

# Balireh | Glossy Black-cockatoo

**Scientific name:** *Calyptorhynchus lathamii*

**Common names:** Glossy Black-cockatoo

**Status:** Vulnerable in NSW

The Glossy Black-cockatoo has a strong spiritual cultural connection for Aboriginal people and features in many cultural stories locally. Feathers are used as important ceremonial body art decoration and according to bush lore, the Glossy Black-cockatoo's calls are an indication of rain.

Glossy Black-cockatoos are one of Australia's rarest threatened large black cockatoos and are known to have a life span that can exceed 30 years. They are found only in eastern and south-eastern Australia, and their populations are declining. They are fussy eaters, feeding only on the seeds in She-oak cones (*Casuarina* and *Allocasuarina*) and only on selected individual trees. The birds will fly more than 10km to feeding areas, returning to the same food tree time and time again, and often ignoring nearby trees full of cones. Currently their feeding patterns are not fully understood.

The Glossy Black-cockatoo is under threat due to the loss of habitat, including the large tree hollows which they require for nest sites, and due to reliance on the she-oak as a food source. They lay only one egg every two years, using the nest for three months.

As the population ecology of the species is so poorly understood, a number of councils, including Tweed Shire Council, joined forces with the Glossy Black Conservancy, and along with local 'citizen scientists' started an annual count of the birds in 2010. Community members and local residents are recording sightings of the birds, which has become the most effective way to monitor populations. These annual surveys ensure data about the birds' locations and behavior are documented and used to help researchers conserve the species. The data is also used to support ecological research and monitoring on the nesting



Photographer Tanya Fountain

ecology and breeding success of Glossy Black-cockatoos in South-Eastern Queensland and Far North-Eastern New South Wales

## How you can help:

- Residents can take part in the annual Glossy Black Cockatoo count, or submit sightings and signs of their feeding activity any day of the year by using an on-line sightings tool on the Glossy Blacks Conservancy's website, [www.glossyblack.org.au](http://www.glossyblack.org.au).
- The She-oak trees that the Glossy Black cockatoo relies on need protection. You can help by protecting any that exist on your property, or choosing a She-oak when planting new trees.