

# Glossy black-cockatoo

*Calyptorhynchus lathamii*

Yuyang (Wiradjuri)



Photo: Chris Tzaros

The **glossy black-cockatoo** may be confused with the **red-tailed black-cockatoo**, but it has more brownish-black plumage on the head, neck and underbody. Their body plumage is more dull black and not uniformly glossy. Also, adult females have much more yellow on the head and lack the yellow spotting on the body that red-tailed black-cockatoos have.

## Description

**Size:** The glossy black-cockatoo of the Riverina is a medium-sized cockatoo.

**Plumage:** Glossy black-cockatoos are generally black but have a blackish-brown head, neck and underparts with red or yellowish-red panels in the tail. Adult females have patches of yellow feathering on head and neck.

**Bill:** They have a broad bulbous bill that is used for tearing apart the seed cones of sheoaks, their primary food source, and to create hollows in old trees for nesting.

**Call:** Noisy squawks or creaky calls; wheezy 'airr-riick', 'kee-aiirrk', 'airrek'. Quieter and less raucous than other black-cockatoos.

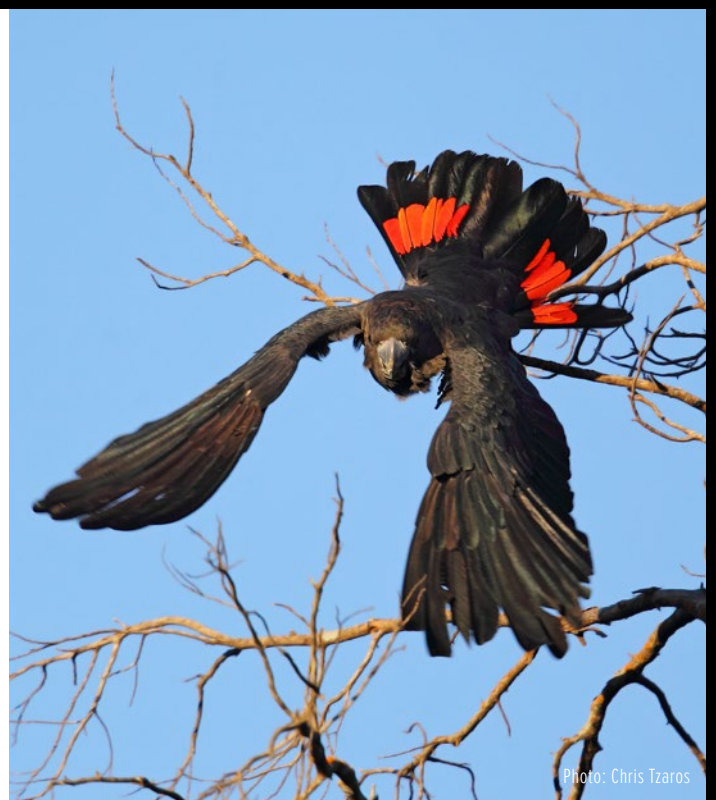


Photo: Chris Tzaros

## Habitat

Glossy black-cockatoos can be found in open forest and woodlands of the coast and the Great Dividing Range where stands of sheoak occur, such as black sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) and forest sheoak (*A. torulosa*). Inland, they feed on drooping sheoak (*A. verticillata*), broombush sheoak (*A. diminuta*) and mallee sheoak (*A. gymnanthera*). Belah (*Casuarina cristata*) is also utilised and may be a critical food source for some populations.

The Riverina population is largely restricted to hills and low ridges where suitable stands of its food plant, the drooping sheoak, remain. They have also recorded in open woodlands dominated by belah.

They feed almost exclusively on the seeds of several species of sheoak (*Casuarina* and *Allocasuarina* species), shredding the cones (below-inset) with their massive bill.



Photo: Matt Wright/Faunagraphic

*The Riverina population is largely restricted to hills and low ridges where suitable stands of its food plant, the drooping sheoak, occur.*



Photo: Chris Tzaros, Inset - Kelly Coleman/Peekdesigns



Photo: Chris Tzaros

## Breeding

Glossy black-cockatoos mate for life and pairs will maintain their bond all year-round.

They will nest in large tree hollows, about 26 cm wide and up to 1.4 m deep. These trees, such as river red gums, can be found in areas adjacent to drainage lines. These areas also contain reliable food and water sources.

A single egg is laid between March and May. The incubation period is about one month. The males feed the female while she sits on the nest during the incubation and brooding stage - up to a week after hatching. Once fledged, the young bird is fed by both parents for up to four months and remains with them until the next breeding season.

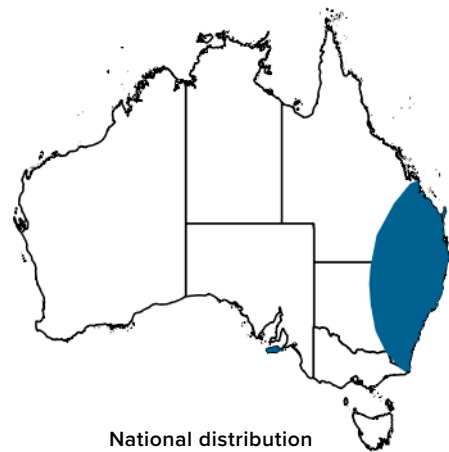
Not all chicks survive to maturity and suitable hollows are disappearing which makes population growth very slow.

*Glossy black-cockatoos mate for life!  
They lay only one egg per year.*

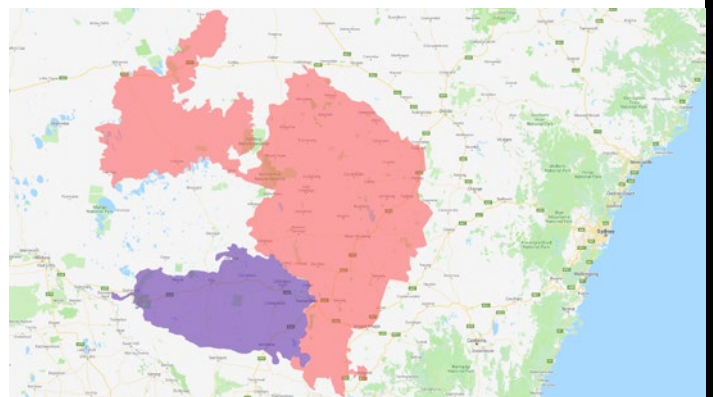
## Distribution

Although uncommon, the glossy black-cockatoo's range is widespread throughout suitable forest and woodland habitats. They have been recorded from the central Queensland coast to East Gippsland in Victoria, and inland to the southern tablelands and central western plains of NSW, with a small population in the Riverina. An isolated population exists on Kangaroo Island, South Australia.

The Riverina population is largely restricted to hills and low ridges where suitable stands of its food plant, drooping sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), remain within the Narrandera Range and to the north-west in the Brobenah Hills, McPhersons Range, Cocoparra Range, Lachlan Range and Jimberoo State Forests, and the Naradhan Range. This population now occurs west of longitude 146° 40' E, within Cobar, Carrathool, Narrandera and Leeton local government areas.



National distribution  
(Atlas of Living Australia)



Riverina population occurrence: Pink = Known, Purple = Predicted.  
(Office of Environment and Heritage)

## Conservation status

In New South Wales, the species is listed as Vulnerable, while the Riverina population is Endangered.

At the national level, this species is listed as Endangered.

## Threats

Some of the key threats to the Riverina population includes:

- Decline of hollow bearing trees over time due to land management activities.
- Excessively frequent fire which eliminates sheoaks from areas, prevents the development of mature sheoak stands and destroys nest trees.
- Decline in the extent and productivity of sheoak foraging habitat due to:
  - feral herbivores, such as goats
  - moisture stress from climate change.
- Forestry activity resulting in loss of hollow bearing trees, reduced recruitment of hollow bearing trees, degradation of foraging habitat, and disturbance of breeding attempts.
- Illegal bird smuggling and egg-collecting.

## Activities to assist this species

- Implement appropriate fire regimes and reduce the impact of burning to avoid the widespread burning of food resources and support the regeneration of sheoaks.
- Protect existing and future hollow-bearing trees for nest sites.
- Retain and protect areas of native forest and woodland containing sheoaks.
- Establish forested corridors linking remnant areas of habitat.
- Report suspected illegal bird trapping and egg-collecting.
- Reduce stocking intensity or exclude grazing in some areas to allow regeneration of vegetation.
- Retain hollows (including protection of existing mature trees); plant native hollow producing species; ensure that some trees are always left to grow to maturity; as a last resort place artificial hollows (e.g. nest boxes) around area.
- Avoid disturbing the species.
- Prevent clearing of sheoak stands and potential nesting habitat, including paddock trees and standing dead trees.
- Undertake annual population monitoring in the post-breeding season.



Photo: Chris Tzaros