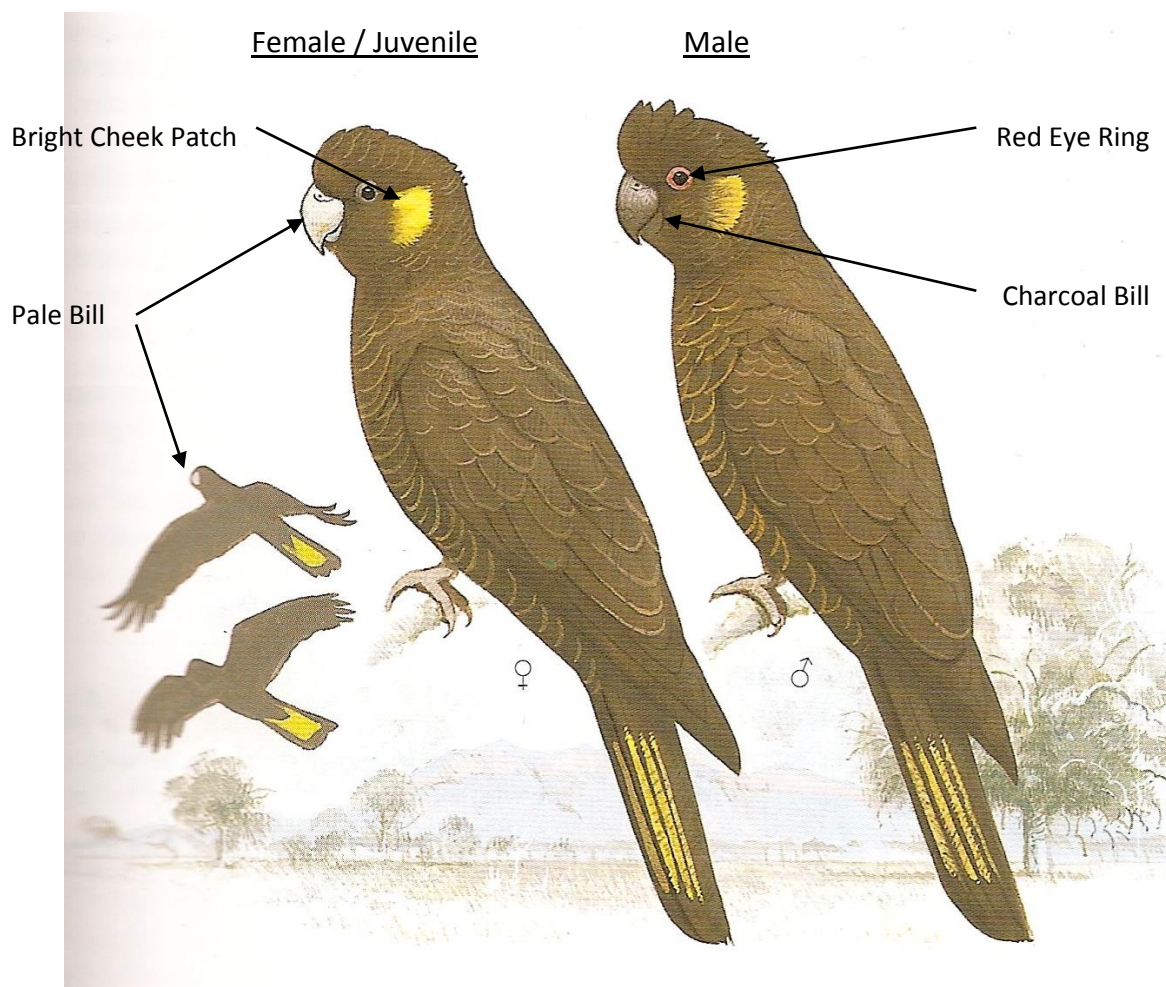
The screenshot shows a web interface for UTM conversion. It includes the following elements:

- Select ellipsoid:** A dropdown menu set to "WGS-84 (NAD83)".
- Traverse Mercator:** Radio buttons for "UTM" (selected) and "MTM Canada".
- MTM ref meridian:** A text input field with "(see notes)" next to it.
- Latitude (dms):** A text input field containing "35° 36' 59.32\"", a dropdown for "S", and a "Calculate" button.
- Longitude (dms):** A text input field containing "138° 9' 41.33\"", a dropdown for "E", and a "Display" button.
- xTM Easting (x):** A text input field containing "242904" and a "Calculate" button.
- xTM Northing (y):** A text input field containing "6054878" and a "Display" button.
- xTM Zone:** A text input field containing "54" and a dropdown for "H".
- Display with:** Radio buttons for "Google map" (selected), "NRCan topo map", "USGS topo map", "Bing maps", and "GeoHack".
- Display window:** Radio buttons for "here" and "separate" (selected).
- Buttons:** "Reset" and "Test data".
- Computed values (for cut&paste):** Four empty text input fields for "lat dec:", "lon dec:", "xTM:", and "lat/lon:".

Identification of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos

Each volunteer is asked to make accurate identifications of the birds they encounter, as well as complete a data sheet for each flock sighting to the best of their ability. As the YTBC is the only species of Black-Cockatoo commonly found on the Fleurieu Peninsula the identification shouldn't be too difficult to master; though there remains the possibility that it could still be confused with other bird species. The YTBC is easily identified by its predominantly black plumage with most body feathers edged with yellow (not visible from a distance) and yellow cheek patch and yellow panels on the tail. The female and juveniles have a larger yellow cheek patch, pale grey eye-ring (pink in males), white upper bill (grey-black in males) and black marks in the yellow tail panels. They are a large, slow moving species with a distinctive loud call.

How to distinguish between the sexes



Helpful Hints

- YTBC juveniles are very similar in appearance to the females
- Use binoculars
- Use photographic or video evidence to assist you in your identification and counts. We are also available to assist with the review of images or footage (and you can never have too many great photos of these birds!!!)
- It is easier to focus on bill colour, rather than eye ring colour, to determine an individual's sex

Guide to Using Data Sheet

The data sheet is a means of collecting information on YTBCs in a standard way. It is important that the data sheet is filled out as accurately as possible to provide us with the most correct population estimate. Whilst volunteers are asked to try and determine the sex ratio and total count of each flock the encounter, the difficulty of this task is acknowledged and an absolute ratio and count is not expected, an estimate however will suffice.

Survey Registration Information

It is important to ensure that the project is carried out in the safest and most effective method possible, and that you please register with Charlie Bensen via email (Charlie.Bensen@sa.gov.au) or phone call (0409 288 421) before starting your survey. When you reach your location, ensure you position yourself in the safest location possible (e.g. well away from traffic) and also provide yourself with a good vantage point to look for YTBCs.

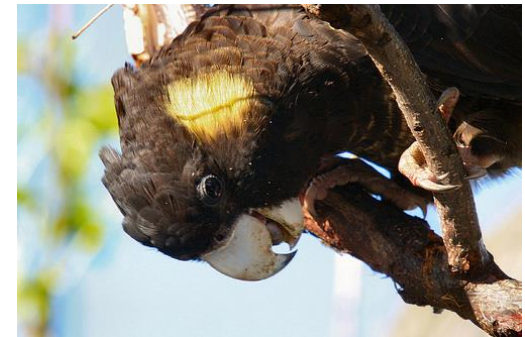
When you have completed your survey, please contact your nominated 'check-in' person and text message Charlie Bensen (0409 288 421) when you're home safely so that we can guarantee that everybody has finished their survey safely.

What You Need to Bring

1. Users Field Guide
2. Map of search area
3. Data Sheet
4. Food and Water
5. First Aid Kit
6. Appropriate footwear and clothing
7. Binoculars (if owned)
8. Mobile Phone (if owned)
9. GPS (if owned)
10. Emergency gear (in case vehicle issues force overnight stay (blanket, torch, etc))

Field Photos Sex Test

How many Males or Females/Juveniles can you identify?



Field Photos Sex Test Answers

How many Males or Females/Juveniles can you identify?

