



BIRD

Petroica boodang boodang

Scarlet Robin

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	R	V	-	Resident



Photo: © Brian Furby

Conservation Significance

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

Uncommon in the MLR, and geographically isolated.^{1,4}

Description

Small bird with a compact appearance (Higgins and Peter 2002). Sexually dimorphic with the male having a prominent red breast and black head with a white patch on the forehead. Back and wings are black with wings having white transverse shoulder bars. Female is predominantly brown with darker brown wings and pale transverse shoulder bars, white forehead patch and the breast has an orange to red wash. Juveniles similar to female, with the exception of streaking on breast and upper body. First year males generally attain full male plumage (Higgins and Peter 2002).²

Distribution and Population

Occurs in Australia and a number of islands of the south Pacific (Higgins and Peter 2002). In Australia restricted to areas south of 25°S and predominantly along coast. The AMLR is close to the western extent of the eastern distribution, rare on Eyre Peninsula and absent from the Nullarbor (Blakers et al. 1984, Barrett et al. 2003).²

Occurs predominantly in the central higher rainfall

areas of the MLR and considered to be less common on the Adelaide Plains and eastern flanks (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*; Paton et al. 1994). Average recording rate across the region has declined from 65% to 29% for the pre-1980 to post-1995 periods. Based on current distribution the most important sub-regions are the spine of the MLR and the southern agricultural area. The northern agricultural area has declined in relative importance for this species, as has the Adelaide Plains although this area was not a major part of its range.²

Many post-1983 AMLR filtered records which show a distinct association with the MLR, extending from Bethany in the Barossa to the southern tip of the Fleurieu.³

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records centred around Adelaide and the surrounding hills from One Tree Hill to Kuitpo, with scattered records on the southern Fleurieu.³

Habitat

Occurs predominantly in Eucalypt woodlands and forests. Good leaf litter, perches in the height range 1-2 m, and fallen logs are important components of habitat (Heddle 1999). Breeds in Eucalypt forest, but not in adjacent grasslands even though individuals occupy this habitat during the non-breeding season (Robinson 1992). In one survey, low shrubs (<1 m high) were more common than in Flame Robin territories, but were still less than 10% cover. Both robin species forage extensively on *Eucalyptus viminalis*, which are likely to support high invertebrate abundance due to high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous. Highly productive Eucalypt woodlands may be important to this species (Robinson 1992).²

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

Biology and Ecology

Typically seen singly or in pairs, and generally hold year-round territories, although some individuals may make seasonal local movements (Robinson 1990a, Paton et al. 1994). The breeding territory of sedentary pairs averages 3.2 ha, and increases during the non-breeding season to an average of 6.6 ha. Those occupying grassland areas only in the non-breeding season have larger territories averaging 9.3 ha (Robinson 1990a). Site fidelity of sedentary pairs is very

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

high, while one in eight pairs resident only during the non-breeding season return the following year. This suggests that these territories are temporary, until young birds can find permanent territories in better habitat.²

Nest is an open, deep cup constructed of bark, grass and moss bound together with spider's web (Beruldsen 2003). May be camouflaged with pieces of moss taken from the host tree (Beruldsen 2003). Usual clutch size of three, but sometimes two and rarely four eggs (Robinson 1990b, Beruldsen 2003). Incubation period ranges from 14-18 days; nestlings fledge around 17 days after hatching. Both sexes feed nestlings and fledglings (Robinson 1990b).²

No detailed studies of dispersal have been made, however long distance movements (>10 km from nesting site) do occur.²

Ground-pouncing insectivores (Robinson 1992, Cale 1994, Heddle 1999, Recher et al. 2002). Shows more seasonal variation in foraging behaviour than other robin species. Predominantly ground pouncers during winter, but shift to snatching and hawking in tree canopies during summer (Robinson 1992; Cale 1994). In grassy areas they require higher perches than in areas with more open leaf litter (Heddle 1999).²

Aboriginal Significance

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

Threats

Threats are not well understood. The following processes may have contributed to its decline and/or represent existing threats to its persistence - vegetation clearance, altered fire and grazing regimes, weed invasion, and loss of specific resources.²

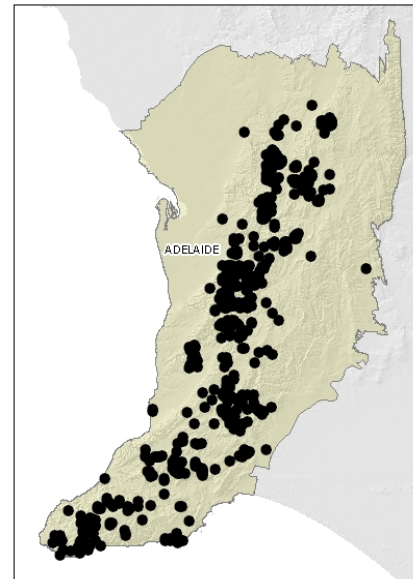
As with other robins they are frequently seen in recently burnt areas, although frequent control burns may be detrimental if they increase the incidence of annual regrowth (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

The major ongoing threat is likely to be degradation of remnant habitat, in particular reduced leaf litter and increased grass cover, and loss of perches for ground pouncing (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*). Predation is the major cause of nest failure (77% of failed nests) (Robinson 1990b).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 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 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