



BIRD

Turnix varia

Painted Button-quail

| AUS | SA | AMLR | Endemism | Residency |
|-----|----|------|----------|-----------|
| - | R | V | - | Resident |



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

Conservation Significance

The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.² 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 'Very High'.³

Description

Large quail, similar in size to the Brown Quail and Buff-breasted Button-quail, but with a finer bill. Normally unmistakable within its range and habitat; the combination of large size, dark eye, rufous-brown shoulder-patch and pale spotting on forehead and breast is distinctive.⁴

Occurs singly, in pairs or occasionally in small coveys. When disturbed, will freeze or run quickly in spurts with head carried high. When flushed, they fly fast, weaving through trees on short, broad and rounded wings, usually a metre or two above the ground. They usually fly some distance before dropping and running.⁴

Repeated booming call of the female can be mistaken for that of Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*). The advertising female gives low booming calls, often at night. Male is usually silent.⁴

Distribution and Population

Distributed throughout south-east QLD, NSW, VIC, TAS, south-west WA and southern SA.⁴

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records mostly confined to the higher rainfall areas, from Barossa to Port Willunga. Clustered records from vegetated areas around Monarto, Mount Compass, Para Wirra, Currency Creek and Newland Head.³

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records are limited but also include records from the southern urban margins of Adelaide (e.g. Belair).³

Recorded during the SMLR Biological Survey but is generally very uncommon in the MLR.¹ Has been recorded at Belair NP, Anstey Hill RP, Aldinga Scrub CP and Morialta CP.^{5,6}

Surveys in 2009 re-recorded subpopulations in Para Wirra RP, Anstey Hill RP, Black Hill CP, Cleland CP, Onkaparinga River NP, Mount Billy CP and Cox Scrub CP. Activity levels were highest in Para Wirra RP, Anstey Hill RP and Cox Scrub CP. Evidence of the species was not observed at Morialta CP (K. Long *pers. comm.* 2009).

Habitat

Sparsely distributed mobile species that occupies a range of Eucalypt associations wherever leaf litter is prominent (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

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

Biology and Ecology

Breeding season usually from August to February. Population numbers vary between years, suggesting patterns of dispersal may be linked to seasonal factors such as rainfall, availability of food and breeding success, or that cyclic fluctuations occur. Individuals may move long distances but migration and dispersal routes are poorly known.⁴

Nocturnal. Generally feed in pairs on seed, fruits, leaves and insects.⁴ They scratch and glean, spinning on alternate legs in litter to create distinctive circular clearing of leaf-litter ('platelets') 10-15 cm diameter where they feed (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).⁴

Clutch-size usually three to four.⁴ Male incubates and rears young and closely attends to foraging chicks.⁴ Nest constructed in a depression scratched in the ground, lined with grass, rushes, plant down, leaves and sticks, usually with a dome or hood, or is 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



Government
of South Australia



ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA Threatened Species Profile

Department
for Environment
and Heritage

domed and built up at the sides and back with similar material.⁴

Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in Kaurna, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri and Peramangk Nations.³

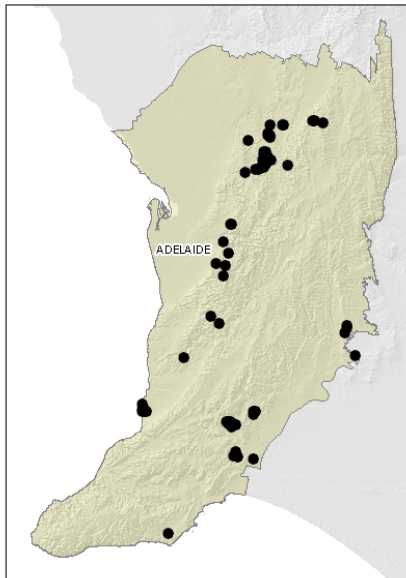
Threats

Decline mainly due to clearance and grazing of woodland habitats, and predation by introduced and feral predators. Persists only in larger remnants (usually >50ha) (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Areas burnt by wildfire are often quickly recolonised, especially if there is dense regeneration of seeding legumes. Low intensity controlled burns may not encourage regeneration of legumes, so may be detrimental to this species (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

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 Armstrong, D. M., Croft, S. N. and Foulkes, J. N. (2003). *A Biological Survey of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges, South*

Australia, 2000-2001. Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australia.

² 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.

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 Marchant, S. and Higgins, P. J., eds. (1993). *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 2: Raptors to Lapwings*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

⁵ Possingham, M., Field, S. A. and Possingham, H. P. (2006). *Species Richness and Abundance of Birds in Mt Lofty Ranges Stringybark Habitat: Year 2000 Survey*. Unpublished report.

⁶ Turner, M. S. (2001). *Conserving Adelaide's Biodiversity: Resources*. Urban Forest Biodiversity Program, Adelaide.

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



Government
of South Australia