

Perth may lose its Carnaby's cockatoos by 2029

Perth's population of endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos is in collapse, with numbers falling by 15 per cent each year, according to BirdLife Australia's latest Great Cocky Count. The outlook is bleak for these birds as vital habitat continues to be destroyed.



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'If this disastrous rate of decline continues, the number of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos on the Swan Coastal Plain will be halved in only five years,' said Dr Jessica Lee, spokesperson for BirdLife Australia.

'By 2029 – that's only 15 years away – the population will have collapsed to the brink of extinction.

'The Cockatoo is already recognised as being at high risk of extinction. With the data collected from the last five annual Great Cocky Counts now analysed, we now have strong evidence that Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos are declining at an alarming rate and that the window of opportunity to save them is closing rapidly.'

A record number of volunteers turned out for this year's Great Cocky Count making it one of the largest citizen science surveys of its kind in Australia.

The report was released in the Perth suburb of Floreat at a location that supported around 150 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos during this year's count.

The site is under threat as the final approval for a housing development is pending. It is one of the ten largest roost sites on the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain. Five of these sites are within the Gnangara Pine Plantation – an important food source for the birds – which is currently being cleared at a rate of around 1000 hectares each year. An additional 10,000-plus hectares of native vegetation were cleared from the Perth Metropolitan Region between 2002 and 2009.

Comparable areas of Carnaby's habitat within the Perth and Peel regions are already zoned 'urban', 'urban deferred' or 'industrial', or flagged for re-zoning, and are therefore also at risk of clearing.

'The cockies' decline is avoidable, but it needs the government to take the lead. Without real government action, the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo will be condemned to extinction,' warned Dr Lee.

BirdLife Australia has called for the WA Government to halt land-clearing until suitable replacement trees are planted and allowed to mature. It has established an emergency campaign for the survival of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos at savethebirds.org.au.

Source: Birdlife Australia

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