

## TAXON SUMMARY

# Red-lored Whistler

1	Family	Pachycephalidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Pachycephala rufogularis</i> Gould, 1841
3	Common name	Red-lored Whistler
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: a

### 5 Reasons for listing

At least half the habitat of this species has been cleared, and clearing is continuing (Near Threatened: a). The species cannot be listed as Vulnerable, because it is not likely to decline by 20% over three generations (15 years; so not A), its extent of occurrence is more than 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, its area of occupancy is more than 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> (so not B), and, although there are possibly fewer than 10,000 mature individuals, the population is neither severely fragmented (probably more than 1,000 individuals in at least two sub-populations; so not C2a), nor in a single sub-population (so not C2b).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	400,000 km <sup>2</sup>	medium
trend	stable	medium
Area of occupancy	5,000 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of breeding birds	10,000	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of sub-populations	8	medium
Largest sub-population	2,000	low
Generation time	5 years	low

### 6 Intraspecific taxa

None described.

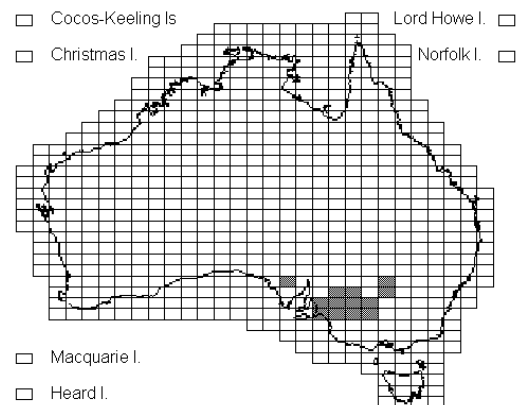
### 7 Past range and abundance

Historical distribution uncertain because of early confusion with Gilbert's Whistler *P. inornata*, but probably continuous through mallee of south-western New South Wales, south-eastern South Australia and north-western Victoria. Sub-population on Eyre Peninsula possibly long-isolated (Mathew *et al.*, 1995, Schodde and Mason, 1999).

### 8 Present range and abundance

Southern Australia: Ninety-Mile Desert, Billiatt Conservation Park, Danggali Conservation Park, Bookmark Biosphere Reserve, along Murray R. and northern Eyre Peninsula; Victoria: Big Desert and Sunset Country; New South Wales: mallee isolates in central and far south-west (Pedler, 1982, Emison *et al.*, 1987, Menkhorst and Bennett, 1990, Smith *et al.*, 1995, Mathew *et al.*, 1995, 1996). Individuals recorded outside these areas presumed vagrant (Parker, 1984, Hackett and Hackett, 1986). Loss from small remnants

continuing (Smith *et al.*, 1995), but most sub-populations now in areas managed for conservation.



### 9 Ecology

Red-lored Whistlers breed where mallee eucalypts 5-8 m tall form an open canopy over a moderately dense and diverse but patchy shrub layer (Woinarski, 1987, Mathew *et al.*, 1996). Birds dispersing in the non-breeding season can occupy a variety of other woodland habitats (Hackett and Hackett, 1986). They build a cupped nest, in which they lay a clutch of 2-3 eggs (Beruldsen, 1980).

### 10 Threats

Clearance of mallee has reduced the range of the species and may continue to do so in New South Wales. In remaining habitat, Red-lored Whistlers prefer vegetation that has not been burnt for at least 5 years (Carpenter and Matthew, 1986, Woinarski, 1987, Mathew *et al.*, 1996). Fires made 90% of Billiatt Conservation Park unsuitable for the whistler in 1988, as well as large tracts of Ngarkat Conservation Park and the Big Desert in 1986-88. In all areas, however, the species is still present (L. Pedler). Over a period of 20 years, Red-lored Whistlers have been replaced by Gilbert's Whistlers at Chapman's Bore and parts of the western Murray Mallee, probably as the result of changes in habitat (J. Cox). The relationship between the two species is not well understood. Because of their similar appearance, interbreeding would be hard to detect.

### 11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Determine effects of fire, especially the bird's ability to survive fire and to re-establish after fire.

- 11.2 Determine current range, probably through Birds Australia Atlas.
- 11.3 Monitor known sub-populations.
- 11.4 Increase intervals between fires in suitable habitat.

## 12 Bibliography

Beruldsen, G. R. 1980. *A Field Guide to Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*. Rigby, Adelaide.

Carpenter, G. and Matthew, J. 1986. The Birds of Billiatt Conservation Park. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 30:29-37

Emison, W. B., Beardsell, C. M., Norman, F. I., Loyn, R. H. and Bennett, S. C. 1987. *Atlas of Victorian Birds*. Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands and RAOU, Melbourne.

Hackett, J. and Hackett, M. 1986. A Red-lored Whistler in the Manning Reserve, Mount Lofty Ranges. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 30:52-53.

Mathew, J., Carpenter, G. and Croft, T. 1996. A record of the Red-lored Whistler on Eyre Peninsula. *S. A. Ornithol.* 32:39-40.

Mathew, J., Croft, T. and Carpenter, G. 1995. Revision of the distribution of the Red-lored Whistler in South Australia. *S. A. Ornithol.* 33:103-106.

Menkhorst, P. W. and Bennett, A. F. 1990. Vertebrate fauna of mallee vegetation in southern Australia. Pp. 39-53 in *The Mallee Lands: a Conservation Perspective*. J. C. Noble, P. J. Joss and G. K. Jones (eds). CSIRO, Canberra.

Parker, S. A. 1984. Remarks on some results of John Gould's visit to South Australia in 1839. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 29:109-111.

Pedler, L. P. 1982. Red-lored Whistler on Calperum Station, northern Murray Mallee. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 29:26.

Schodde, R. and Mason, I. J. 1999. *The Directory of Australian Birds: Passerines*. CSIRO, Collingwood, Victoria.

Smith, P. J., Smith, J. E., Pressey, R. L. and Whish, G. L. 1995. Birds of Particular Conservation Concern in the Western Division of New South Wales: Distributions, Habitats and Threats. *National Parks and Wildlife Service Occasional Paper 20*. New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hurstville.

Woinarski, J. C. Z. 1987. Notes on the status and ecology of the Red-lored Whistler *Pachycephala rufogularis*. *Emu* 87:224-236.

### Comments received from

Peter Copley, Richard Loyn, Lynn Pedler, Adrian Stokes.