

Garden wildlife: Glossy Black-cockatoos in Hornsby Shire

Glossy Black-cockatoos are the smallest black cockatoo being approx. 48cm long and with a wingspan of 90cm. It is known by its black colour, small crest and red tail feathers. Its call is quieter than the more common Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo.

Glossy Black-cockatoos live in groups of 2-10 birds and can feed over large areas. They are known to forage for food over large areas, although they may defend nest trees and favoured feeding areas.



Top and Above: Chewed Casuarina cones
Photos: NPWS

What can you do?

The Glossy Black-cockatoo has been listed as 'vulnerable' under the NSW Threatened Species Act 1995.

The Glossy Black-cockatoo usually prefers feed trees with heavy cone crops. You can help by maintaining singular trees and stands of She-oaks on your property as well as planting local She-oak species.

These birds also require suitably sized tree hollows for nesting and rearing young. The retention of hollow-bearing in both live and dead trees is therefore important for continued breeding success of this species.

Where do Glossy Black-cockatoos occur?

Glossy Black-cockatoos live in variety of habitats from coastal woodlands and dry eucalypt forests to open inland woodlands and forested watercourses, wherever She-Oaks, their preferred food trees occur.

Additionally, Glossy Black-cockatoos require large tree hollows in both living and dead trees for nesting and must compete with other hollow-dependent mammals and birds for a suitable nesting hollow.

What do Glossy Black-cockatoos eat?

Glossy Black-cockatoos feed almost entirely on the seeds of the Allocasuarina species. They use their strong bill to extract seeds by crushing cones held in their claws. Occasionally they may eat insect larvae and have been observed feeding on seeds from some eucalypts, angophoras, acacias and hakeas.

Evidence of feeding on She-oak (Allocasuarina) stands by Glossy Black-cockatoos is characterised by a litter of chewed cones under individual trees. These chewed cones usually remain on the ground for several weeks to months and are a clear indication that this stand of She-oaks is an important food source for this species.



Allocasuarina tree with seed cones Photo: NPWS
Insert: Glossy Black Cockatoo Photo: Lionel Cole