



STUDENT FACT SHEET

CHESTNUT-BREASTED WHITEFACE

Aphelocephala pectoralis

The Chestnut-breasted Whiteface is one of only two species of bird that is found only in South Australia. Most of its distribution is in stony deserts where it can be difficult to detect as it forages on the ground for seeds and insects.

IDENTIFICATION

The tiny Chestnut-breasted Whiteface measures only 10cm in length and is seen mostly in pairs or small groups or in mixed flocks of other birds including Banded or Southern Whitefaces, Wrens or Cinnamon Quail-thrushes. When disturbed they fly off in low rising and falling flight before dropping to the ground where they closely match the colour of surrounding soil and stones.

The birds' upper back is chestnut-brown and the flight feathers and tail are dark grey. The white face and eye are sharply bordered above with black that pales to grey on the crown. A wide chestnut band across the chest is sharply defined below but pales towards the throat. The belly is white with large reddish brown blotches along the side.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

The Chestnut-breasted Whiteface inhabits stony hills, tablelands, breakaways and rises



associated with stony plains. It has been recorded from as far west as Coober Pedy and Tarcoola, through the Marla-Oodnadatta area and the south-east to Marree, around the Birdsville Track and Leigh Creek districts.

Vegetation is usually low and very open constant shrubland of low bluebush, saltbush and a variety of grasses.

POTENTIAL THREATS TO CHESTNUT-BREASTED WHITEFACE

The Chestnut-breasted Whiteface is listed as rare in South Australia. Overgrazing by rabbits (and in some cases livestock) in some areas has resulted in reduction or loss of some of the low perennial shrubs such as Low Bluebush that this species requires. Opal mining also destroys suitable habitat.

FOCUS QUESTION

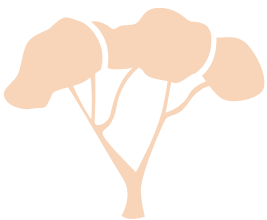
Why is the Chestnut-breasted Whiteface hard to find?

Sparse chenopod shrubland with Low Bluebush.
Photograph by Michelle Watson.

Chestnut-breasted Whiteface. Photographs by Lynn Pedler.



Australian Government





CONTACT US

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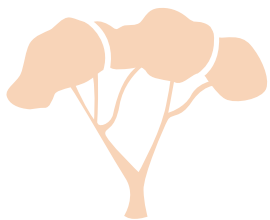
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GREY FALCON

Falco hypoleucos

The Grey Falcon is one of Australia's rarest raptors. It feeds mostly on parrots and pigeons but also takes reptiles, as well as small mammals and large insects particularly when these become very abundant. It does not build its own nest but rather uses and modifies the stick nests of other large birds.

IDENTIFICATION

The Grey Falcon is usually seen singly or in pairs, occasionally in small family groups. The Grey Falcon tends to perch within cover and can be very approachable. The Grey Falcon is a relatively uniform pale grey bird. It has a grey head, back, wings and tail. The underside is whitish with some small brownish spots. The upper side of the outer half of the large wing feathers are blackish grey. It grows to 43 cm and you can generally see its orange-yellow legs and feet in flight.

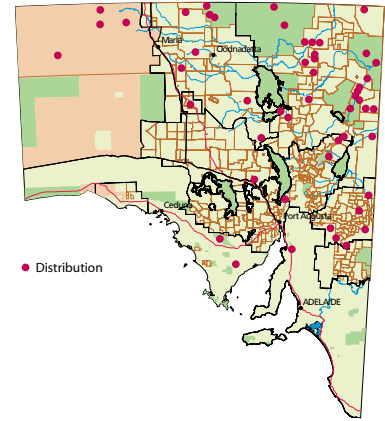
HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

The Grey Falcon occurs very sparsely in a wide variety of arid habitats including open woodlands and open Acacia shrublands particularly on stony and sandy plains, grasslands and wooded watercourses. Also around swamps, waterholes and bore drains that attract prey.

FOCUS QUESTION

Why are there two names for the bird?

Why might Latin be used to name birds, animals and plants?



Grey Falcon Distribution in South Australia
Map courtesy of DWLBC

POTENTIAL THREATS TO GREY FALCON

The Grey Falcon is listed as Vulnerable in Victoria and Rare in all other states including South Australia. The estimated total population is fewer than 5000 individuals including about 1000 pairs. Breeding successes have been reduced by persistent DDT-related thinning of egg shells.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you think you have seen a Grey Falcon within or beyond the locations shown on the distribution map please let us know. Please note the location so that your written record can be used to find the same place again.

Creepline habitats are often used by Grey Falcons.
Photograph by Rachael Young.



Grey Falcon. Photograph by Nick Birks.

