



BIRD

Lewina pectoralis pectoralis

Lewin's Rail (eastern)

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	V	V	-	Resident



Photo: © Nevil Lazarus

Conservation Significance

The AMLR distribution is part of a very limited extant distribution in adjacent regions within SA. The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.¹ Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Extremely Restricted'. Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.²

Description

Plump rail with long magenta-pink bill and extensive white barring on the flanks (barring is more evident in males, in females relatively dull and indistinct). Secretive and difficult to see in swamp habitat where they forage. Rarely fly. Call is a sharp, loud 'krek' given in a burst of 10-20 calls.⁴

Distribution and Population

Occurs as a disjunct distribution through near-coastal environments across southern Australia from Kangaroo Island, Fleurieu Peninsula, across VIC and following the coast north to Townsville in QLD (Marchant and Higgins 1993).³ Has declined in south-eastern Australia (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Extent of occurrence estimated at 400,000 km². Area of occupancy estimated at 1,000 km² (low reliability) and believed to be declining due to the contraction of mainland wetland environments. Number of breeding birds is estimated at 20,000 (low reliability) and decreasing.³

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records isolated from south of Uraidla, and areas near Mount Compass, Deep Creek, Victor Harbor, Port Noarlunga and northern Adelaide.²

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records also limited but suggest a similar distribution, with additional single records near Port Adelaide, Mitcham and Finniss.²

Habitat

Inhabit permanent to ephemeral, fresh to saline wetlands with dense emergent or fringing vegetation. Also use artificial habitats with similar structural features.³

In AMLR, known from rank, undisturbed vegetation along freshwater creeks and swamps with dense native vegetation, especially reeds (*Typha* sp., *Phragmites* sp.), Silky Teatree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*), *Gahnia* sp. and sedges (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Wetland and Shrubland.²

Biology and Ecology

Cryptic species that skulks in the vegetation avoiding exposure. Feed on a range of invertebrates and occasionally birds' eggs and frogs. Cup nests usually well-hidden within low vegetation above water, or on or near the ground. Three to five eggs are laid in spring or summer (Marchant and Higgins 1993) (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).³ Breeding probably occurs throughout most of range but this is uncertain as nests very cryptic.³

Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in Ngarrindjeri, Kaurna and Peramangk Nations.²

Threats

Habitat can be degraded by livestock grazing, regular burning and increased salinity due to excessive vegetation clearance within catchments (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*). Specifically, loss of habitat through drainage and river diversion is the primary threat to this subspecies. Also likely to abandon wetlands where fringing vegetation has been degraded by grazing, inappropriate burning, or trampling and rooting by stock and feral pigs. Some birds are killed by foxes, pigs and cats, as well as traffic, mowers, fences, windows, rabbit traps and powerlines (Marchant and Higgins 1993). Fox predation may partly

Further information:

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region
Phone: (61 8) 8336 0901 Fax: (61 8) 8336 0999
<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/>

© Department for Environment and Heritage FIS 90346 May 2008

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



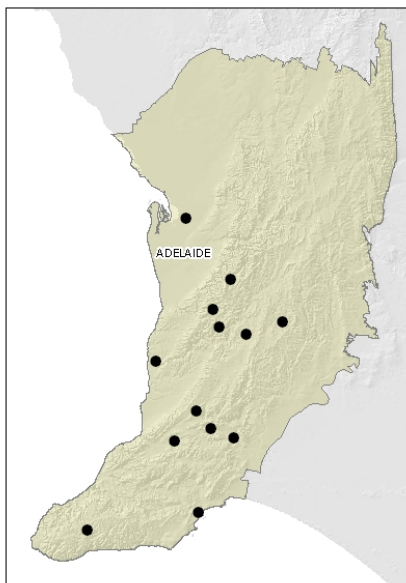


explain the difference in abundance between the eastern subspecies and Tasmanian subspecies.³

Extinction of the south-western subspecies suggests the species is more vulnerable to habitat change than many other wetland birds.³

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.² 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 Cale, B. (2005). *Towards a Recovery Plan for the Declining Birds of the Mount Lofty Ranges*. Scientific Resource Document for Birds for Biodiversity. Unpublished Report.

2 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.

3 Garnett, S. T. and Crowley, G. M. (2000). *The Action Plan for Australian Birds*. Environment Australia, Commonwealth of Australia.

4 Morcombe, M. (2000). *Field Guide to Australian Birds*. Steve Parish Publishing Pty Ltd, Queensland.

Further information:

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region
Phone: (61 8) 8336 0901 Fax: (61 8) 8336 0999
<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/>

© Department for Environment and Heritage FIS 90346 May 2008

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

