



BIRD

Haliastur sphenurus

Whistling Kite

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	U	-	Resident



Photo: © Anon.

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 'Very Restricted'. Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.³

Description

Medium-sized raptor with a shaggy appearance. Light brown head and underparts with pale streaks, and dark sandy-brown wings with paler undersides. Underwings have a characteristic pale 'M' shape when open. Head and body relatively narrow and tail rounded. Wings are long and well-rounded, spanning 120 - 145 cm. Sexes are similar, but females are larger. Young birds slightly darker above, with paler streaking on head and underbody. Often seen near water or around farms, soaring in a lazy circling flight pattern. Call is a loud descending whistle 'tee-ti'.¹

Distribution and Population

Widespread over mainland Australia but uncommon in TAS. Partially migratory, but mostly resident in northern and western Australia.¹

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records focused around the coastal areas between Port Adelaide and Port Gawler. Multiple records in the MLR and southern Fleurieu Peninsula (Currency Creek areas, Onkaparinga, Ashbourne, Victor Harbor, Newland

Head, Fishery Beach).³

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records limited to a few records at Morphett Vale, Finniss, Gumeracha and Golden Grove.³

Habitat

Found in woodlands, open country and particularly wetlands. Also common around farmland, vineyards and anywhere where carrion can be found (e.g. abattoirs, rubbish dumps and roadsides). Prefers tall trees for nesting.¹

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Grassy Woodland and Riparian.³

Biology and Ecology

Soar above the ground, trees and water to search for prey such as carrion and small live animals such as mammals, birds, fish and insects.¹

Breeding season from July to January in the southern AMLR and March to October in northern areas. Clutch size one to three, usually two and incubation period 38 days.¹

Appears to be monogamous, with some breeding pairs remaining in a territory throughout the year actively defending the area around nest. Bulky nest platform is built of sticks in a tall tree and may be reused, growing larger over time. Both sexes build the nest and incubate the eggs (female does most of the incubation) and may breed two or three times a year. Young stay with the parents after fledging for about six to eight weeks.¹

Aboriginal Significance

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

Threats

Favoured to some extent by land clearance as does not enter dense forests, but requires remnant tall trees for nesting. Farmlands are used for hunting and provide extra water sources.¹

Additional current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

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



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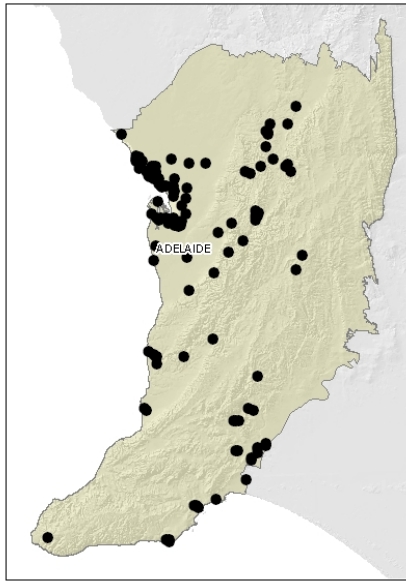


ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Threatened Species Profile

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

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.

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