

[1] "[Monarch](#)" [Glossary](#) [SPRAT](#) [Profile](#) For information to assist regulatory considerations, refer to Policy Statements and Guidelines, the Conservation Advice, the Listing Advice and/or the Recovery Plan. [EPBC Legal Status and Documents](#) [Top](#) [EPBC Act Listing Status](#) [Listed marine](#) [Listed migratory - EPBC Act](#), [Bonn](#) [Approved Conservation Advice](#) There is no approved Conservation Advice for this species [Listing Advice](#) There is no Listing Advice for this species [Adopted/Made Recovery Plans](#) There is no adopted or made Recovery Plan for this species [Adopted/Made Threat Abatement Plans](#) Department of the Environment (2015). Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/tap/threat-abatement-plan-feral-cats>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 23-Jul-2015. [Other Commonwealth Documents](#) [Top](#) [Policy Statements and Guidelines](#) [Draft referral guideline for 14 birds listed as migratory species under the EPBC Act \(Department of the Environment, 2015\) \[Admin Guideline\]](#). [Federal Register of Legislative Instruments](#) [Marine: Declaration under section 248 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of Marine Species \(Commonwealth of Australia, 2000c\) \[Legislative Instrument\]](#) [Migratory: List of Migratory Species \(13/07/2000\) \(Commonwealth of Australia, 2000b\) \[Legislative Instrument\]](#) [Non-statutory Listing Status](#) [IUCN: Listed as Least Concern \(Global Status: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: 2020.2 list\)](#) [NGO: Listed as Least Concern \(The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2010 - non-threatened\)](#) [Naming](#) [Top](#) [Scientific name](#) [Monarcha melanopsis \[609\]](#) [Family](#) [Dicuridae: Passeriformes: Aves: Chordata: Animalia](#) [Species author](#) (Vieillot, 1818) [Infraspecies author](#) [Reference](#) [Distribution Map](#) [Top](#) [Distribution map](#) The distribution shown is generalised from the Departments Species of National Environmental Significance dataset. This is an indicative distribution map of the present distribution of the species based on best available knowledge. Some species information is withheld in line with sensitive species polices. See map caveat for more information. [Illustrations](#) [Top](#) [Illustrations](#) [Google Images](#) [Other Links, Including Superseded Commonwealth Documents](#) [Top](#) [Commonwealth of Australia \(2000b\). List of Migratory Species \(13/07/2000\). F2007B00750. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2007B00750.](#) [Commonwealth of Australia \(2000c\). Declaration under section 248 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of Marine Species. F2008B00465. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2008B00465.](#) [Department of the Environment and Heritage \(2006qn\). Monarcha melanopsis in Species Profile and Threats \(SPRAT\) database. Canberra: DEH. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=609.](#) [Morris, A.K. & A. Burton \(1997\). New South Wales Annual Bird Report 1995. Australian Birds. 30:81-149.](#) [Newsletters](#) [Top](#) [EPBC Act email updates can be received via the Communities for Communities newsletter and the EPBC Act newsletter.](#) [Caveat](#) [Top](#) This database is designed to provide statutory, biological and ecological information on species and ecological communities, migratory species, marine species, and species and species products subject to international trade and commercial use protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act). It has been compiled from a range of sources including listing advice, recovery plans, published literature and individual experts. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, no guarantee is given, nor responsibility taken, by

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Where available the sections below provide a biological profile for the species. Biological profiles vary in age and content across species, some are no longer being updated and are retained as archival content. These profiles are still displayed as they contain valuable information for many species. The Profile Update section below indicates when the biological profile was last updated for some species. For information to assist regulatory considerations, please refer to Conservation Advice, the Recovery Plan, Policy Statements and Guidelines.

Australian and State/Territory Government Legal Status

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The Convention on Migratory Species (the Bonn Convention) uses Morony and colleagues' (1975) treatment of bird species. As such, this species is Migratory under the family Muscicapidae (sensu lato) under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Taxonomy

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Scientific name: *Monarcha melanopsis*
Common name: Black-faced Monarch

The Black-faced Monarch is considered to be a monotypic species by Schodde and Mason (1999). Storr (1973, 1984c) and Blakers and colleagues (1984) describe two subspecies: *pallidus*, in the Cape York Region south to Cardwell and *melanopsis* further south. Schodde and Mason's (1999) appraisal found only a slight increase in wing-length in adjacent populations across their distribution from north to south Australia, but no significant difference between northern and southern breeding populations. It has also been suggested that northern populations have a narrower bill, the side of the head is paler and the black forehead less extensive (Storr 1973), but the study of Schodde and Mason (1999) did not support this.

Australian Distribution

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Australian distribution

The Black-faced Monarch is widespread in eastern Australia (Blakers et al. 1984; Coates 1990a; Schodde & Mason 1999). It is vagrant to Western Australia; a single bird was detected 16 km east-north-east of Mt Brookes, June 1987 (Johnstone 1991). In Queensland, it is widespread from the islands of the Torres Strait and on Cape York Peninsula, south along the coasts (occasionally including offshore islands) and the eastern slopes of the Great Divide, to the New South Wales border (Beruldsen 1990; Blakers et al. 1984; Draffan et al. 1983; Storr 1984c). The species also occasionally occurs further inland, for example, at Forty Mile Scrub in April 1976, and Eight Mile Plain in October 1991; a single vagrant was recorded at Windorah, south-western Queensland in March 1989 (Britton 1990, 1992; Ford et al. 1980). In New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, the species occurs around the eastern slopes and tablelands of the Great Divide, inland to Coutts Crossing, Armidale, Widden Valley, Wollemi National Park, Wombeyan Caves and Canberra (Morris et al. 1981; Blakers et al. 1984; Ford et al. 1985; Taylor & COG 1992). It is rarely recorded farther inland (e.g. Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve, January 1995, and Maules Creek, 50 km south-east of Narrabri, December 1994) (Morris & Burton 1996a, 1997). In Victoria, it is largely confined to east Gippsland, where it is widespread south of 37 °S, and west to around the Mitchell River National Park (Emison et al. 1987). It is vagrant farther west, with recent records sparsely scattered in Tarra Bulga National Park, Noojee, Powelltown, Mt Eliza, Kinglake, Aireys Inlet and Echuca (Emison et al. 1987; Drummond 1985; Peake 1991). There are several historical records for the Dandenong Ranges (e.g. Wheeler 1942). In South Australia, the species is a vagrant, with a single bird sighted at Goolwa in December 1998 (Eckert 2001) and a single bird at Sturt Gorge Recreation Park, Adelaide in March 2000 (Rogers 2001). International distribution

The Black-faced Monarch is recorded in Papua New Guinea; from Merauke and the Trans-Fly Region; north to the Star Mountains and the Hindenberg Range; also around Finschhafen, and from Port Moresby east to the Louisiade Archipelago (Coates 1990a). The species is vagrant to the Aru Island (Diamond & Bishop 1994) and New Zealand. Historic changes

The species showed no significant regional variation in distribution between the period from 1998—2001 (see Barrett et al. 2002), and from 1977—1981 (Blakers et al. 1984) indicating no change in range in this time.

Habitat

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The Black-faced Monarch mainly occurs in rainforest ecosystems, including semi-deciduous vine-thickets, complex notophyll vine-forest, tropical (mesophyll) rainforest, subtropical (notophyll) rainforest, mesophyll (broadleaf)

thicket/shrubland, warm temperate rainforest, dry (monsoon) rainforest and (occasionally) cool temperate rainforest (Blakers et al. 1984; Bravery 1970; Emison et al. 1987; Ford et al. 1980; Gill 1970; Gosper 1992; Laurance et al. 1996; Morris et al. 1981; Officer 1969; Schodde & Mason 1999; Smith 1984; Storr 1984c). The species also occurs in selectively logged and 20–30 years old regrowth rainforest (Laurance et al. 1996). It is also sometimes found in nearby open eucalypt forests (mainly wet sclerophyll forests), especially in gullies with a dense, shrubby understorey as well as in dry sclerophyll forests and woodlands, often with a patchy understorey. The species especially occurs in 'marginal' habitats during winter or during passage (migration) (Blakers et al. 1984; Emison et al. 1987; Ford et al. 1985; Gosper 1992; Kavanagh et al. 1985; Marchant 1979b; Morris et al. 1981; Officer 1969; Recher & Holmes 1985; Schodde & Mason 1999; Storr 1984c). Other areas in which the Black-faced Monarch may be found include: gullies in mountain areas or coastal foothills (Emison et al. 1987; Officer 1969; Smith 1984; Storr 1984c; Taylor & COG 1992), softwood scrub dominated by Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*) (Leach 1995), coastal scrub dominated by Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) and Southern Mahogany (*Eucalyptus botryiodes*) (Smith 1984), occasionally among mangroves (Draffan et al. 1983; Storr 1984c; Diamond & Bishop 1994) and sometimes in suburban parks and gardens (Taylor & COG 1992).

Life Cycle

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The Black-faced Monarch breeds in rainforest habitat, and generally nests near the top of trees with large leaves, in the tops of small saplings, or in lower shrubs (BA NRS 2002; Campbell 1900; Marchant 1986; North 1901–14). The nests are usually well concealed by foliage and usually secured in a three-pronged fork (Beruldsen 2002, pers. comm; Campbell 1900; North 1901–14). The species nests less often on horizontal forks or on horizontal branches with thin lateral twigs or shoots (BA NRS 2002; North 1901–14). Tree and shrub species used as nest sites include: daisybushes (*Olearia* spp.), Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*), Yellow Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*), wattles (*Acacia* spp.), Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*), Grey Myrtle (*Backhousia myrtifolia*) and Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) (BA NRS 2002).

Specific locations where breeding has been recorded includes: the Atherton Region in Queensland (wet tropics) - Julatten south to the Paluma Range and inland to the Atherton Tableland and from 26° S in south-eastern Queensland to near Lakes Entrance, Victoria (BA NRS 2002; Blakers et al. 1984; Bravery 1970; Gill 1970; Schodde & Mason 1999).

The species has been recorded with the following densities: 0.01 birds/ha near Armidale, north-eastern New South Wales (Ford et al. 1985); 0.2 birds/ha at Moruya, southern New South Wales (Marchant 1979b); 0.2–0.5 birds/ha near Eden, south-eastern New South Wales (Kavanagh et al. 1985) and 0.1–0.2 birds/ha near Bombala, southern New South Wales (Recher & Holmes 1985).

The breeding biology of the Black-faced Monarch is relatively well-known. There have been no major studies, but there are 46 records in Birds Australia's Nest Record Scheme database (BA NRS 2002).

The Black-faced Monarch breeds from October to March, with eggs recorded mostly from November to mid-January (BA NRS 2002; Bravery 1970; Campbell 1900; Emison et al. 1987; Gill 1970; North 1901–1914). However, there is some regional variation in the timing of laying: in north-east of Queensland, between Cooktown and Bowen, eggs are laid from November to January; in south-east Queensland, eggs are laid from October to December and possibly into January (Campbell 1900; North 1901-14; Lavery et al. 1968; Storr 1984c; BA NRS 2002); in New South Wales, eggs have been recorded from October to February (Campbell 1900; North 1901-1914; Morris et al. 1981; BA NRS 2002); in Victoria breeding has been recorded mainly during December to March (Emison et al. 1987). The clutch size is usually two or three (Beruldsen 2002, pers. comm; Campbell 1900; North 1901–14; Officer 1969; Storr 1984c). The incubation period is thought to be 13–15 days and the fledging period approximately 7 days or slightly more (BA NRS 2002). The species appears to have a relatively high rate of fledging failure, with analyses of hatching and fledging success indicating that an average of 0.1 fledged young is yielded per nest per breeding event (BA NRS 2002).

Feeding

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The Black-faced Monarch feeds mostly in rainforest but also in open eucalypt forest. They forage at all vertical levels of the forest, though most often at low or middle levels, within 6 m of the ground (Blakers et al. 1984; Coates 1990a; Hughes & Hughes 1980; Officer 1969; Recher & Holmes 1985). They collect most prey from the foliage, and to a lesser extent, branches and crevices of trees and shrubs. They may also catch prey in the air, but very rarely feed on the ground or from the trunks of trees and from loose bark (Blakers et al. 1984; Hughes & Hughes 1980; Laurance et al. 1996; Officer 1969; Recher et al. 1985). There are no detailed analyses of the diet of the Black-faced Monarch. However, they are known to eat arthropods, including: spiders (Arachnida, Araneae); beetles (Coleoptera); sawflies and wasps (Hymenoptera); grasshoppers (Orthoptera); bugs, cicadas and lerps (Hemiptera); moths and caterpillars (Lepidoptera); flies (Diptera); and dragonflies (Odonata) (Barker & Vestjens 1990; Blakers et al. 1984; MacGillivray 1914; North 1901-1914; Officer 1969).

Movement Patterns

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The movements of the Black-faced

Monarch are poorly known. They exhibit migratory behaviour, spending spring, summer and autumn in eastern Australia, and wintering in southern and eastern Papua New Guinea from March to August (Blakers et al. 1984; Officer 1969; Schodde & Mason 1999; Storr 1973, 1984c). There are some records in Australia during winter months (Blakers et al. 1984), but these are thought to be non-migrating immature birds (Hughes & Hughes 1980). The species is claimed to be resident (i.e. does not migrate) in some parts of north-east Queensland and eastern Papua New Guinea (Officer 1969). It is a passage migrant across Torres Strait in small numbers (Draffan et al. 1983). Griffioen and Clarke (2002) describe the movement pattern of this species as an "Intercontinental Whole Coast" pattern. Species exhibiting this pattern move north along the east coast of Australia from as far south as Victoria. They move directly along the coast as well as taking the shortest route inland, and a large proportion of the population leaves Australia during winter. The species leaves Victoria between February and March (Emison et al. 1987). In New South Wales, they usually leave between March and April, but often depart in February (see Marchant 1979b; Morris & Burton 1999). In Queensland, they migrate between February and May (Beruldsen 1990; Blakers et al. 1984; Bravery 1970; MacGillivray 1914; Storr 1973, 1984c). Black-faced Monarchs are usually seen singly or in pairs, however, during migration they sometimes join flocks of mixed-species (Coates 1990a; Diamond & Bishop 1994; Makin 1961; Marchant 1986). It should also be noted that there is evidence that the Black-faced Monarch is altering its migration timing in response to climate change (Beaumont et al. 2006).

Survey Guidelines

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Black-faced Monarchs have been surveyed using standard bird survey techniques, including fixed-width transect counts (e.g. 50 m width) and point counts (e.g. of one hour duration) (Ford et al. 1985; Kavanagh et al. 1985; Recher et al. 1985; Laurance et al. 1996).

Threats

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Individuals occasionally collide with windows (Taplin 1991) and lighthouses (Makin 1961).

Management Documentation

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Management documents relevant to the Black-faced Monarch are at the start of the profile.

Species Profile References

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