

TAXON SUMMARY

Western Whipbird (western mallee)

1	Family	Eupetidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Psophodes nigrogularis oregon</i> Schodde and Mason, 1991
3	Common name	Western Whipbird (western mallee)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: a

5 Reasons for listing

At least half the habitat of this subspecies has been cleared for agriculture (Near Threatened: a). The subspecies exists at 12 locations, and although the area of occupancy appears to have been reduced to about 800 km² and may still be declining, the population is not severely fragmented (so not Vulnerable: B1). Occasional fires do not result in extreme fluctuations in population size (B3). Similarly, although the population probably contains only 5,000 mature individuals and could be decreasing, security is ensured by the high number of sub-populations (so not C2b), including some with more than 1,000 individuals (so not C2a).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	50,000 km ²	medium
trend	decreasing	medium
Area of occupancy	800 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	10,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	12	medium
Largest sub-population	5,000	low
Generation time	5 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

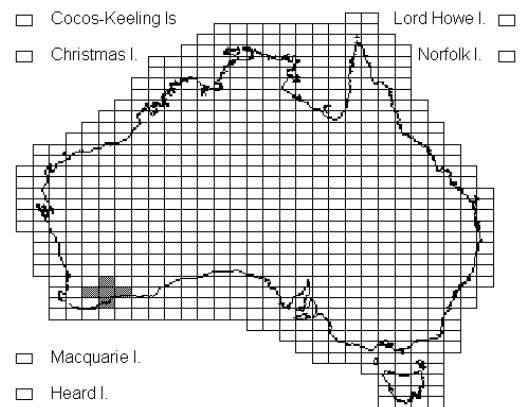
P. n. leucogaster (eastern mallee) is Endangered, *P. n. nigrogularis* (Two Peoples Bay-Mt Manypeaks, W. A.) is Vulnerable and *P. n. lashmari* (Kangaroo I., S. A.) is Near Threatened. Global status of species is Near Threatened. On the basis of genetic work showing a close relationship between *P. n. nigrogularis* and *P. n. lashmari* (Christidis and Norman 1999), elevation of *P. n. nigrogularis* to a monotypic species (Schodde and Mason, 1999) is not adopted here. *P. n. nigrogularis* and *P. n. oregon* apparently differ in both plumage (Schodde and Mason, 1999) and nest architecture (R E. Johnstone).

7 Past range and abundance

Near-coastal environments in south-western Western Australia, between Cape Arid and Cape Riche, extending inland in the west to about 30°S (Schodde and Mason, 1991).

8 Present range and abundance

South-western Western Australia with scattered sub-populations between Munglinup east of Ravensthorpe west to at least Cape Riche on the coast and inland to Sukey Hill, east of Cranbrook and north to Lake Grace (McNee, 1986, Cale and Burbidge, 1993). Largest sub-populations in Fitzgerald and Stirling Ranges National Parks (Cale and Burbidge, 1993).



9 Ecology

Western Whipbirds are birds of mallee and heath that forage on the ground for invertebrates. Domed nests, in which two eggs are laid, are built in dense vegetation (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Smith, 1991).

10 Threats

Much of the Western Whipbird's habitat has been cleared. Sub-populations that remain in fragments remaining in the wheatbelt may become extinct over time as a result of random events, with no likelihood of recolonisation. Even the larger populations are likely to be affected by extensive fires.

11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Cease clearance of habitat.
- 11.2 Rehabilitate habitat fragments.
- 11.3 Determine characteristics of fragments that continue to support the subspecies.
- 11.4 Monitor population regularly, particularly in relation to habitat rehabilitation.
- 11.5 Clarify genetic relationships with other subspecies.

12 Bibliography

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Comments received from

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