

# A call to action for Australian birds

Title Birds Australia, Charles Darwin University and CSIRO Publishing today launched *The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2010*. The Action Plan is the third in a series that have been produced at the start of each decade. It analyses the status of all the species and subspecies of Australia's birds to determine their risk of extinction. "At one level this book describes a tragedy," said Dr Graeme Hamilton, CEO of Birds Australia (BirdLife Partner), "That in the 200 short years since Europeans arrived in Australia we have so diminished our natural capital that 234 Australian birds are either Extinct, threatened with extinction or Near Threatened, is a national disgrace". But this is not a book of lost causes. It is a call for action to keep the extraordinary biodiversity we have inherited and pass the legacy to our children. Every one of Australia's threatened birds can be saved. "We do not need to lose any more Australian birds," said Barry Baker, President of Birds Australia. "This book describes the populations of species at greatest risk and outlines ways we can turn them around." There is much reason to hope. We would have lost far more had there not been enormous effort over the last few decades. After all, it is only 20 years since all the information available on Australia's threatened birds was compiled in the first Action Plan for Australian Birds. The status of some birds has improved over the last two decades as a result of dedicated conservation management. Some may not have improved their lot but at least they are holding their own. Many, however, are continuing to decline and a distressing number are new to the list. While Birds Australia members and many others in the community are willing to devote substantial portions of their lives to helping threatened birds, many birds also need professional help. That takes money. "Sadly, over the last decade, threatened species conservation appears to have gone out of fashion with government policy makers and public funding bodies". According to Dr Hamilton, instead of species conservation, emphasis is being placed on landscapes without the necessary attention to the precious detail those landscapes contain. "We at Birds Australia do not share that view," he said. "We, like the majority of the public, believe that a vital role for conservation agencies is the prevention of species loss. "If we as a nation fail to take the actions spelled out in this plan, Australia will be a poorer place in which to live." [Click here to subscribe to The BirdLife Pacific Quarterly E-Newsletter.](#)