

# 2019 Great Cockey Count Report

## Summary of Key Findings

### Carnaby's population stable in the Perth region

#### Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo is a threatened species endemic to southwest Western Australia. In the months between January to July, most Carnaby's move from the wheatbelt region where they breed, to coastal areas, including the Perth Metropolitan Area and other parts of the Swan Coastal Plain.

Carnaby's are particularly vulnerable to increasing levels of clearing for forestry, urban and industrial development across the southwest. It is therefore important we understand the population size and distribution of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo across their species range.

#### The Great Cockey Count

The Great Cockey Count (GCC) is an annual, citizen science survey for black-cockatoos in Western Australia. The survey occurs throughout the southwest on a single evening in April. Volunteers are allocated to known roost sites and count the number of black-cockatoos that arrive at the site to roost for the night. The tenth GCC was held on Sunday 7 April 2019.



birds are in our nature

#### The 2019 Count: key findings

In 2019 750 volunteers surveying 397 roost sites across the southwest.

2019 recorded 22,647 white-tailed black-cockatoos across the species range, which is the highest total number recorded in GCC history. A single roost in a pine plantation east of Yanchep recorded 5,145 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos.

6,104 Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos were recorded at 119 occupied roosts.

#### Greater Perth-Peel Region

The Greater Perth-Peel Region consists of the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain and the Northern Darling Scarp and Plateau. The minimum population count for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in the Greater Perth-Peel Region was 13,984.

Trend analysis of roost counts for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain found that in recent years (2016-2018) the population has stabilised. However since 2010 there is an overall decline of 35% (approximately 4% per year).

On the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain, the majority of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos are restricted to few roost sites, many of which are associated with pines. Protection of these sites and associated native feeding habitat is crucial to arrest the decline of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo and ensure its persistence in this region. Retention of Banksia woodland and revegetation of former pine stands to avoid a gap in food resources in the near future in this region should also be seen as a high priority to protect this iconic species.

White-tailed Black-Cockatoos in the Northern Darling Scarp and Plateau are declining at 13% per year. Since most of these birds are Baudin's Black-Cockatoos it may reflect a sharp decline in this species, which many experts believe to be the most endangered of the three southwestern black-cockatoo species.

2019 saw a large increase in Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos roosting on the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain. This is thought to be due to a seasonal redistribution of birds from forested areas exploiting food resources such as Cape Lilac.

### Regional Areas

The 2019 GCC recorded 7,167 white-tailed black-cockatoos at 60 roosts in regional areas (outside the Greater Perth-Peel Region). This figure is higher than previous years and reflects a conscientious effort to increase coverage regionally.



Photo by Keith Lightbody

## What does this mean for Black-Cockatoos in the Perth-Peel region?

Despite a recent stabilisation of the local population, the trend since 2010 shows a 35% decline of Carnaby's and a 13% decline per year of Baudin's. A precautionary approach dictates that efforts be made to protect remnant vegetation of Black-Cockatoos, particularly Banksia woodlands and Marri/Jarraah forest. Revegetation of former pine plantations should be a priority to ensure no feed gap in the future.

### More Information

The full 2019 Great Cocky Count Report, in addition to previous GCC reports, can be found at <http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/southwest-black-cockatoo-recovery/publications-and-forms>

### 2020 Great Cocky Count

The next Great Cocky Count will take place at sunset on Sunday 5 April 2020.

To register your interest for the 2020 GCC, or to report a black-cockatoo roost site near you, email [greatcockycount@birdlife.org.au](mailto:greatcockycount@birdlife.org.au)

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