

# Great Cockey Count 2012 Report Summary

## Carnaby's numbers still down in Perth

### Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo is a threatened species, endemic to south-western Australia. In the non-breeding season, most of the cockatoos move from the wheatbelt where they breed, to coastal and near coastal areas, including the Perth Metropolitan Area and other parts of the Swan Coastal Plain. The birds are vulnerable to increasing levels of clearing for urban and industrial development in areas where human populations are rapidly growing.

### The Great Cockey Count

In 2006, BirdLife Australia (formerly Birds Australia) conducted the first Great Cockey Count to estimate the population of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in the Perth region. Since 2010, an annual Great Cockey Count has been conducted with the support of the Department of Environment and Conservation; currently the project is supported by Perth Region NRM and Caring for Our Country. The GCC counts as many cockatoos as possible on a single night each April.



### The 2012 Count: important findings

The report details the findings of the count conducted on 15 April 2012, which identified Carnaby's roost sites throughout the species' range and provided a population estimate for the Swan Region.

In 2012, the range of the survey expanded to include 359 locations from Geraldton to Esperance, including 141 confirmed roosts, 62 unconfirmed roost sites, and 156 potential roosts. The Great Cockey Count formally surveyed 206 sites, utilising 252 volunteer observers. Thirty-nine new roosts were identified.

The survey confirmed there has been a statistically significant decline in the number of Carnaby's in the Swan Region, down 40% to 4036 counted in 2012. In the Greater Perth Region, there has been a statistically significant decrease of almost 40% from 2010. Numbers remained relatively stable between 2011 and 2012.

Counts from 38 roosts monitored over three years in the Swan Region found a statistically significant decline of 58% in the number of Carnaby's counted since 2010.

Mean roost size in the Swan Region in 2012 was not significantly different to mean roost size in 2010 or 2011, but there was a significant decrease from 2010 to 2011. However, there were only eight large roosts (>150 cockatoos) recorded in the 2012 GCC, similar to 2011 but fewer than the 19 large roosts recorded in 2010, indicating the roosting population remains fragmented compared to 2010.

The numbers of occupied roosts in the southern Swan Region is falling: there were only 10 occupied roosts recorded in this area in the 2012 Great Cockey Count, compared to 19 in 2010.

Follow-up surveys from 2010 to 2012 showed mean roost size in the Swan Region generally increases from April to June, and decreases in July, meaning that migration to the region is still occurring at the time of the Great Cockey Count. However, several large roosts recorded their maximum counts before or during the Great Cockey Count.



Follow-up surveys show that mean roost sizes were larger in July of 2011 and 2012 than in July of 2010, suggesting a delayed return to breeding areas is occurring.

The most important threats to Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo are increasing rates of loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat. The decrease in number of Carnaby's counted in the Swan Region since 2010, with no significant improvement since 2011, may indicate the impact of continued habitat loss and degradation. It is crucial to halt critical feeding and roosting habitat clearance within the Swan Region, and to protect and better manage existing habitat across the species' range.

Photos by Robyn Pickering and Georgina Steytler

## Key facts

- The Great Cocky Count counted Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos in the Perth region in 2006, 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- The 2010 to 2012 Great Cocky Counts have used standardised, rigorous surveys that allow defensible estimations of the population in the Swan Region around Perth.
- Since 2010, there has been a 40% drop in the number of Carnaby's counted.
- There has been a decrease in the number of large roosts since 2010.
- It is critical that as many members of the public, and BirdLife Australia members, contribute to Great Cocky Counts so that we can continue to monitor the rate of increase or decrease of numbers at night roosts.
- The 2013 Great Cocky Count will take place for an hour at sunset on Sunday 7 April 2013. For the cockies: join us!

## More information

The 2012 Great Cocky Count report and previous reports are available online. Go to [birdlife.org.au/carnabys](http://birdlife.org.au/carnabys)

## Next Great Cocky Count: 7 April 2013

Report new night-time cockatoo roost sites and get involved in the 2013 Great Cocky Count! Contact our Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Conservation Officer:

**Tamara Kabat**

**P** 08 9287 2204 or 0457 333 177

**E** [greatcockycount@birdlife.org.au](mailto:greatcockycount@birdlife.org.au)



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