

Baudin's cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii*

Conservation Status: Endangered

Identification

Baudin's cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* is a white-tailed black cockatoo found in the south-west of Western Australia, most often observed in small groups at dawn or dusk as they leave or return to a roost site. It is similar in appearance to Carnaby's cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris*, the only other species of white-tailed black cockatoo. Baudin's cockatoo is mostly a dull black with rectangular white panels on the tail feathers and white cheek patches.



Photos: K. Page/DBCA (left); T. Kirkby (right)

Baudin's is a slightly smaller sized bird than Carnaby's cockatoo, and its bill has a longer upper mandible. Experts are also able to distinguish between the two species by the sounds of their calls.

The male has a black bill and pink eye-ring, while the female has a pale bill, grey eye-ring and a larger, yellow-tinged cheek patch. Juvenile birds are similar in appearance to the adults, except that juvenile males have pale bills which begin to darken after the second year.

Length: 50-60cm

Weight: 560-770g

Taxonomy

Family: Cacatuidae

Genus: *Calyptorhynchus*

Species: *baudinii*

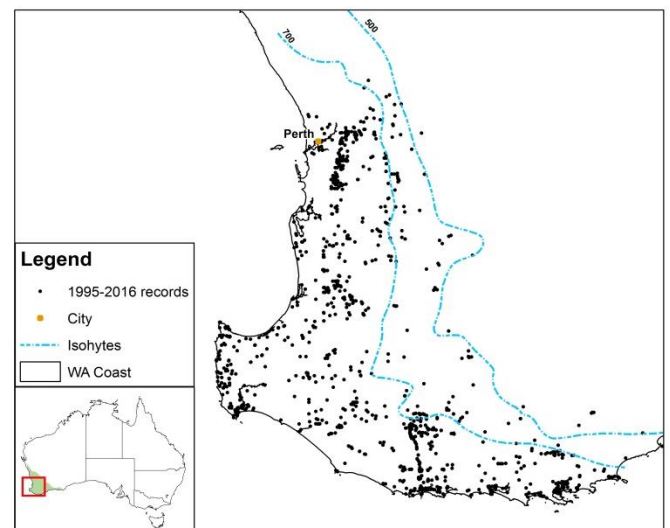
Other common names: Baudin's black cockatoo, long-billed black cockatoo

Distribution and Habitat

Baudin's cockatoo is endemic to the higher rainfall parts of the south-west of WA, generally found within the 500-750mm average annual rainfall isohyet. Their distribution ranges from Albany in the south to Gidgegannup in the north, and inland toward the Stirling Ranges and Kojonup.

It is estimated that the species' range has been reduced by approximately 25% since widespread vegetation clearing began in the 1950s. Surveys between 1995-2004 have estimated the population at 10,000-15,000 individuals with a declining trend.

Baudin's cockatoo prefer the dense Jarrah, Marri and Karri forests of the south-west. A significant proportion of the population relies on the Jarrah forests that are within the Warren, Northern and Southern Jarrah Forest IBRA sub-regions. They breed in the densely forested areas of the Southern Jarrah Forest bioregion, and after breeding,



Current distribution of Baudin's cockatoo (Parks and Wildlife, 2016)

they migrate in a north-easterly direction in search of food.

For further information regarding the species distribution, please refer to www.naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au.

Community Involvement

If you think you have seen a Baudin’s cockatoo, fill out a [fauna report form](#) and send it to the Department’s Species and Communities Branch at fauna@dbca.wa.gov.au. The Department keeps track of the distributions of threatened species to help monitor population trends and inform management decisions.

The [Great Cocky Count](#) is a long-term citizen science survey that monitors known roost sites of Carnaby’s cockatoos, but also takes note of Baudin’s and forest red-tailed cockatoos. Anyone can get involved, with volunteers participating in the one-night survey every autumn across the south-west of WA.

Artificial nesting hollows can be installed for any of the black cockatoo species, which allows cockatoos to breed in areas where natural hollows are now limited. The Department of Parks and Wildlife have produced information sheets on [designing, monitoring and maintaining artificial hollows](#) for Carnaby’s cockatoos that are applicable for all black cockatoo species.

The Department runs a variety of volunteer projects across WA including scientific research, community education and manual labour. Further information about these opportunities can be found on the Department’s [webpage](#).

Biology and Behaviour

Baudin’s cockatoos are very long-lived and individuals may survive in the wild up to 25-50 years. They are a gregarious species, living in small to large flocks (30-1,000 individuals) most of the year, except in breeding and nesting season when they split into pairs and family groups. Family groups are made up of a female, male and juvenile and occasionally also an immature bird from a previous breeding season.

Flocks have large roost sites, usually comprising of tall eucalypts with nearby watercourses, which they use during the winter non-breeding season. Studies have shown that they continually use the same roost sites each year, with smaller sites used occasionally when foraging distances are too great. Baudin’s and Carnaby’s cockatoos have been observed within the same flock during non-breeding times.

Their diet mainly consists of seeds from Marri *Corymbia calophylla* but they also feed on various *Banksia* species, *Hakea* species and Jarrah *Eucalyptus marginata*, and occasionally insects and insect larvae. They are also known to forage in apple, pear, persimmon and nut orchards and pine plantations. Flocks will opportunistically feed on suitable trees that they see while flying over, but they are also known to fly more than 10km from roosting or nesting sites to preferred feeding areas.

Pairs of Baudin’s cockatoos form strong, monogamous bonds and will mate for life, starting from four years of age. They stay together all year round except for when the female is sitting on an egg or caring for a hatchling. It is thought that approximately only 10% of the population breeds each year. In years when Marri seed production is poor, the population may fail to raise any young.

For nesting they require large natural hollows that form in old (>100 years old) Karri *Eucalyptus diversicolor*, Marri *Corymbia calophylla*, Wandoo *Eucalyptus wandoo*, Tuart *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* and Bullich *Eucalyptus megacarpa* trees. Nest hollows have a diameter of 30-40cm and are generally more than 30cm deep. Both adults in a pair are involved in selecting the nest hollow but the female is then responsible for preparing the hollow for breeding. Between August and December the female will lay one to two eggs but usually only one young survives. Incubation lasts for approximately 29 days.

Conservation Status

Baudin’s cockatoo is recognised as a threatened species under State and Commonwealth legislation. In Western Australia the species is listed as fauna that is ‘likely to become extinct’ in the wild (Specially Protected) under the [Wildlife Conservation Act 1950](#) and has been assigned the threat status ranking of Endangered using [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN) criteria. Nationally the species is listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#).

The species has experienced a continued population decline since the 1950s. Nest hollow shortage is considered to be the principal threat to the species; a large number of suitable trees have been felled in the past and are likely to

continue to be lost due to mining activities, timber harvesting and fires. Other threats currently impacting on the species include:

- Competition for nest hollows with other cockatoos, native ducks and feral European honey bees.
- Ongoing habitat loss from vegetation clearing;
- Death and injury resulting from vehicle strike;
- Illegal shooting by apple and pear orchardist;
- Reduced food and water availability due to climate change.

Management

Recovery Plan

A [national recovery plan](#) has been produced for the two forest black cockatoos, Baudin’s cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* and forest red-tail black cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*. The plan outlines the recovery actions required to stop further decline in breeding populations and to ensure their persistence throughout their range (DEC, 2008). Management objectives from this plan for Baudin’s cockatoo include:

- Eliminate illegal shooting and develop non-lethal means of mitigating fruit damage by Baudin’s cockatoo in orchards.
- Map feeding and breeding habitat, and identify and manage important sites.
- Determine patterns and significance of movement.
- Monitor demographic indicators (population size, distribution, trends).
- Identify factors affecting the number of breeding attempts and breeding success and manage nest hollows to increase recruitment.
- Determine and implement ways to: remove feral honeybees from nesting hollows, minimise the effects of mining and urban development on habitat loss, and manage forests for conservation.
- Maintain and promote community awareness and support.

Existing Conservation Measures

The Forest Black Cockatoo Recovery Team, led by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, has been assisting with the implementation of recovery actions as outlined in the recovery plan since 2005.

The [Western Australian Museum](#) and the [Water Corporation](#) launched the [Cockatoo Care](#) research initiative in 2001, with the aim of researching the distribution and ecology of black cockatoos and threats to their survival, as well as implementing measures to encourage the conservation of the species.

BirdLife Australia has a [Southwest Black-Cockatoo Recovery Program](#), which has involved working on recovery actions for black cockatoos since 2001.

The Department, BirdLife Australia and the WA Museum have been involved in installing artificial nest hollows, and repairing damaged and degraded natural nest hollows.

The Department of the Environment and Energy has published a [referral guideline](#) for the three species of black cockatoos in WA, which provide guidance for vegetation clearing and other activities that could have a significant impact on the species and their habitats.

[Kaarakin](#), a black cockatoo conservation centre, and [Perth Zoo](#) are involved in rehabilitating injured black cockatoos for release back into the wild. Kaarakin also revegetates areas of degraded bushland and educates the community about the conservation of these species.

Damage Prevention and Control

Baudin’s cockatoo forage for fruit in orchards, particularly for apples and pears, and have been known to do so since the 1900s when vegetation clearing for forestry and agricultural activities removed large portions of the species’ suitable feeding habitat. Historically, they were considered a pest species because of the damage they caused to fruit crops, and they were therefore controlled via lethal means (shooting). Killing of Baudin’s to protect fruit crops (or for any reason) has been considered an offence since 1989 under the provisions of the Western Australian [Wildlife Conservation Act 1950](#). Unfortunately, black cockatoos continue to be illegally shot each year, resulting in injuries and deaths. Offenders may face a fine of up to \$10,000, which will increase to up to \$500,000 for an individual person (or

\$2.5 million for a corporation) when regulations under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* come into force.

Studies have shown that shooting or otherwise destroying black cockatoos is not an effective means of preventing damage. The Department’s fact sheets on [minimising damage to crops](#) outline how to control damage caused by black cockatoos using non-lethal methods, including various scaring techniques and exclusion netting.

If you suspect black cockatoos are being harmed or captured, or find an injured or dead cockatoo, call the [Wildcare 24-hour Helpline](#) on (08) 9474 9055.

Related Information Sheets

Department fact sheets: [Bird Control in Orchards](#)

BirdLife Australia webpage and brochure: [Identify your Black-Cockatoo](#)

Western Australian Museum webpage and fact sheet: [Baudin’s Cockatoo](#)

Citation

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. (2017). *Fauna Profile - Baudin’s cockatoo Calyptorhynchus baudinii*. Retrieved from <http://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/>

Key References and Further Reading

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