



BIRD

Zoothera lunulata halmaturina

Bassian Thrush (South Australian)

| AUS | SA | AMLR | Endemism | Residency |
|-----|----|------|----------|-----------|
| - | R | V | State | Resident |



Photo: © Fiona Paton

Conservation Significance

The AMLR distribution is disjunct, isolated from other extant occurrences within SA. The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.³ Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Very Restricted'.⁴

Has a Bassian zoogeographic distribution, and is at the western extreme of its natural range in the MLR.¹

Description

Secretive bird. Plumage mottled brown to olive-brown, heavily scalloped with black crescent-shaped bars on the back, rump and head. The paler underparts all have brown-black scalloping. White eye-ring. In flight it shows a broad dark diagonal bar across the white underside of its wing. Mainly heard at dawn or in dull weather, its song being three clear notes: the first steady, the second rising briefly, and the third steady.²

Distribution and Population

The species is found predominantly around the south-east of Australia, and also in the Atherton Tablelands, QLD.² However, this subspecies is restricted to SA. It has lost at least half of its original area of occupancy. The estimated extent of occurrence is 9,000 km². The estimated area of occupancy is 1,000 km². The number of breeding birds is estimated at 12,000 (low reliability estimate) and decreasing.⁵ It is confined to larger remnants (>100 ha) and occurs as isolated

populations in the MLR and southern Flinders Ranges (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records restricted to MLR areas from Talisker and Deep Creek CPs in the south to just north of Kaiserstuhl CP in the north.⁴

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records indicate the distribution was similar to post-1983 but with the northern most record just north of Gumeracha.⁴

Habitat

On the mainland, the species favours damp Eucalypt forest or woodland and has also been recorded breeding in exotic pine plantations with some native understorey. In much of its range, suitable habitat is confined to creeklines or dune swales. Damp habitats seem particularly important in summer (Edington 1983, SAOA 1991).⁵

Damp, densely forested areas and gullies are favoured, usually with a thick canopy overhead and leaf-litter below.²

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Heathy Woodland and Grassy Woodland.⁴

Biology and Ecology

Mostly a sedentary species, which feeds on the ground by scratching under the leaf-litter for small invertebrates and worms (SAOA 1991).^{2,5}

Lays two to three eggs in a bulky, bowl-shaped nest (Beruldsen 1980).⁵ Nest may be quite low or up to about 15 m above the ground. Both parents care for the young. Incubation period is approximately 14 days with 14 days in the nest.²

Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in Ngarrindjeri, Kurna and Peramangk (bordering Ngadjuri) Nations.⁴

Threats

Adversely affected by clearing or degradation of densely vegetated habitats.² Much of the best habitat has been cleared for agriculture. That which remains on the mainland is threatened by increased water extraction (resulting in the desiccation of the litter layer downstream) and grazing by cattle. In 1983, wildfire destroyed several sites where the subspecies had been common (SAOA 1991).⁵ Prescribed burning has the

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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014



ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Threatened Species Profile

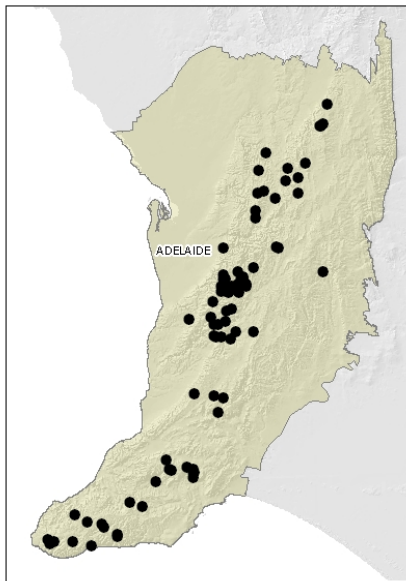
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for Environment
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potential to impact on the habitat of this species by reducing the amount of leaf-litter and encouraging annual growth (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Also threatened by competition from the introduced Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) (G. Carpenter and D. Armstrong *pers. comm.*).^{5,6}

Additional current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.⁴ Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

References

Note: In some cases original reference sources are not included in this list, however they can be obtained from the reference from which the information has been sourced (the reference cited in superscript).

1 Armstrong, D. M., Croft, S. N. and Foulkes, J. N. (2003). *A Biological Survey of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia, 2000-2001*. Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australia.

2 Australian Museum (2006). *Birds in Backyards: Bird Finder*. Available from <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net> (accessed November 2007).

3 Cale, B. (2005). *Towards a Recovery Plan for the Declining Birds of the Mount Lofty Ranges*. Scientific Resource Document for Birds for Biodiversity. Unpublished Report.

4 Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot*

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