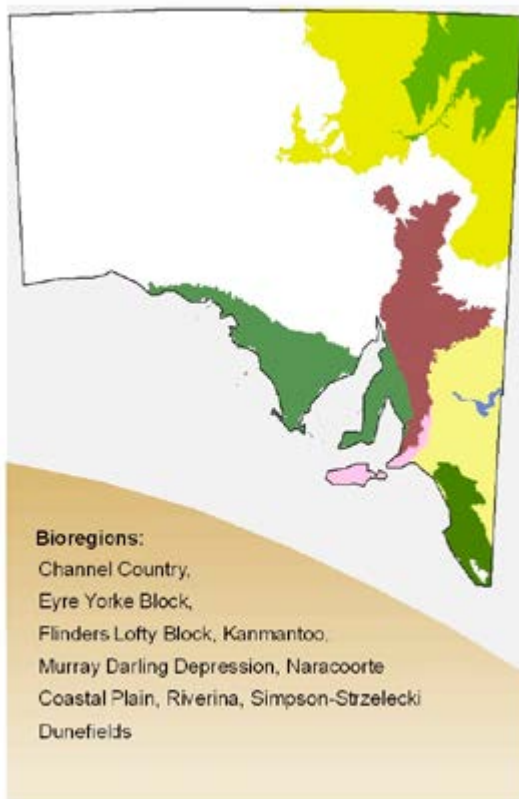


Bush Stone-curlew

Burhinus grallarius



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.

Bush Stone-curlews are ground-dwelling birds; this means that they roost, feed and nest on the ground. Their big yellow eyes and long legs with knobby knees allow them to be easily distinguished from other birds. They can live more than 20 years and grow to 50-60 cm tall.

Bush Stone-curlew are nocturnal, and are famous for the wailing sound they make at night. They are such secretive birds that sometimes this call is the only way to know that they are around.

During the day they rest crouching down, head outstretched. When disturbed they tend to freeze instead of flying away, which can make them especially vulnerable to predators. Historically they travelled in groups of 50–100 but it is now rare to see more than four birds together.

Diet

These birds eat insects, small frogs, lizards and snakes.

Breeding

Bush Stone-curlews nest from August to February and usually lay two eggs in a scrape (small bare patch) on the ground. These eggs are mottled brown and grey for camouflage and are incubated by both parents. Unfortunately, only 15 per cent of nesting attempts in the South East of SA are successful.

Habitat

Bush Stone-curlew prefer 'untidy' landscapes covered in fallen timber and debris. The mottled grey-brown colour of their feathers makes them well camouflaged amongst the woody debris of their habitat. These unique birds have disappeared from around 90 per cent of their former habitat on the South Australian mainland.

Threats

Foxes and cats are the Bush Stone-curlew's main predators. The clearance of open woodlands has led to the fragmentation and destruction of suitable habitat. The removal of timber makes them vulnerable to predation from feral animals. Other threats include eggs being trampled by stock and nest disturbance from pets and people.



Aboriginal People associated the curlews with ghosts because of the wailing cries they make at night!

Conservation

You can help protect the Bush Stone-curlew by:

- avoiding taking firewood from woodland environments; these are an important part of the curlew's habitat
- keeping pets inside at night and walk dogs on a lead in woody areas – cats and dogs can kill native birds like the curlew
- trying not to disturb Bush Stone-curlews if you come across them.



Photo by Dan Harley

Bush Stone-curlew

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



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