



ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA Threatened Species Profile

Department
for Environment
and Heritage

BIRD

Falco peregrinus

Peregrine Falcon

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	R	R	-	Resident



Photo: © Nevil Lazarus

Conservation Significance

The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.³ Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Very Restricted'.⁴

Description

Large, powerfully built bird of prey (average size 43 cm) with black hood, blue-black upperparts and creamy white chin, throat and underparts, which are finely barred from the breast to the tail. Long tapered wings have a straight trailing edge in flight and tail is relatively short. Eye-ring yellow. Heavy bill also yellow, tipped black. Although widespread throughout the world, not a common species. Call is loud, shrill and repeated: 'hek-ek-ek', with females lower-pitched than males.²

Distribution and Population

Found across Australia, but not common anywhere within its distribution. Also found in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas.² Largely a resident species, with young birds roaming at random until ready to breed.²

Rare status is partly a reflection of its international situation; Australia is a stronghold for the species. Pairs are known to have large territories, and an estimated

3000 to 5000 pairs exist in Australia, of a world total of 12,000 to 18,000 pairs (Blakers et al. 1984). Records at six of 157 survey quadrats within the SMLR, which is only 0.08% of the total area of Australia (0.6% of South Australia), indicates it is well represented in the region.¹

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records across the region, apart from the northern Adelaide Plains and central Fleurieu. Available records do not suggest any range decline has occurred.⁴

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records are limited to Adelaide and surrounds, and a single record near Meadows.⁴

Habitat

Found in most habitats, from rainforests to the arid zone, and at most altitudes, from the coast to alpine areas. Requires abundant prey and secure nest sites, preferring coastal and inland cliffs or open woodlands near water, and may even be found nesting on high city buildings especially where feral pigeons are available as prey (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).²

Sparsely distributed in SA, with most records in Red Gum woodlands (especially near water), in gorges with rock faces and along coastal cliffs.

In the AMLR, breeding habitat is mainly riparian *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* woodland (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Riparian and Coastal.⁴

Biology and Ecology

Distinctive flight call, and often observed flying high above the tree canopy. Pairs nest in the same location for many years. Their preference for nesting on cliff faces, particularly in the SMLR, enables observers to target such habitat in anticipation of locating this species.¹

Feed on small and medium-sized birds, as well as rabbits and other daytime-active mammals. Swoops down on prey, catching or stunning it with powerfully hooked talons, before grasping and carrying it to a perch to eat. Will pursue flying birds, being able to fly at speeds of up to 300 km/h, and soars to a great height to search for prey. Pairs may hunt co-operatively, with one member, usually the male, scattering a flock of birds while the other swoops to attack an individual. This co-operative behaviour is most often observed during the breeding season.²

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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Breeding season August to December. Clutch size two to four, usually three. Incubation time 30 days and chicks' time in the nest 35 days.²

Mate for life and pairs maintain a home range of about 20-30km² throughout the year. Lays eggs in recesses of cliff faces, tree hollows or in the large abandoned nests of other birds. Female incubates eggs and is fed by the male on the nest. When young have hatched, both parents hunt to provide food. Young birds disperse widely, but often return to original home area to breed when mature.²

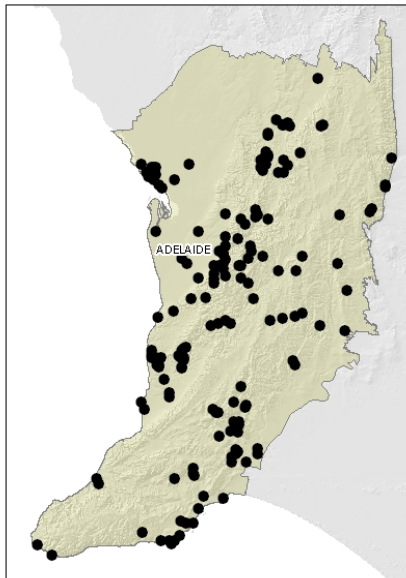
Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in Kaurna, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri and Peramangk Nations. Also occurs close to the border of Nganguraku Nation.⁴

Threats

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.⁴ 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 Australian Museum (2005). *Birds in Backyards: Bird Finder.* Available from <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net> (accessed November 2007).

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

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