



**BIRD**

***Petroica goodenovii***

**Red-capped Robin**

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	V	-	Resident



Photo (male bird): John Milbank (www.afrigalah.com)

**Conservation Significance**

The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.<sup>1</sup> Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Very Restricted'.<sup>2</sup>

**Description**

Small bird being the smallest of the *Petroica* genus. Sexually dimorphic as adults but juveniles are similar in plumage. Male has prominent red breast and cap, with black head and back. Wings are mainly black with white transverse shoulder bars. Female grey/brown with a reddish wash on the cap and sometimes on the breast that varies from obviously red to very faint red. Juveniles similar to the female, but boldly streaked on breast and generally no red wash on cap.<sup>1</sup>

**Distribution and Population**

Endemic to Australia, occurring across southern Australia, but less commonly in central regions.<sup>1</sup>

Occurs predominantly in the northern and eastern areas of the MLR including the Adelaide Plains, but rare in the southern Fleurieu Peninsula (Paton et al. 1994). On the eastern flanks of the ranges appear to extend as far south as the Milang/Clayton area, but

further west do not extend so far south (Birds for Biodiversity database).<sup>1</sup>

Average recording rate across the MLR has declined from 14% to 2% of surveys for the pre-1980 to post-1995 periods (regional scale changes in MLR Report). The Adelaide Plains and ranges have showed the greatest declines in recording rate, though all areas have declined. The most important sub-regions are the eastern flanks of the MLR and the northern agricultural sub-region.<sup>1</sup>

An increase in records from the Adelaide Plains and southern areas (early 1990s) was due to an influx of birds from the north as a result of drought conditions (Paton et al. 1994). These observations plus those of influxes of birds into areas where they are not permanent residents, suggest that fluctuations in population size do occur, but are more likely to be found in areas at the edge of their range.<sup>1</sup>

Regularly recorded in the 1930s from a number of locations in the northern Adelaide Plains (Port Gawler, Golden Grove and Two Wells), but it is uncertain how common they were (Brown unpublished journals cited Cale 2005). Recorded from Netherby between 1919 and 1938, but there are no other records from the Adelaide Plains and Hills (cited Cale 2005).<sup>1</sup>

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records across the region with most from Monarto, suburban Adelaide and the Barossa. Mostly absent from the Fleurieu, with isolated records from Newland Head, Goolwa and near Currency Creek.<sup>2</sup>

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records from the Adelaide Hills - Barossa and near Port Gawler.<sup>2</sup>

**Habitat**

Found in a wide range of arid habitats from Eucalypt woodlands and mallee to *Callitris* woodland and shrubland communities (Cale 1994; Major et al. 1999; Higgins and Peter 2002; Recher et al. 2002).<sup>3</sup>

Important habitat requirements are shrubs and trees which produce vertical forks suitable for nesting sites, and horizontal branches for perching while foraging (Cale 1994; Recher et al. 2002).<sup>1</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Grassy Woodland, Mallee and Shrubland.<sup>2</sup>

**Further information:**

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

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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



## ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA Threatened Species Profile

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### Biology and Ecology

Ground feeding insectivores (Cale 1994; Recher et al. 2002).<sup>1</sup> Territorial (Major et al. 1999). Varies from sedentary to migratory, or dispersive (Coventry 1988; Chan 2001; Dowling 2003). Griffioen and Clarke (2002) classified them as a species that showed local movements (less than 200 km).<sup>1</sup>

Breed in pairs and do not appear to be facultative cooperative breeders like many other robin species. DNA analysis of paternity has revealed that high levels of extra-pair matings occur (Dowling 2003).<sup>1</sup>

Nests an open cup, generally constructed in the fork of a tree or shrub from fine shredded bark and grass bound together with spider's web, and lined with soft materials such as fur, wool, feathers or grass (Higgins and Peter 2002). Frequently located less than 10 m above the ground. Breeding occurs between late June and mid-January (NRS cited in Higgins and Peter 2002; Dowling 2003).<sup>1</sup>

Most commonly lay a clutch of two eggs but this varies across the breeding season with almost all three egg clutches being laid early. Numbers decrease as the season progresses. Incubation takes 14-15 days, and nestlings fledged 13-15 days later. Once fledged the juveniles are fed by their parents for at least three weeks. Females frequently start re-nesting two to three weeks after fledging (Dowling 2003).<sup>1</sup>

No detailed studies of dispersal have been conducted. However, influxes have been recorded in areas around the edge of their normal distribution (Anon 1945; Brooker 2004; Coventry 1988; Paton et al. 1994). Some of these movements represent dispersals of at least 100 km, indicating that this species is capable of long distance dispersal.<sup>1</sup>

### Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in all Aboriginal Nations - Kurna, Ngadjuri, Nganguraku, Ngarrindjeri and Peramangk.<sup>2</sup>

### Threats

Dispersal ability over large distances even in highly fragmented landscapes suggest that habitat fragmentation is not a major threat to this species. However, vegetation clearance resulting in more linear remnants may reduce population viability at a landscape scale.<sup>1</sup>

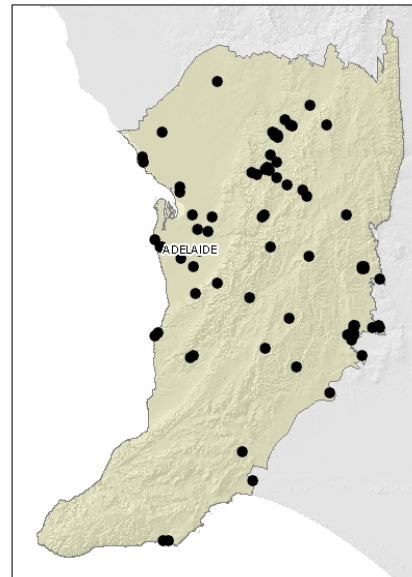
Changes to vegetation structure that reduce perches and access to (or quality of) the ground substrate are likely to affect this species. Weed

invasion can be particularly important in this regard, reducing foraging habitat quality by increasing shrub density, especially when they occur over extensive areas. Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) can completely smother the ground and reduce feeding habitat. Dense exotic grasses also reduce feeding habitat by reducing visibility of the ground substrate (Hedde 1999).<sup>1</sup>

Found to use previously unoccupied areas after bushfires, however, frequent fires can reduce the patchiness of suitable habitat areas (Brooker 2004, Cale 2005). Removal or loss of fallen logs is also likely to reduce habitat quality.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

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

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