

TAXON SUMMARY

# Shy Heathwren (Riverina)

1	Family	Pardalotidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Hylacola cauta macrohyncha</i> (Schodde and Mason, 1999)
3	Common name	Shy Heathwren (Riverina)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: a

5 Reasons for listing

This is an isolated subspecies that probably occupies less than 50% of its former area of occupancy (Near Threatened: a), as its distribution has been fragmented by clearing.

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	23,000 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	medium
Area of occupancy	5,000 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	stable	low
No. of breeding birds	20,000	low
trend	stable	low
No. of sub-populations	5	low
Largest sub-population	7,000	low
Generation time	4 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

*H. c. cautus* (eastern mallee) and *H. c. halmaturina* (Kangaroo I.) are Least Concern. *H. c. whitlocki* (south-western Western Australia) is Near Threatened. Recent taxonomic work (Schodde and Mason, 1999) suggests the Riverina subspecies was isolated by a natural disjunction in mallee distribution that existed before European settlement (Cunningham *et al.*, 1981).

7 Past range and abundance

Central New South Wales, between Hay, Griffith, West Wyalong and Cobar (Smith *et al.*, 1995, NSW NPWS, 1996, Schodde and Mason, 1999).

8 Present range and abundance

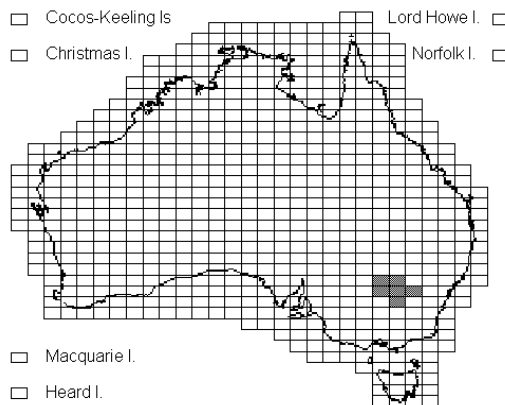
As above, although its once continuous distribution is now divided among larger remnants, particularly in east of range (NSW NPWS, 1996).

9 Ecology

Shy Heathwrens are restricted to dense mallee and forage on the ground for insects, but sometimes also take seeds. They are most abundant in the shrubby regrowth that occurs soon after fire, but persist at lower densities in unburnt habitat (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Smith *et al.*, 1995). They lay 2-3 eggs in domed nests built in shrubs, or on the ground below dense vegetation (Beruldsen, 1980, Schodde and Tidemann, 1986).

10 Threats

This subspecies' distribution has further fragmented, with local extinctions caused by clearance of mallee. Remnant habitat has been degraded by weed invasion, grazing and ill-timed fire (Smith *et al.*, 1995). The ground-dwelling habits of this bird make it vulnerable to predation by cats and foxes (Smith *et al.*, 1995), although it has persisted in their presence for over 150 years.



11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Protect all woodland in which Shy Heathwrens are known to be resident from clearing, and monitor compliance biennially.
- 11.2 Secure all Shy Heathwren sub-populations found on public land through conservation management, particularly those in timber reserves, or transport corridors or on local government land.
- 11.3 Within the heathwren's range, manage at least 15% of the pre-European area of all woodland communities on public or private land for nature conservation, using incentives where necessary.
- 11.4 Using appropriate incentives, undertake extension with land-holders that have suitable woodland habitat to promote sound management of remnants and encourage greater connectivity between sub-populations.
- 11.5 Promote revegetation and land reclamation that recreates woodland habitat with a full complement of biodiversity, including the heathwren.

- 11.6 Control and reduce firewood collection from areas occupied by Shy Heathwrens, promoting wood-lot development close to markets, and reduce grazing densities where necessary.
- 11.7 Undertake long-term monitoring of remnant sub-populations.

## 12 Bibliography

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Comments received from

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