

A statement for the purposes of approved conservation advice  
(s266B of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

**Approved Conservation Advice for**  
***Cereopsis novaehollandiae grisea* (Cape Barren Goose (south-western))**

This Conservation Advice has been developed based on the best available information at the time this conservation advice was approved.

**Description**

*Cereopsis novaehollandiae grisea*, Family Anatidae, also known as the Cape Barren Goose (south-western) or the Recherche Cape Barren Goose, is a large bird measuring about 72–85 cm in length when fully grown. Adults of both sexes are grey with a creamy-white crown and forehead, large dark-grey to black spots on the shoulders and back, small black spots on the upper wing, a black tail and a black bill with a large, bright yellow-green patch at the base (Storr, 1991). This sub species differs from the nominated species in that the white crown extends to the top of the eye, the body plumage is browner and the legs are darker (Marchant & Higgins, 1990).

**Conservation Status**

The Cape Barren Goose (south-western) is listed as **vulnerable**. This subspecies is eligible for listing as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) (EPBC Act) as, prior to the commencement of the EPBC Act, it was listed as vulnerable under Schedule 1 of the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992* (Cwlth). The subspecies is also listed as rare under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* (Western Australia).

**Distribution and Habitat**

The Cape Barren Goose (south-western) is most abundant on islands and rocks in the Archipelago of the Recherche, off Western Australia's southern coast. The subspecies has also been recorded west of the archipelago on West Island, Red Island and Hauloff Rock, and is a casual visitor to mainland Western Australia from Bremer Bay to Cape Arid. The subspecies, which occurs on more than 70 islands and rocks off the Western Australian coast, is most regularly observed in grasslands and low fields of succulent herbs (Garnett & Crowley, 2000). The Cape Barren Goose (south-western) occurs in the South Coast and Rangelands (Western Australia) Natural Resource Management Regions.

The total population is estimated at 650 individuals, and has remained at similar levels over the past 50 years, with the exception of a decline in 1991 associated with unusual weather conditions; and the population is considered secure (Halse et al., 1995).

The distribution of this species is not known to overlap with any EPBC Act-listed threatened ecological communities.

**Threats**

The main potential threat to the Cape Barren Goose (south-western), given its distribution on islands, is extreme weather or climate conditions, particularly heatwaves. The population size declined considerably in 1991 during a period of extremely hot and dry weather, with a large number of birds dying from starvation or heat stress (Garnett, 1993; Halse et al., 1995). An expected increase in temperature and decrease in rainfall with global climate change in southern Western Australia could therefore render the Archipelago of the Recherche less suitable for the Cape Barren Goose (south-western).

The main potential threats to the subspecies are alteration of habitat; hunting by humans; and introduction of non-endemic fauna, flora or pathogens to the Archipelago of the Recherche.

**Research Priorities**

Research priorities that would inform future regional and local priority actions include:

- Research potential impacts of changing climatic conditions, and investigate possible mitigation measures.
- Establish the genetic distinctiveness of the population.

### **Regional and Local Priority Actions**

The following regional and local priority recovery and threat abatement actions can be done to support the recovery of Cape Barren Goose (south-western).

#### **Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification**

- Monitor known populations to identify key threats.
- Monitor the progress of recovery, including the effectiveness of management actions and the need to adapt them if necessary.
- Control and manage access to areas inhabited by the subspecies.

#### **Diseases, Fungi and Parasites**

- Monitor for presence of non-endemic fauna, flora or pathogens on islands in the Archipelago of the Recherche.

#### **Conservation Information**

- Raise awareness of the Cape Barren Goose (south-western) within the local community.

This list does not necessarily encompass all actions that may be of benefit to the Cape Barren Goose (south-western), but highlights those that are considered to be of highest priority at the time of preparing the conservation advice.

### **Information Sources:**

Garnett, ST (Ed) 1993, *Threatened and Extinct Birds of Australia. Second edition. Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Report 82*, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and RAOU, Melbourne.

Garnett, ST & Crowley, GM 2000, *The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2000*, Environment Australia, Canberra.

Halse, SA, Burbidge, AA, Lane, JAK, Haberley, B, Pearson, GB & Clarke, A 1995, 'Size of the Cape Barren Goose population in Western Australia', *Emu*, vol. 95, pp. 77-83.

Marchant, S. & Higgins, PJ 1990, *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds Volume 1, Ratites to ducks*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Storr, GM 1991, *Birds of the South-west Division of Western Australia*, Supplement to Records of the Western Australian Museum, vol. 35, pp. 1-150