

## TAXON SUMMARY

# Western Whipbird (Kangaroo Island)

1	Family	Eupetidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Psophodes nigrogularis lashmari</i> Schodde & Mason, 1991
3	Common name	Western Whipbird (Kangaroo Island)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: a

### 5 Reasons for listing

About half of this subspecies' habitat has been cleared for agriculture (Near Threatened: a). Although the population is thought to number only 5,000, at least one sub-population contains over 1,000 individuals (so not Vulnerable: C2b). The area of occupancy is about 500 km<sup>2</sup>, but is spread over 10 locations (so not B1), while population fluctuations resulting from fires are not extreme (so not B3).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	2,000 km <sup>2</sup>	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	500 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	5,000	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of sub-populations	2	medium
Largest sub-population	4,000	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. oberon* (Stirling Ra. to Ravensthorpe, W. A.) 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. However, *P. n. nigrogularis* and *P. n. lashmari* are retained as separate subspecies pending direct genetic comparison between *P. n. nigrogularis* and *P. n. oberon*, which apparently differ in both plumage (Schodde and Mason, 1999) and nest architecture (R. E. Johnstone).

### 7 Past range and abundance

Kangaroo I., S. A. (Schodde and Mason, 1991).

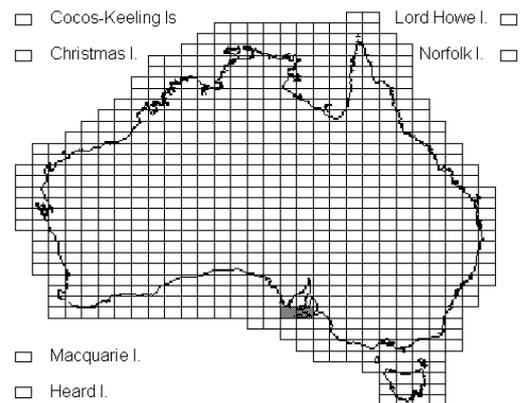
### 8 Present range and abundance

Remnant mallee on western and southern Kangaroo I. (Baxter, 1995), with a possible break in distribution at Pennington Bay.

### 9 Ecology

On Kangaroo I., Mallee Whipbirds occur in coastal and subcoastal mallee and heath, and forage on the

ground for invertebrates (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Baxter, 1995).



### 10 Threats

Half of the Western Whipbird's habitat on Kangaroo I. has been cleared for agriculture, but most of the remainder protected. Although adversely affected by fire, habitat fragmentation and pattern of burning on Kangaroo I. make it unlikely that fire will affect the habitat of more than 20% of the population at any one time.

### 11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Survey sub-populations when species calling during spring to determine current distribution, particularly in areas burnt in the last decade (Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park, northern half of Flinders Chase National Park).
- 11.2 Maintain a fire management regime that limits the extent of burnt habitat within any one habitat block.
- 11.3 Clarify genetic relationships with other eastern infraspecific taxa.

### 12 Bibliography

- Baxter, C. 1995. *An annotated list of birds of Kangaroo Island*. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Kingscote.
- Blakers, M., Davies, S. J. J. F. and Reilly, P. N. 1984. *The Atlas of Australian Birds*. RAOU and Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Christidis, L. and Norman, J. 1999. Status of the Western Whipbird (heath subspecies): Development of Molecular Markers. Report to Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth

Schodde, R. and Mason, I. J. 1991. Subspeciation in the Western Whipbird *Psophodes nigrogularis* and its zoogeographical significance, with descriptions of two new subspecies. *Emu* 91:133-144.

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

Comments received from

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