

Malleefowl



Photo: Nye Evans

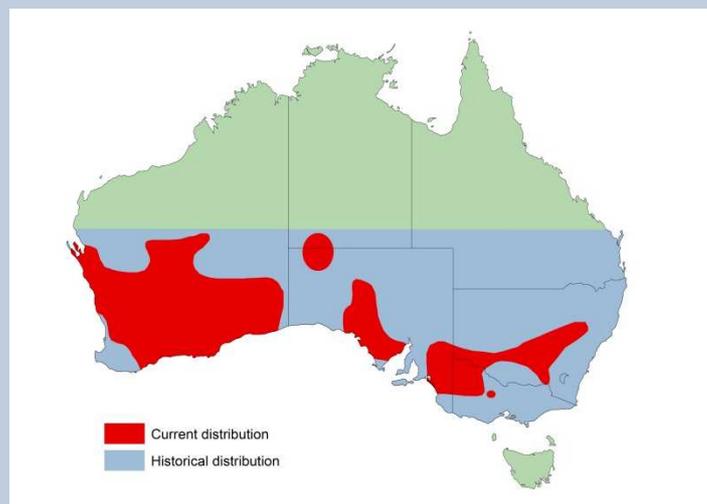
Scientific Name: *Leipoa ocellata*

Other Common Names: gnow, nganamara, lowan, native pheasant, incubator or thermometer bird

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

Threats: vegetation clearing, feral cat and fox predation, fire, road mortality and competition for food and habitat with sheep, rabbits, cattle and goats.

Distribution: Semi-arid Mallee (*Eucalyptus*) shrublands and woodlands across southern Australia



Have you seen a malleefowl?

Please tell us if you have seen a malleefowl or a malleefowl mound by sending a [malleefowl report form](#) (on the Department of Parks and Wildlife website www.dpaw.wa.gov.au) to fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au.

What is a malleefowl?

A malleefowl is a bird about the size of a large chicken that lives on the ground and rarely flies. They make nests on the ground, called malleefowl mounds, by heaping together a large mound of soil over a pile of leaves and sticks.

What do they look and sound like?

They can be very hard to spot because they camouflage so well with their natural environment. The wing feathers are grey, black and white, the belly is creamy, and the neck and head are grey.

Malleefowl will often freeze or move quietly away when disturbed. The male malleefowl makes a deep bellowing or loud clucks, while the female makes a high-pitched crowing, soft crooning or low grunting noise.

Interesting facts

The scientific name means 'eyelet egg-leaver' because they have a white ring around their eyes and they bury their eggs in the mound.

Malleefowl use their beaks to check the temperature inside the mound, which is why they are also known as thermometer birds and incubator birds.

Malleefowl mounds can be as big as 1 metre high and 5 metres wide.

The female lays up to 35 eggs and buries them inside the nest. The male then cares for the mound until the chicks hatch and dig their way out.

Within a day of hatching, chicks can fly because their wings are already well feathered.