

TAXON SUMMARY

Painted Honeyeater

1	Family	Meliphagidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Grantiella picta</i> (Gould, 1838)
3	Common name	Painted Honeyeater
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: c

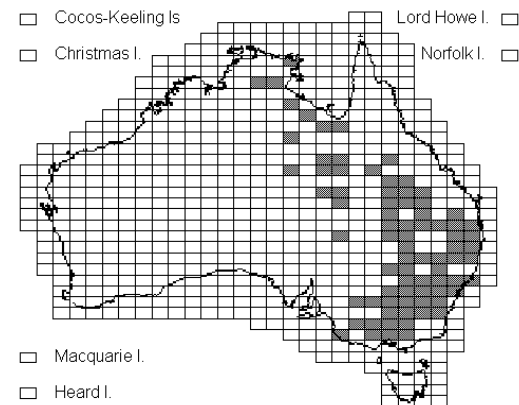
5 Reasons for listing

Given this species' dependence on woodland, observed declines in habitat availability are interpreted as indicating a reduction in overall density of the species exceeding 50% (Near Threatened: c).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	2,800,000 km ²	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	20,000 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	15,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	5 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

None recognised. Possible differences between birds in the Northern Territory and south-eastern Australia may warrant investigation (L. Conole), although breeding in the former area has not been confirmed.



7 Past range and abundance

Sparsely distributed from south-eastern Australia, to north-western Queensland and eastern Northern Territory (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Schodde and Mason, 1999). Greatest concentrations and almost all records of breeding come from south of 26°S, on inland slopes of Great Dividing Ra. between Grampians, Vic., and Roma, Qld (Morris *et al.*, 1981, Blakers *et al.*, 1984). After April migrates to semi-arid regions, including north-eastern South Australia, central and western Queensland and central Northern Territory (Hall, 1974, Matheson, 1981, Morris *et al.*, 1981, Blakers *et al.*,

1984, Keast, 1985, McNamara, 1986, Emison *et al.*, 1987).

8 Present range and abundance

Mostly as above, but no recent records from south-eastern South Australia (Blakers *et al.*, 1984) and declined in abundance in ACT, (P. Ormay), western New South Wales (Maher, 1988, Smith *et al.*, 1995), central Victoria (Brindley, 1991) and probably north-central Queensland, where once relatively common near Cloncurry (MacGillivray, 1901).

9 Ecology

The Painted Honeyeater lives in dry forests and woodlands. Its primary food is the fruit of mistletoes in the genus *Amyema*, though it will also take some nectar and insects (Eddy, 1961, Reid, 1986, Oliver *et al.*, 1998). Its diet in the non-breeding season is presumed to be similar but is poorly known, partly because the bird is secretive at this time (L. Conole). Its breeding distribution is dictated by the presence mistletoes, which are largely restricted to older trees, and by the seasonality of mistletoe fruiting. However, extent of vegetation is also important, with birds being less likely to be found in strips of remnant box-ironbark woodlands, such as occur along roadsides and in windbreaks, than in wider blocks (Robinson, 1994). The bird helps disperse mistletoe seed, and sometimes all trees in areas where it breeds repeatedly are infected, to the extent that some trees die (Reid, 1986). Painted Honeyeaters build cupped nests and usually lay 2 eggs (Beruldsen, 1980).

10 Threats

Much of the woodland used by the Painted Honeyeater during the breeding season has been cleared or fragmented (Robinson, 1994), particularly the box-ironbark and boree woodlands. Non-breeding habitat is still being cleared for agriculture and habitat remnants in both breeding and non-breeding range continues to be degraded by grazing.

11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Undertake studies of feeding and breeding ecology, particularly site fidelity and patterns of movement.
- 11.2 Obtain a better understanding of ecology during non-breeding season.

- 11.3 Protect all woodland in which Painted Honeyeaters have been recorded regularly from clearing, and monitor compliance biennially.
- 11.4 Secure all Painted Honeyeater sub-populations found on public land through conservation management, particularly those in timber reserves, or transport corridors or on local government land.
- 11.5 Within the honeyeater's range manage at least 15% of the pre-European area of all woodland communities on public or private land for nature conservation, using incentives where necessary.
- 11.6 Using appropriate incentives, undertake extension with land-holders that have suitable woodland habitat to promote sound management of remnants and encourage greater connectivity between sub-populations.
- 11.7 Promote revegetation and land reclamation that recreates woodland habitat with a full complement of biodiversity, including the honeyeater.
- 11.8 Control and reduce firewood collection from areas occupied by Painted Honeyeaters, promoting wood-lot development close to markets, and reduce grazing densities where necessary.
- 11.9 Undertake long-term monitoring.

12 Bibliography

- Beruldsen, G. R. 1980. *A Field Guide to Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*. Rigby, Adelaide.
- Blakers, M., Davies, S. J. J. F. and Reilly, P. N. 1984. *The Atlas of Australian Birds*. RAOU and Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
- Brindley, A. 1991. *Birds of the Bendigo District*. Bendigo Field Naturalist Club, Bendigo.
- Eddy, R. J. 1961. Twenty years of Painted Honeyeaters. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 1:122-128.
- 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.
- Hall, H. F. (ed.) 1974. *Birds of the Harold Hall Australian Expeditions*. British Museum of Natural History, London.

Lumb, J. M. 1991. Tree clearing in Australia. *Search* 22:140-141.

Keast, A. 1985. Australia's forest and woodland avifauna: an ecological and evolutionary perspective. Pp. 11-15 in *Birds of Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands*. A. Keast, H. F. Recher, H. Ford and D. Saunders (eds). Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton and RAOU, Melbourne.

Maher, P. 1988. Threatened avifauna of New South Wales. *National Parks J.* 32:11-16.

Matheson, W. E. 1981. Records of the Painted Honeyeater in South Australia. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 28:184-185.

MacGillivray, W. 1901. Notes on some north Queensland birds. *Vic. Nat.* 18:45-47.

McNamara, J. A. 1986. Painted honeyeater in north-eastern South Australia. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 30:21.

Morris, A. K., McGill, A. R. and Holmes, G. 1981. *Handlist of Birds in New South Wales*. NSW FOC, Sydney.

Nadolny, C. 1991. The dilemma of rural tree clearing. *Search* 22:43-46.

Oliver, D. L., Quin, B. R., Quin, D. G., Walpole, R. M. and Walpole, S. C. 1998. Observations of nectar- and insect- feeding by Painted Honeyeaters *Grantiella picta*. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 17:353-355.

Reid, N. 1986. Pollination and seed dispersal of mistletoes (Loranthaceae) by birds in southern Australia. Pp. 64-84 in *The Dynamic Partnership: Birds and Plants in Southern Australia*. H. Ford and D. C. Paton (eds). The Flora and Fauna of South Australia Handbooks Committee, Adelaide.

Robinson, D. 1994. Research plan for threatened woodland birds of south-eastern Australia. *Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research Tech. Report Ser.* 133.

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

Comments received from

Lawrie Conole, Richard Loyn, Peter Menkhorst, Peter Ormay, Bruce Quin, Doug Robinson.