

Glossy Black-cockatoo

Feed Trees

Glossy Black-cockatoo (GBC)

The Glossy Black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathamii*) is the smallest of the black cockatoos with an average length of 48cm and wingspan of 90cm. It is black-brown in colour with a small inconspicuous crest and has distinctive red or orange-red panels in its tail feathers. These are most obvious when the bird is in flight. Most females differ from male birds by having yellow markings around the neck area.

Calls of this species are quieter than the more common Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo. Glossy Black-cockatoos live in groups ranging from 2 – 10 birds and are not strictly territorial as they may forage over large areas, although they may defend nest trees and favoured feeding areas.



Michael Murphy

Glossy Black-Cockatoo

Why is the GBC important?

The Glossy Black-cockatoo once occurred across most of south-eastern Australia. It is now, however, restricted to an area extending from the coast near Eungella in eastern Queensland to Mallacoota in

Victoria. The species is now rare or has become locally extinct in many parts of its former range.

Because of on-going threats such as habitat clearing, modification and fragmentation, the Glossy Black-cockatoo is listed as **'Vulnerable'** on Schedule 2 of the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act).

Where does the GBC occur?

Glossy Black-cockatoos live in a variety of habitats from coastal woodlands and dry eucalypt forests to open inland woodlands and forested watercourses wherever their preferred food trees, She-oaks (*Allocasuarinas* spp.) occur. Additionally, Glossy Black-cockatoos require large tree hollows in both living and dead trees for nesting and must compete with other hollow-dependent mammals and birds for a suitable nesting hollow. (Refer to Advisory Note 1 - Hollow-Bearing Trees for more information on the importance and protection of trees with hollows).



NPWS

Allocasuarina tree with seed cones





Chewed seed cones lying on the ground under She-oaks are a clear indication that these trees are being used by Glossy Black-cockatoos.

Photographs: NPWS

Evidence of Feeding

Evidence of feeding on She-oak (*Allocasuarina*) stands by Glossy Black-cockatoos is characterised by a litter of chewed cones under individual trees. These chewed cones usually remain on the ground for several weeks to months and are a clear indication that this stand of She-oaks is an important foraging habitat for this species.

What do GBC eat?

Glossy Black-cockatoos feed almost exclusively on the seeds of *Allocasuarina* species. They use their strong bill to extract seeds by crushing cones held in their claws. Occasionally they may eat insect larvae and have been observed feeding on seeds from some eucalypts, angophoras, acacias and hakeas.

In coastal and tablelands areas preferred feed trees are Forest Oak (*Allocasuarina torulosa*) and Black Oak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*). Additionally, there is some evidence that the coastal species Horse-tail She-oak (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) is occasionally foraged by Glossy Black-cockatoos.

Further west on the tablelands and western slopes additional *Allocasuarina* and *Casuarina* species are used by this species. These include the Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), Belah (*Casuarina cristata*) and *C. pauper*. Within the north-west cypress/ironbark forests the shrubby *Allocasuarina* species *A. gymnanthera* and *A. diminuta* are thought to be particularly important, although other *Casuarina* and *Allocasuarina* species are also known to be food resources.



What can you do?

The Glossy Black-cockatoo usually prefers feed trees with heavier cone (seed) crops. This feeding behavior means that the foraging of birds is patchy with only favoured feed trees utilised in any *Allocasuarina* stand. For this reason it is important that all She-oaks in an area or stand are maintained for foraging opportunities.

Glossy Black-cockatoos also require suitably sized tree hollows for nesting and rearing young. The retention of hollow-bearing trees is therefore important for continued breeding success of this species.

References and Further Reading

- Clout, M N (1989), *Foraging behaviour of the Glossy Black-cockatoo*, Australian Wildlife Research 16(4):467-473.
- DEC Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Further Information

Environment Protection and Regulation Division
North East Branch
Department of Environment and Conservation
24 Moonee Street
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450
Phone: 6651 5946

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