

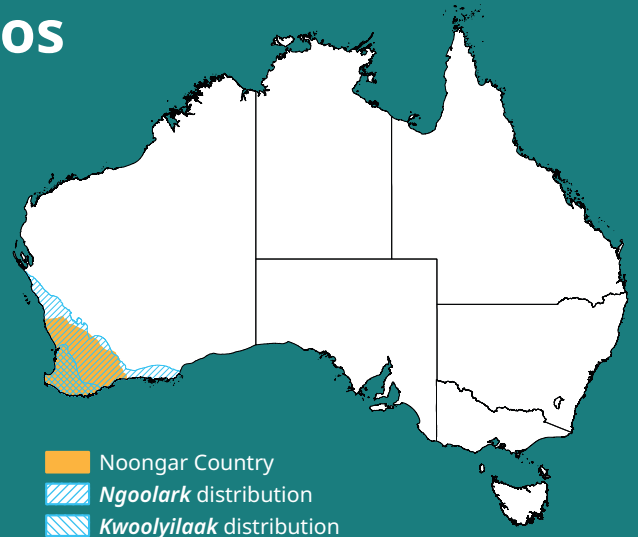
# White-tailed black cockatoos on Noongar Country

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Common names: 1: Carnaby's cockatoo, 2: Baudin's cockatoo

Scientific names: 1: *Zanda latirostris*, 2: *Zanda baudinii*

Language names: 1: *Ngoolark*, 2: *Kwoolyilaak*



## Status



## Description

*Ngoolark* and *Kwoolyilaak* are all long-lived, slow-breeding birds that display strong pair bonds and mate for life. They are monogamous breeders and return to the same site to breed each year. They can live for 40 to 50 years in the wild.

*Ngoolark* and *Kwoolyilaak* both have a white patch on their ears and white panels in their tail feathers. The beak of *Kwoolyilaak* has a longer and finer upper mandible.

Overall population numbers for each species are declining and are expected to continue to decline.



*Ngoolark*. Photo: Louise/stock.adobe.com

## Distribution

Both species are endemic to south-west Western Australia.

*Ngoolark* occur from Kalbarri to the east of Esperance and are semi-migratory, flying from inland Wheatbelt woodland areas where they breed, to coastal woodland areas to feed. They are locally extinct in many parts of the Wheatbelt.

*Kwoolyilaak* have a similar distribution, occurring from north of Perth across to Kojonup and east past Albany. They are locally resident but move away from their breeding areas at the end of the breeding season to form large flocks.

## Habitat

Both species nest in tree hollows, with trees likely to take 200 years or longer to develop suitable nest hollows. Nesting habitat for *Ngoolark* includes remnant eucalypt woodlands in the Wheatbelt (mainly Salmon gum and Wandoo) and for *Kwoolyilaak* includes Marri, Jarrah and Karri forests in the south-west. *Ngoolark* also require feeding habitat nearby (within an approximately 12 km radius from the nesting tree), which includes Kwongan heath.

Non-nesting habitat consists of banksia woodlands/shrubland, coastal scrub and introduced pine trees for *Ngoolark*, and south-west Marri forests with proteaceous scrub for *Kwoolyilaak*.

## Threats

Threats to these black cockatoo species include:

- **Agricultural and urban development**, leading to the loss of vegetation, vegetation degradation through salinity and fragmentation impacting upon breeding, non-breeding/ foraging and night roosting habitat
- **Mining and extraction activities**, leading to the loss or degradation of habitat
- **Illegal shooting and take**, leading to reductions in breeding success and recruitment of juveniles
- **Climate change**, including tree dieback associated with extreme temperatures and more frequent drought events
- **Collisions with motor vehicles**, resulting in a change in foraging behaviour driven by the availability of food resources
- **Disease**, such as Cockatoo Hindlimb Paralysis Syndrome (CHiPS) and Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (PBFD)
- **Wrong-way fire**, including out-of-season fires, too frequent fires and large, hot wildfire events, in particular those that destroy nesting hollows and vegetation that supports food plants.

## Cultural Connections

**Ngoolark** are an important species which connect all Noongar Nations across the south-west of Western Australia. **Ngoolark** feature strongly in the **Nytting** (Creation Time), they are also totemic birds for many Noongars.

Black cockatoo and white cockatoo Country meet across a ridgeline that help to delineate Noongar Country from Yamatji Country (to the north) and Ngadjju Country (to the east), a movement pattern associated with Lore and kinship.



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Design and layout by Nani Creative

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## Cultural Values

### Country

The language names for these species come from the sounds they make. They are key indicator species; you hear them long before you see them. The presence of **Ngoolark** signify important seasonal changes like the start of rain and they also can help to find water.

*“The sounds of these birds are powerful, a reminder of our connection to our Country. Hearing them makes you feel good.”*

*David Wardong Collard, Noongar*

### Knowledge

Sharing knowledge, passing knowledge down to the younger generation, is a responsibility of Noongar Elders. **Ngoolark** are knowledge holders and key in aiding the transfer of knowledge between generations and clans.

*“We hold knowledge about these birds. Elders have shared stories with me about Lore and practice.”*

*David Wardong Collard, Noongar*

### Kin

Noongars hold responsibilities to care for black cockatoos as they are part of **Boodja** (Country). Their feathers were used in ceremony, these feathers are gifts from our animal kin.

*“It is about survival. It is critical to Noongar culture, these species must not disappear.”*

*David Wardong Collard, Noongar*



## Results of Poor Management

### Loss of habitat

Noongar Country is part of a global biodiversity hotspot yet huge areas have been cleared for agriculture, mining and urban development. Big new mines and mine extensions are still being permitted in critical black cockatoo habitat

*“Our biodiversity hotspot is being ravaged. Noongars want a say in how our Boodja is being used, we need to ensure it is healthy for future generations.”*

*David Wardong Collard, Noongar*

### Poor water quality

Water pollution and salinity that are a consequence of farming, clearing and mining are of great concern. Black cockatoos also come to drink from toxic tailings dams built as part of mining operations.

### Poor bird diet

Due to habitat clearance, birds come into Perth and other towns and eat the fruits and seeds from introduced trees which don't have the right nutrient and protein mix. It is affecting their health and even reproduction success.

### Effects of logging

The forest canopy has decreased in height as a consequence of the best old straight trees being removed by logging over many decades. Hollow-bearing trees critical to the survival of black cockatoos have been removed over vast areas.

### Dieback

It is of great concern that in the last 15 years we have seen new growth at the tops of trees die off. This is a consequence of water levels dropping due to big demands by development and also climate change (we are getting more aseasonal summer rain).



*Kwoolyilaak. Photo: Imogen/stock.adobe.com*

## Noongar Vision

### Working together

The South West Native Title Settlement is providing opportunities for the six Noongar Nations to have a stronger voice in management decision-making for these Culturally Significant Species, for example, through joint management arrangements and recovery plans. Noongars want to be the voice of their animals and Country, so we can consider the health of Country into the future.

### Education

It is important that the wider public understand the importance of these birds to Noongars and learn about the threats they are facing.

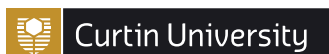
The [Keep Carnaby's Flying – Ngoolarks Forever](#) project is an important example of this work.

### Noongar-led projects

Weed control, tree planting and putting up nest boxes, for example, can help these cockatoos stay safe into the future, but take a lot of work, a lot of time, a lot of people and needs to be funded. So far there's has been only small investments in these projects by the Western Australian government – we need to see a lot more. We want the opportunity to collaborate and lead recovery and management programs to protect these cockatoos for generations.



National Environmental Science Program



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