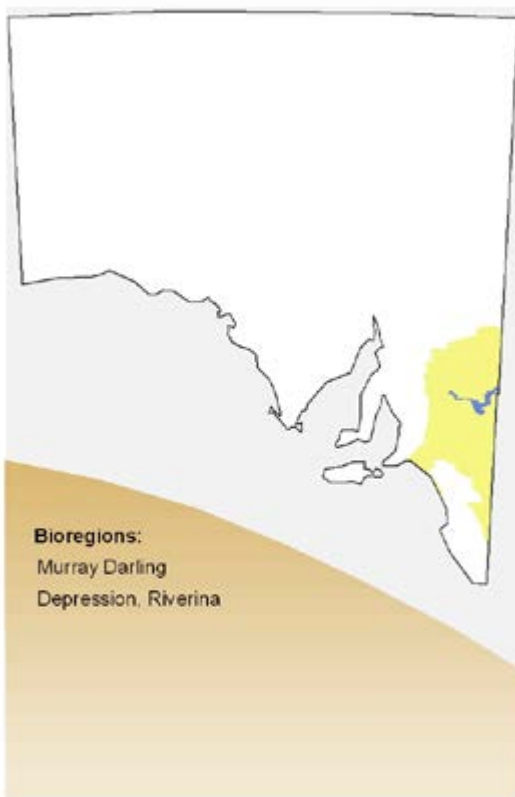


Black-eared Miner

Manorina melanotis



Map courtesy of Mapping Unit, Customer and Commercial Services.

Map is not intended to indicate spatial distribution of the species, only the bioregions in which the species is found.

The Black-eared Miner lives in the Murray Mallee region of South Australia. It is one of four species of honeyeater in the *Manorina* group, and all of these species can interbreed with each other. A darkly coloured, stocky bird it is dark grey above, paler underneath with a black face mask and orange/yellow bill and legs. It is one of Australia's rarest endemic bird species and is shyer and quieter than other miner species.

The Black-eared Miner is similar in appearance to the more common Yellow-throated Miner (*Manorina flavigula*), and is threatened as an individual species as it has been interbreeding with them. This interbreeding has become common since human disturbance to and destruction of their habitats has enabled Yellow-throated Miners to access and use the Black-eared Miner's habitat more readily.

Diet

Miners eat mainly invertebrates and lerp (a sugary substance made by tiny sap-sucking insects).

Breeding

Black-eared Miners mate for life, only seeking a new partner if their chosen one dies. Several breeding pairs choose to live close together and form a colony. These colonies of birds help each other with their nests, and act together to scare off predators and intruders.

Black-eared Miners are opportunistic breeders – they wait until conditions are favourable and there are plenty of nectar-bearing flowers and insects to eat and then they breed. This usually happens from September to December in the spring time. They lay clutches of two to three eggs and forage for food close to their nests.

Habitat

Old growth mallee is the preferred habitat of Black-eared Miners; they prefer habitat that has not been burnt for 40 years or more. Unfortunately for these miners the mallee eucalypts they prefer in the Murray region grow on very fertile land which has been selectively cleared for agriculture. For this reason much of their former habitat has been destroyed.

Threats

Habitat clearance and degradation has been the major threat to Black-eared Miners. Yellow-throated Miners moving into their habitat and interbreeding with them is another problem. Isolated colonies which are slow to grow, climate change and drought, and fire destroying old growth trees are other threats to this species.



Natural Resources
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Government of
South Australia

Mighty helpful! Up to 13 'helper birds', mostly males, will assist the nest of a breeding pair in their colony

Conservation

Recovery plans aimed at preserving what is left of the Black-eared Miner's habitat, establishing captive breeding populations and keeping them separated from the Yellow-throated Miners have had some success. It is hoped this will continue in the future.

You can help the Black-eared Miner by:

- preserving remaining mallee habitat on your property and in your local area
- spreading the word: tell other people about the plight of these unique birds
- doing your bit to help stop climate change – be wise with your energy use at home
- Visit Gluepot Reserve north of Waikerie to see if you can spot a Black-eared Miner.

For further information

Public enquiries

For more local information on any of the species in this resource please contact your nearest Natural Resource Centre office on:

Eastwood: (08) 8273 9100

Gawler: (08) 8523 7700

Lobethal: (08) 8389 5900

Willunga: (08) 8550 3400

Education enquiries

For teachers wanting more information about environmental education resources and opportunities please contact the relevant NRM Education sub regional team on:

Northern Adelaide: (08) 8406 8289

Barossa: (08) 8563 8436

Central Adelaide: (08) 8234 7255

Southern Adelaide: (08) 8384 0176

Southern Fleurieu: (08) 8551 0524

