

# **CONSERVATION CORNER**

**Up-date on the Glossy Black Cockatoo**  
**From 'Chewings' No. 17. September 2002**

## **2002 nesting season**

Lynn Pedler has banded thirty-one Glossy Black-Cockatoo nestlings, with one nestling still too small to be banded. This brings this year's total to thirty-three, including a nestling that fledged before it could be banded. Unfortunately, one fledgling was found dead on the North Coast Road at Middle River, only a few days after it had left the nest (in this case an artificial hollow). Since the carcass showed little sign of crushing, it's not clear whether cause of death was a blow from a vehicle or attack from a bird of prey.

Young fledglings remain vulnerable to predator attack for many months, since they cannot fly very well and spend most of their time sitting in trees, calling sporadically to be fed by their parents. The mortality rate for birds in their first year is thought to be around fifty per cent

## **Glossies in Penneshaw**

For the first time for several years, a flock of Glossies is present in Penneshaw, at the eastern end of Kangaroo Island. Up to twelve Glossies have been observed feeding and roosting in this area during July and August. Of the ten birds that Lynn has examined with the spotting scope, nine have bands and range in age from one to four years old.

These birds are known to have fledged in the Cygnet River and Parndana areas and then flown to American River, where a number of the banded birds were sighted earlier in the year. The birds have subsequently flown to Penneshaw, a distance of around 16 kilometres.

The presence of a group of Glossies at the eastern end of the Island increases the likelihood of the birds visiting the mainland, only a 15 kilometre flight from Penneshaw.

## **Population viability analysis (PVA)**

Recently, the South Australian Glossy Black-Cockatoo Recovery Team engaged Rick Southgate to undertake a literature search and identify a computer model suitable for Glossy Black-Cockatoo population analysis. Rick will also assess the data collected on Kangaroo Island to date and how it could be used with such a model.

PVAs are formulated to help investigate how populations function. They assist us to define problems more clearly and to better understand the data that we have collected. The primary aims of a PVA are to identify the probability that the target species will become extinct and to look at the factors that influence population growth.

This PVA will help to identify the factors that are limiting the growth of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo population, which has shown only a gradual increase from around 250 to around 260 birds in the last four years, despite on-going nesting success. It should also indicate how National Parks and Wildlife SA can best manage the population to ensure its long term survival.

## **Glossy habitat conservation**

It is estimated that around fifty per cent of Drooping She-oak feeding habitat (2,600 hectares) on Kangaroo Island is protected within NPWSA reserves, Heritage Agreements and through Glossy Black Rescue Fund projects.

Most regularly used areas of nesting habitat (Sugar Gum and SA Blue Gum) are conserved within NPWSA reserves and Heritage Agreements or are located on private property where the habitat is fenced from stock access.

Large areas of suitable nesting habitat are also conserved along creek lines in Flinders Chase at the western end of Kangaroo Island, but the Glossies do not currently use this area.