



BIRD

Chalcites basalis

Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	V	-	Migratory Breeder



Photo: © Tom & Marie Tarrant (www.aviceda.org)

Conservation Significance

The species is regarded as declining within the AMLR (D. Paton *pers. comm.*). Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.³

Description

Olive-brown above with pale scaling and a bronze to green sheen on back and upper tail. Prominent dark-brown eye stripe and contrasting white eyebrow stripe above, both curving down sides of the neck. Throat white with fine dark mottling. Underbody white to cream, dark-brown barring at sides with bars joining in the middle on upper breast only. Tail edged rufous (orange-brown) and undertail rufous when spread. Juveniles similar but duller with faint or no barring on sides of body. Call a descending, high-pitched whistle: 'fee-ew' or 'tseeeuw'. Also: 'chirrup' like a sparrow or pipit.¹

Distribution and Population

Found in all regions of Australia, including some islands. Widespread on eastern side of the Great Dividing Range in QLD, and found through NSW and VIC to TAS and SA, but not on the Nullarbor Plain. Widespread in the NT and WA except in the most arid areas (also found on Ashmore Reef). Also found from the Malay Peninsula to the lesser Sundas, Indonesia

and, rarely, Aru Island and southern New Guinea.¹

Partial migrant, moving to breeding areas in south-eastern Australia during winter and spring and leaving in late autumn. Resident in northern Australia.¹

Probably once common in moist open, wooded and heath habitats within the AMLR, but now generally uncommon.⁴

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records numerous across the region, apart from the north-eastern area, with more isolated records in the northern Adelaide plains.³

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records less extensive.³

Habitat

Found in many wooded habitats (such as open and dry woodland and forest) with a range of understoreys from grasses to shrubs or heath. Sometimes found near clearings and in recently logged or burnt softwood forests. Also found in farmland with some trees, orchards, vineyards and urban parks and gardens.¹

Breeds in various coastal, grassy woodland, heathy woodland, mallee, shrubland, riparian and swampy habitats (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Heathy Woodland, Grassy Woodland and Shrubland.³

Biology and Ecology

Mostly feeds on insects and their larvae, especially hairy caterpillars, although may sometimes eat plant matter. Forages on the ground and in trees, and may sometimes feed in the air on caterpillars lowering themselves to the ground by sticky threads.¹

Breeding season July to February in the south and in the north during all months, except April and July. Clutch size of one egg and incubation is 12 days. Chick remains in the nest for 16 days.¹

Nest parasite, usually parasitising bird species that build dome nests such as fairy-wrens and thornbills but may also parasitise the open cup nests of other species, such as the White-fronted Chat. Egg can sometimes resemble host's eggs in markings, but not always. If egg is laid before those of the host, host may build over or abandon the cuckoo egg. Otherwise, the female cuckoo removes one of the host's eggs, or the newly

Further information:

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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014



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hatched young cuckoo ejects eggs or nestlings of the host. Host parents incubate the cuckoo egg and feed young up to several weeks after fledging.¹

Aboriginal Significance

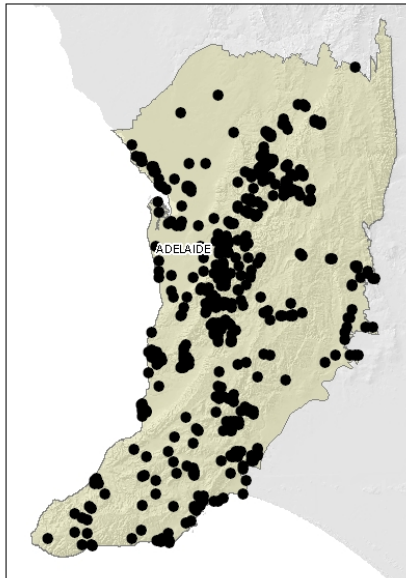
Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in all Aboriginal Nations - Kurna, Ngadjuri, Nganguraku, Ngarrindjeri and Peramangk).³

Threats

Has shown evidence of area sensitivity in highly fragmented habitat in the central wheatbelt of WA. In this research, adult cuckoos were rarely recorded in small remnants. Breeding success depended on females finding a concentration of their host species in a single large remnant. Thus, the effects of habitat loss and fragmentation on the density and spatial distribution of their hosts would be expected to have an adverse outcome for breeding.²

Additional current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.³ Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

References

Note: In some cases original reference sources are not included in this list, however they can be obtained from the reference from which the information has been sourced (the reference cited in superscript).

1 Australian Museum (2005). *Birds in Backyards: Bird Finder*. Available from <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net> (accessed November 2007).

2 Brooker, M. and Brooker, L. (2003). Brood parasitism by Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo in a fragmented agricultural landscape in Western Australia. *Emu Austral Ornithology* 103 (4): 357-361

3 Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot Project Database*. Unpublished data extracted and edited from BDBSA, SA Herbarium (July 2007) and other sources.

4 Turner, M. S. (2001). *Conserving Adelaide's Biodiversity: Resources*. Urban Forest Biodiversity Program, Adelaide.

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