



BIRD

Petrochelidon ariel

Fairy Martin

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	U	-	Migratory Breeder



Photo: © Tom & Marie Tarrant (www.aviceda.org)

Conservation Significance

The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.² Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Very Restricted'.³

Description

Small bird with dark wings, white underbody and rufous head. The short, slightly forked tail appears square in flight. Gregarious, feeding in large flocks and nesting in colonies.¹

The related Tree Martin (*Hirundo nigricans*) has a black head and a 'dirty' white rump. Martins are generally smaller and 'dumplier' than swallows, and have a shorter, squared rather than forked tail in flight. Call is a soft chirring and twittering.¹

Distribution and Population

Found across Australia.¹ Migrates seasonally, moving north for winter, with some individuals flying to New Guinea.¹

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records widespread throughout the region, south to Second Valley and Victor Harbor, east to Monarto, and north to Greenock and Port Gawler.³ Recorded at Adelaide Airport every spring and summer (up to 15 individuals). Summer breeding visitor, winters in northern Australia. An increase in numbers could be

encouraged if nesting sites are conserved.⁴

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records indicate a more limited distribution (probably reflecting a lack of records) with scattered records in the AMLR and coastal reserves.³

Habitat

Prefers open country near water. Usually observed near nesting sites, in cliffs, culverts, bridges and river banks.^{1,4}

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation group is Riparian.³

Biology and Ecology

Colonial nester; bottle-shaped mud nests are packed closely together on the ceilings of caves, under bridges or similar built structures. Both sexes build the nest and share incubation and care of the young.¹

Breeding season is variable, generally from June to December. Clutch size is two to six eggs and incubation period 16 days.¹

Feed high in the air on flying insects, usually in large flocks.¹

Aboriginal Significance

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

Threats

Availability of nesting sites is of critical importance. However, it is adaptive in this regard in that it will use both natural and built structures for nesting.¹ Also requires open areas (near water) rather than densely revegetated sites (P. Paton *pers. comm.*).

Additional 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/>

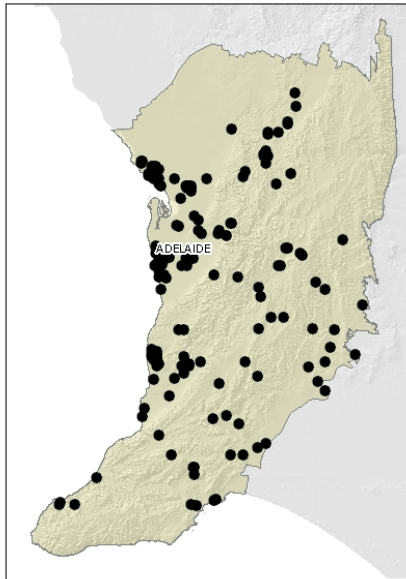
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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014





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 (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.

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