



**BIRD**

***Acanthiza chrysorrhoa***

**Yellow-rumped Thornbill**

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	U	-	Resident



Photo: © South Australian Ornithological Association

**Conservation Significance**

The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.<sup>2</sup>

**Description**

Largest and probably best-known thornbill, with a striking yellow rump. Mainly grey-olive to grey-brown above to cream below, white-spotted black crown and dark eye stripe. Tail black with white tips. Young birds have softer, fluffier plumage on the body, but are otherwise similar. Call is a musical, cheery, tinkling song, ending with two clear whistled notes and repeated often.<sup>1</sup>

**Distribution and Population**

Found throughout eastern and south-eastern Australia, including TAS, in southern parts of the NT, on the Nullarbor Plain and south-west WA. Found in most climatic zones, but sparse in the tropics, arid zone and east of the Great Dividing Range.<sup>1</sup>

Sedentary.<sup>1</sup> Remnant populations in the Adelaide Parklands and along the coast are in decline. Stable populations on the northern Adelaide Plains.<sup>4</sup>

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records across the entire region.<sup>3</sup>

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered limited, focused around suburban Adelaide and the surrounding Adelaide Hills, and isolated records near One Tree Hill, Port Gawler, Strathalbyn Myponga, Mount Compass, and Port Willunga.<sup>3</sup>

**Habitat**

Often found on the ground in open habitats, such as woodlands, forests, shrublands and grasslands with some trees. Also common in agricultural lands, along watercourses, beside roads, in parks and gardens, and coastal open shrublands.<sup>4</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Grassy Woodland and Grassland.<sup>3</sup>

**Biology and Ecology**

Feeds mainly on insects, but may sometimes eat seeds. Primarily a ground-feeder, more so than most other thornbills, but stays near tree cover and will sometimes feed in shrubs or trees. Often seen in small mixed flocks with other thornbills and birds such as Speckled Warblers and Weebills.<sup>1</sup>

Breeding occurs in all months but mainly from July to December. Clutch size two to five, but usually three or four. Incubation period 17 days and chicks' time in the nest 19 days. Female incubates the eggs, assisted by the male and any helpers with feeding and protecting the young.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes breed co-operatively, with a pair being assisted by one or two auxiliaries (helpers) to build the nest and feed the young. Nest is a large and untidy structure of grass and bark with two parts: an upper 'false' cup-shaped nest and a lower, domed, nest-chamber with a hooded entrance. The function of the false nest is not clearly understood; it may be to deter predators or parasitic cuckoos, a roosting place for males or fledglings, a 'practice' nest for the helpers or as a 'displacement' activity for males. Nest is usually in the dense foliage of trees, near the end of branches or in vines or mistletoe.<sup>1</sup>

**Aboriginal Significance**

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in all Aboriginal Nations - Kaurna, Ngadjuri, Nganguraku, Ngarrindjeri and Peramangk.<sup>3</sup>

**Threats**

Development at the margins of urban areas has resulted in the decline of sub-populations, however, it has adapted well to agricultural habitats, especially where native vegetation cover remains. Weed invasion and changes in farm management to pastures may adversely affect the species (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

**Further information:**

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

© Department for Environment and Heritage FIS 90346 May 2008

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





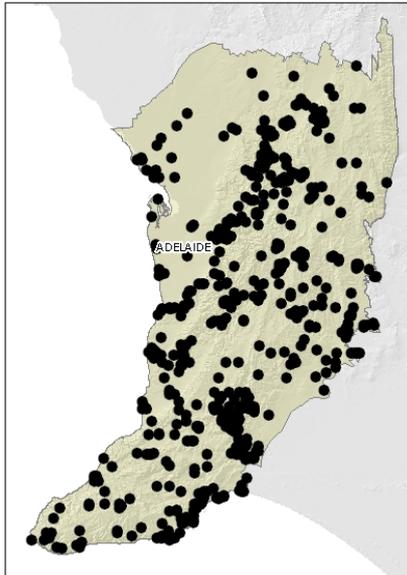
## ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Threatened Species Profile

Department  
for Environment  
and Heritage

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

### Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.<sup>3</sup> 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 (2005). *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.
- 4 Turner, M. S. (2001). *Conserving Adelaide's Biodiversity: Resources*. Urban Forest Biodiversity Program, Adelaide.

---

### Further information:

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

© Department for Environment and Heritage FIS 90346 May 2008

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



Government  
of South Australia