

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Mallee Emu-wren

1	Family	Maluridae
2	Scientific name	<i>Stipiturus mallee</i> A. J. Campbell, 1908
3	Common name	Mallee Emu-wren
4	Conservation status	Vulnerable: B1+2abcde

5 Reasons for listing

The area of occupancy is probably less than 2,000 km² and fragmented, even within extensive areas of mallee (Vulnerable: B1) and destructive fires have caused a decrease in the extent of occurrence (B2a), area of occupancy (B2b), quality of habitat (c), number of sub-populations (d) and the number of mature individuals (e). Although the population may contain fewer than 10,000 individuals and is likely to decline with further fires (C2), there are several sub-populations (so not b) and at least one probably contains more than 1,000 individuals (so not a).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	20,000 km ²	medium
trend	decreasing	medium
Area of occupancy	2,000 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	10,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	7	low
Largest sub-population	4,000	low
Generation time	3 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

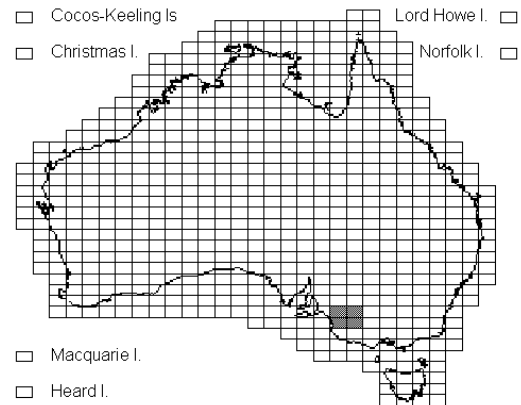
None described.

7 Past range and abundance

Victorian and South Australian mallee regions, south and east of the Murray R. (Schodde, 1982, Menkhorst and Bennett, 1990, Schodde and Mason, 1999) including Billiatt Conservation Park (Carpenter and Matthew, 1986).

8 Present range and abundance

As above, although fragmented even within large blocks of mallee. South Australia: between Nadda, Peebinga, Pinnaroo, Comet Bore, Coonalpyn and Coombe (Eckert, 1977, Carpenter and Matthew, 1992, Rowley and Russell, 1997). Victoria: Murray-Sunset National Park east to Annuello Fauna Reserve, south-east of Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, and in the Big Desert east to Bronzewing Flora and Fauna Reserve (Emison *et al.*, 1987, Rowley and Russell, 1997). The species has not been recorded from Billiatt Conservation Park since large fires in 1989 (G. Carpenter).



9 Ecology

The Mallee Emu-wren occupies habitats containing *Triodia spinifex*, in which it builds well-hidden domed nests containing 2-3 eggs, usually within low woodland dominated by mallee eucalypts and cypress pine. It also occurs in heath containing banksias, casuarinas and grass-trees *Xanthorrhoea* (Schodde, 1982, Cheal *et al.*, 1979, Emison *et al.*, 1987, Rowley and Russell, 1997). In Victoria, the species occurs at highest densities a few years after fire and can apparently move long distances to find suitable habitat (Emison *et al.*, 1987). At Ngarkat Conservation Park, S. A., emu-wrens can disperse at least 6 km into vegetation recovering from fire, 3-4 years after it has been burnt. They peak in abundance in vegetation 8-10 years post fire then decline in density after 30 years, although still present in mallee 50 years old (D. Paton, L. Pedler).

10 Threats

Clearance of habitat has been the greatest threat to the species in the past. Though clearing has now stopped, the population has been fragmented (Emison *et al.*, 1987). Isolated sub-populations are vulnerable to extensive fires that have the capacity to render large areas unsuitable for the birds and, in 1989, appear to have eliminated them altogether from one substantial area of mallee (G. Carpenter). Although the emu-wrens have recovered from large fires at Ngarkat Conservation Park and other reserves, a series of such fires could place the species in danger.

11 Information required

11.1 Determine current range.

12 Recovery objectives

12.1 To establish a fire management program that will ensure the conservation of the species within its existing range.

12.2 To re-establish the species in areas from which it has been eliminated by fire.

13 Actions completed or under way

None.

14 Management actions required

14.1 Establish monitoring of known populations.

14.2 Minimise fire frequency in suitable habitat.

14.3 Determine the feasibility of reintroduction to Billiatt Conservation Park.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation

South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage, Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

16 Other organisations involved

Bird-watching societies, Parks Victoria, Adelaide University.

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out

Staff resources required 2001-2005

0.2	Project Officer
0.1	Technical Officer

Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Survey current distribution ¹	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
Initiate monitoring ¹	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
Reduce frequency of destructive fires ²	\$7,500	\$0	\$7,500
Determine feasibility of translocation	\$23,000	\$0	\$23,000
Total	\$45,500	\$15,000	\$60,500

¹ Costs shared with Western Whipbird (eastern)

² In addition to routine fire management, costs shared with Western Whipbird (eastern)

18 Bibliography

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Silveira (1992).

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