

Woodland Birds

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Many once-common woodland bird species are now declining in south-eastern Australia. Of 20 woodland bird species whose numbers have declined significantly since the 1980s (Reid 1999), at least 17 can be found in the Lachlan Catchment.

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Species, If distribution in Lachlan Catchment

Emu, Y

Red-capped Robin* , Y

Brown Treecreeper , Y

Speckled Warbler ,Y

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill ,Y

Hooded Robin* , Y

Jacky Winter , Y

Eastern Yellow Robin, Y

Grey-crowned Babbler*, Y

White-browed Babbler, Y

Varied Sittella, Y

Crested Shrike-tit, Y

Rufous Whistler, Y

Restless Flycatcher, Y

White-browed Woodswallow*, Y

Dusky Woodswallow, Y

Diamond Firetail*, Y

Southern Whiteface, ?

Crested Bellbird , N

Painted Button Quail, N

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*Listed under NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995

Research in the NSW central Murray Catchment found that woodland bird abundance and species richness was the highest in woodlands greater than 100 ha that were less than 1 km from other patches of woodland with high habitat complexity (canopy cover, shrubs, groundcover, litter and logs) and good tree health (Oliver and Parker 2006). They also found that River Red Gum woodlands and forests had the highest total bird abundance and species richness when compared with other tree planting sites. The main reasons for a decline in woodland bird species are loss of habitat, fragmentation of woodland vegetation and simplification or degradation of the remaining woodland vegetation (Reid 1999). Large intact woodlands with native shrubs and groundcover plants are now extremely rare in south-eastern

Australia, particularly on fertile soils. This emphasises the importance of maintaining and protecting semi-permanent wetland vegetation types such as River Red Gum woodlands. Coolibah and Black Box woodlands are also important and extensive plant communities in the mid-to lower Lachlan. However, there is a need to find out more about the relationship between these plant communities and woodland birds.