



## Glossy Black Conservancy News No. 12 February 2014

*The Glossy Black Conservancy is a not for profit consortium that seeks to increase awareness and promote a collaborative conservation management approach for Glossy Black-Cockatoos across South East Queensland and the north coast of New South Wales, through a partnership between government, private enterprise, researchers and the wider community.*

### Glossy Black-Cockatoo Birding Day 2013

The 2013 Glossy Black-Cockatoo Birding Day was held on 19 May across south-east Queensland and north-east New South Wales. Volunteers searched 1km<sup>2</sup> grid cells across nine local government areas in the region searching for glossies and their feed trees.

A total of 197 observers signed on for the day with 132 birds sighted – the most that has been sighted since the birding day went region wide in 2010! The Scenic Rim Region recorded the highest number of birds (55), followed by the Sunshine Coast (49).

Additionally, a nesting pair of glossy blacks was observed at Macleay Island in the Redlands. This is the first time that a nesting record has been obtained from the Birding Day!

Bird sighting and feed tree data from the 2013 Birding Day are summarised in the table below:

Region	No. of Observers	No. of Trees	Birds Seen
Gold Coast	30	8	22
Brisbane	2	0	0
Scenic Rim	52	44	55
Sunshine Coast	41	48	49
Moreton Bay	8	0	0
Logan	17	0	0
Redlands	16	6	4
Tweed	31	19	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>132</b>

The next birding day will be held on **Sunday October 19 2014!** Further details, including the names and contact details of regional co-ordinators for each Council area, will be added to the Conservancy's website (<http://www.glossyblack.org.au/>) closer to the date.

### Glossy Black-Cockatoo Essential Habitat Mapping

SEQ Catchments, a partner of the Glossy Black Conservancy, has developed a predictive essential habitat model for glossy black-cockatoo based on the intersection of high-precision sighting records with regional ecosystems which glossy black-cockatoo food trees are known to occur.

Jessica Holding, a research student from the University of Queensland School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Management, has recently completed a project field-testing the habitat model. The aim of the study was to ground-truth and update the model, in two ways:

1. By finding evidence of glossy black-cockatoo habitation, especially in areas where they haven't been seen previously; and
2. By calculating the density of glossy black-cockatoo food trees (*Allocasuarina* species) in predicted habitat polygons of differing categorisation (known habitat or predicted habitat, and with high or medium confidence) to test the prediction that potential habitat areas close to high precision records (known habitat) will have higher densities of food trees than equivalent potential habitat areas distant from high precision records.

Although not conclusive, the prediction was supported, suggesting that food tree density can affect glossy black-cockatoo use of potential habitat. The results also provide validation of the different habitat categories used in the essential habitat mapping.

Throughout field work, it was noted that the quality of potential habitat varies greatly, due to factors such as topography, weed invasion and recent fire. Because of this, suitability of habitat polygons should be determined on a case-by-case basis.



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These findings are consistent with the literature, as food tree density is not the sole factor in determining the availability of food trees due to the fact the glossy black-cockatoos are very fussy eaters.

Because of the uncertainty surrounding the primary reason for habitat selection, it is suggested that areas containing above average *Allocasuarina* densities are maintained for glossy black-cockatoo conservation purposes, so that their population is not constrained by availability of resources.

Jessica's project was funded by the Glossy Black Conservancy, and Conservancy members also assisted with field work.



UQ student Jessica Holding undertaking field work as part of the ground-truthing of habitat mapping.

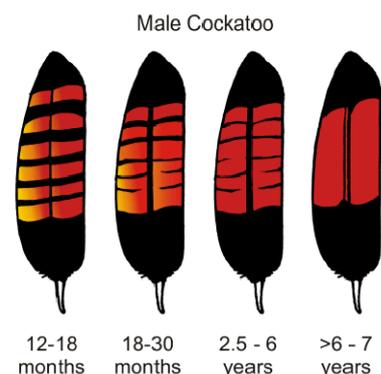
### Feather Collection

We are calling on regular observers of glossy blacks to keep an eye out for naturally shed feathers at locations such as regular watering and roost sites, to improve our understanding of dispersal and population ecology!

The Glossy Black Conservancy is proposing to manage the opportunistic collection of feathers for a future research project that will use molecular methods to analyse gene flow between populations. Feathers generally retain sufficient genetic material within the feather quill to enable DNA extraction and provide a non-invasive method of genetic sampling.

In Queensland, a permit is required for collecting feathers. The Conservancy plans to obtain a permit on which willing, regular observers of glossy blacks are listed as official collectors. If you are interested in being a part of this project, please contact Dr Ian Gynther on 3202 0250 or email [Ian.Gynther@ehp.qld.gov.au](mailto:Ian.Gynther@ehp.qld.gov.au). If you would like to help but would prefer not to be nominated on the permit, please still tell us about any feathers you find so that we may come and collect them.

Only adult male glossy black-cockatoos have solid bright red panels in their tail feathers, whereas younger birds of both sexes have orange/yellow panels in the tail with additional horizontal black barring across these coloured panels, as illustrated in the following diagrams:

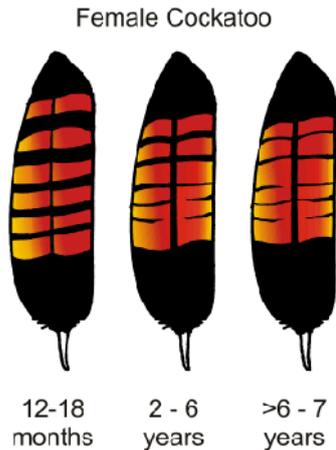


Male glossy black-cockatoo feathers from juvenile to adult (left to right). Horizontal barring is lost as birds age.



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Female glossy black-cockatoo feathers from juvenile to adult (left to right). The barring is not lost as birds age.

### Recent GBC Sightings

Since late November 2013 large numbers of glossy blacks have been frequenting a private property at Hervey Bay. Up to 8 adult birds have been seen in one day! Thank you to Cliff Greet from Hervey Bay Birdwatchers for sharing these images!



Glossy black roosting at Walligan, Hervey Bay.



A group of birds feeding at Walligan.



Male glossy black-cockatoo feeding at Walligan (note solid red tail panels and no yellow patches on head).

Some great footage of glossy blacks feeding, in the Macleay River Valley in the New England region of NSW can be seen at the following link:

<http://wildambience.com/2013/07/glossy-black-cockatoo/>

Thank you to Marc Anderson from Wild Ambience for sharing this footage with the Conservancy!



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### Report Your Sightings!

Please report any glossy black-cockatoo sightings to us via the online form on the Conservancy's website (<http://www.glossyblack.org.au/database.php>). Sightings of feed trees can also be logged by clicking on the appropriate button (note that if you are logging a sighting of a bird feeding, there is no need to also log a feed tree sighting).

- - Click on this button to report a Glossy Black-Cockatoo sighting
- - Click on this button to report a 'Feed Tree' sighting (presence of chewings)

Please enter all details as requested on the form so that we can process and use your sighting information. Thank you for your valuable contribution!

### Glossy Black Conservancy on Facebook!

Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for Glossy Black Conservancy to check out our new Facebook page. Click "Like" to be kept up to date on news, research and upcoming events related to glossies.



### Golden Ort Award 2013

Each year, the outstanding contribution of a Conservancy member is recognized through the presentation of the Golden Ort Award.

In 2013, the Golden Ort was awarded to Tracey Larkin of [Mount Barney Lodge](#), for her work in her local area through the production of newsletters, coordination of activities, and for the establishment and maintenance of the Glossy Black Conservancy Facebook page.

Congratulations and thank you for your efforts Tracey!



Glossy black-cockatoo at Mt. Barney