



ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA Threatened Species Profile

Department
for Environment
and Heritage

BIRD

Gallirallus philippensis mellori

Buff-banded Rail

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	V	-	Resident



Photo: © Brian Furby

Conservation Significance

The AMLR distribution is part of a limited extant distribution in adjacent regions within SA. The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.² Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Extremely Restricted'. Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.³

Description

Medium-sized stout rail with short legs. Distinctive grey eyebrow and orange-brown band on streaked breast. Eye red; lores, cheek and hindneck rich chestnut. Chin and throat grey, upperparts streaked brown and underparts barred black and white. Young birds are much paler to white underneath, with indistinct bars and only a faint orange-brown tint on the breast. Downy chicks are fluffy black. Walks slowly, with tail raised and flicking constantly. Call a loud creaky squeak when breeding but usually silent.¹

Distribution and Population

Widespread in mainland Australia, particularly along the eastern coast and islands, and on Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands. Also found in south-east Asia, New Guinea and NZ.¹

Resident and possibly locally nomadic though little is known of these movements.¹ Cryptic and mobile species that inhabits rank vegetation (native and introduced) near wetlands and on some offshore

islands. Once common in SA but now rarely reported (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records most common in the Adelaide Hills region and there are several records from the Victor Harbor area and Deep Creek in the south.³

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records indicate a similar distribution but with more records in the northern Fleurieu region.³

Habitat

Observed singly or in pairs in dense reeds and vegetation bordering many types of wetlands or crops. Makes widespread use of artificial wetlands, including sewage ponds and drainage channels.¹

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Wetland and Riparian.³

Biology and Ecology

Feeds on crustaceans, molluscs, insects, seeds, fruit, frogs, carrion and refuse; mostly early in the morning and the evening.¹

Breeding season September to February with a clutch size of five to eight eggs. Incubation period is 19 days.¹ Nests in long grass, tussocks, rushes or crops. Makes an unlined cup-shaped nest of grasses or reeds. Both parents incubate and the young will leave the nest within 24 hours of hatching. Both parents remain with the young, which usually feed themselves, though the female may feed them as well. Two broods may be raised in some seasons.¹

Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the majority of the AMLR distribution occurs in Kaurna Nation. It also occurs in Peramangk, Ngarrindjeri and Ngadjuri Nations.³

Threats

Current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

Further information:

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region
Phone: (61 8) 8336 0901 Fax: (61 8) 8336 0999
<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/>

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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014



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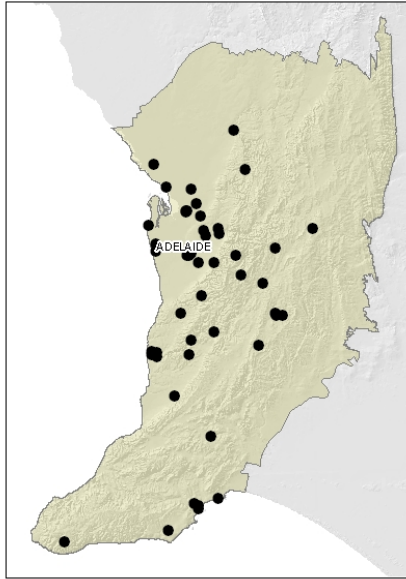


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Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.³ Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

References

Note: In some cases original reference sources are not included in this list, however they can be obtained from the reference from which the information has been sourced (the reference cited in superscript).

1 Australian Museum (2006). *Birds in Backyards: Bird Finder*. Available from <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net> (accessed November 2007).

2 Cale, B. (2005). *Towards a Recovery Plan for the Declining Birds of the Mount Lofty Ranges*. Scientific Resource Document for Birds for Biodiversity. Unpublished Report.

3 Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot Project Database*. Unpublished data extracted and edited from BDBSA, SA Herbarium (July 2007) and other sources.

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