



**BIRD**

***Corcorax melanorhamphos***

**White-winged Chough**

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	R	V	-	Resident



Photo: © John Leonard

**Conservation Significance**

The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.<sup>2</sup> 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'.<sup>3</sup>

**Description**

Large, almost completely black bird. Curved beak, red eye and large white wing patch, seen in flight. From a distance, may be confused with one of the Crows or Ravens (*Corvus* sp.), but the curved bill and red eye distinguish it from these birds. Crows and Ravens also lack the white wing patch. Often first noticed by a mournful, descending whistle call. If disturbed, gives a ratchet-like call.<sup>1</sup>

**Distribution and Population**

Found throughout most of eastern and south-eastern mainland Australia, but are absent from northern QLD.<sup>1</sup>

Once quite common, sighted at Belair NP, Black Hill CP, Aldinga Scrub CP and Eurilla CP.<sup>4</sup>

In the MLR it has declined in many areas, although populations have persisted in areas with a mixture of native woodlands and mature pine forests, provided extensive grassless areas with leaf litter are present (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records from the central MLR and Monarto, with additional scattered records north of Kuitpo and an isolated record for Deep Creek.<sup>3</sup>

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records limited, mostly from the central MLR and single records for the Adelaide area and Willunga.<sup>3</sup>

**Habitat**

Mostly a sedentary and colonial species that inhabits woodlands and taller mallee, where it feeds on the ground amongst the leaf-litter (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*). Tend to prefer wetter areas with leaf-litter, for feeding, and available mud for nest building.<sup>1</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Grassy Woodland and Mallee.<sup>3</sup>

**Biology and Ecology**

Live in social clans of about seven to ten individuals and will defend their nest territory during the breeding season with 'wing-waving' displays to deter unwanted intruders. Mostly feed on the ground by raking through the grass and leaf litter. Food consists of insects and some seeds. Large feeding territories are kept, often up to 1000 ha in extent.<sup>1</sup>

Clutch size usually three to five, sometimes up to ten. Incubation 19 days and chicks' time in the nest is 28 days.<sup>1</sup>

Stay in social flocks throughout the breeding season. Groups normally comprise one breeding pair, the other birds being offspring from previous years. Young birds take four years to reach breeding maturity and stay with the parents during this time, helping with nest building, incubation and feeding of chicks. Nest is a large bowl of mud, built on a horizontal branch within 15 m of the ground. May take several months to build if there is insufficient mud to hand. If there is a lack of mud, birds may use cattle or emu dung. When chicks first leave the nest, they are not able to fly, and are easy prey for feral cats and foxes.<sup>1</sup>

**Aboriginal Significance**

Post-1983 records indicate the majority of the AMLR distribution occurs in Peramangk Nation. Also occurs in Ngarindjeri, Kaurna, Ngadjuri and Nganguraku Nations.<sup>3</sup>

**Further information:**

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region  
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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

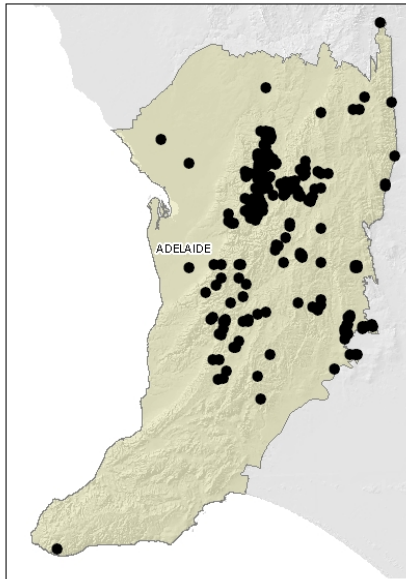
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### Threats

Threatened throughout its range due to habitat loss, especially in extensively cleared districts (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.<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

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