

# Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo

'*Banjo Frog's Concert Spectacular*' is a children's storybook set in the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, part of the Mt Lofty Ranges. This information sheet is one of a series on the heroes of the story.

## Introduction

The Glossy Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathamii*) was once widespread across south-eastern Australia but is now more confined, with the *halmaturinus* sub-species only surviving on rabbit-free Kangaroo Island.

Previously they were also present in the adjacent mainland (Fleurieu Peninsula) and would fly between there and the Island but they disappeared from the mainland in the 1970s. It is now one of the rarest cockatoos in Australia and listed as endangered under Australian and South Australian legislation.

Significant work is being undertaken on Kangaroo Island to conserve the sub-species and on the southern Fleurieu Peninsula to provide habitat to enable their return to the mainland. Managing rabbit impacts is key to the success of revegetation and regeneration programs.

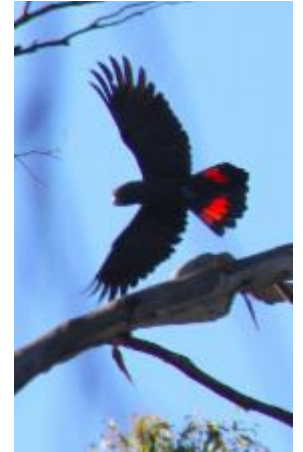
## Description

The Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo is a medium-sized cockatoo with a large and dull black-brown body, bulbous bill and red (male) or orange-red with black bars (female) tail panels. The adult female also has conspicuous yellow patches on the head.

Juveniles of the Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo are similar in appearance to the adult male, but have some yellow markings on the head, breast, belly and flanks; yellow or orange spots on the wing; and red or orange-yellow panels with black barring in the tail.

## Habitat & Habits

The Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo requires high-quality Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) woodland for foraging and large hollow-bearing eucalypts for roosting and nesting habitat. Often these woodlands



Source: *Atlas of Living Australia*

are interspersed with taller stands of Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*).

They generally forage on sheoaks growing on sandstone and basalt areas along the north coast and major inland rivers of Kangaroo Island. They occasionally also use Slaty Sheoak (*Allocasuarina muelleriana*) for foraging.

The Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo usually occurs in pairs (they mate for life), or in groups of three, which comprise a breeding pair and their offspring. Solitary males and small groups of juvenile males are also observed, as are loose flocks, which typically consist of 25 birds or less, but may comprise 50 or more birds in the post-breeding period.

Breeding takes place from late summer to spring, with eggs laid from January to July. They nest in hollows in the trunks and upper limbs of tall Eucalyptus trees (especially Sugar Gum, but also Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*) and Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*).

Non-breeding Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoos feed on around 60–80 sheoak cones/day and spend around

### Did you know?

The Kangaroo Island subspecies of Glossy Black-Cockatoo is smaller but has a bigger bill than the subspecies that occur along the Great Dividing Range and east coast of Australia

### Did you know?

*In recent years (as part of conservation programs), Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoos have nested in specially erected artificial nests, most of which are made from PVC piping.*

30–40% of the day feeding. A male feeding a nesting female may eat nearly double this amount (120+ cones) and feed for more than 50% of daylight hours.

## Rabbits

Wild European rabbits affect many native plant and animal species, but the key impacts for Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoos (on the mainland) are prevention of sheoak regeneration, overgrazing and general damage to important plant species and removal of critical habitat.

Historical land clearance and degradation of remaining habitat contributed to the contraction of the sub-species to Kangaroo Island. The Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo continues to be vulnerable to decline because its small numbers (454 birds, 2020 survey) and limited range leave it at risk from catastrophes such as fire and disease. Part of the formal recovery plan for the Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo seeks to have the sub-species return to its former range on the mainland.

Continued grazing by rabbits on the mainland prevents natural regeneration of sheoaks (and other important species) and hinders conservation efforts to replant sheoak woodlands. Without rabbit control it is difficult to protect sheoak recruitment and revegetation of sheoak woodlands. Without human intervention it is unlikely the Kangaroo Island Glossy-Black Cockatoo can repopulate its former range on the mainland.

### Did you know?

*The 'Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by rabbits' made under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 lists Kangaroo Island Glossy-Black Cockatoo as a threatened species which may be affected by rabbits.*

### Fun Fact

*Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoos eat left "footed". That is, after twisting the hard woody cone from the sheoak with their sturdy bill, they (nearly always) transfer it to their left foot for eating.*

## Easter Bilby's Friends

Easter Bilby and friends are all affected by rabbits and other pressures like loss of habitat and predation. They want their homes, their food and their friends back. People are the key to environmental recovery; and more information on the people and organisations helping Easter Bilby's Friends can be found on the Easter Bilby's Friends website [www.easterbilbysfriends.com.au](http://www.easterbilbysfriends.com.au).



In 'Banjo Frog's Concert Spectacular' children plant trees and other habitat, and that is just what is happening on the Fleurieu Peninsula as people across the region do their bit to safeguard the future of Glossy-Black Cockatoos with rabbit control and revegetation.

### Did you know?

*Two lone birds turned up on the mainland in 2023 having flown from Kangaroo Island, just like in the Banjo Frog story. How exciting!*

### Kangaroo Island Glossy Black-Cockatoo names:

Scientific name – *Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus*  
Kurna name – yutika  
Ngarrindjerri name – pilambi  
Other common names – Glossy/ies, South Australian Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Glossy Black-Cockatoo (Kangaroo Island)  
Related species –  
*Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami* – south-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo (sub-species)  
*Calyptorhynchus lathami erebus* – northern or Capricorn Glossy Black-Cockatoo (sub-species)

## More information about Rabbit-Free Australia

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**Bilbies Not Bunnies**