



BIRD

*Acanthiza iredalei rosinae*

Slender-billed Thornbill (St Vincent Gulf)

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	V	V	State	Resident



Photo: © Tony Crittenden (www.tcphotos.net)

#### Conservation Significance

Endemic to SA. The AMLR distribution is part of a very limited extant distribution in adjacent regions within SA. The species has been described as 'probably declining' within the AMLR.<sup>1</sup> Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Extremely Restricted'.<sup>2</sup>

This subspecies is rated nationally as Vulnerable in the Bird Action Plan. Only found at four general locations and any decline in the small area of its habitat would result in the classification of the subspecies as Endangered.<sup>3</sup>

#### Description

Small thornbill, 9-10 cm. Three forms or races exist differing in colour and occurring in separate localities across southern Australia. Race *rosinae* is the darkest form. Forehead finely speckled; pale eye, back dark olive-grey; rump deep yellow. Wing and tail feathers dark. If flushed, departs with low, bouncy undulations and the yellowish rump is conspicuous against the dark tail. Call is a rapid, high twittering, 'tsip-tsip-sip-sip-chip-chweet-tsip-tsip'.<sup>4</sup>

#### Distribution and Population

This subspecies is endemic to the northern shores of Gulf St Vincent, SA (SAOA 1977 in Garnett and

Crowley 2000). There are two other subspecies; each has part of its distribution in SA (Garnett and Crowley 2000).<sup>5</sup>

Range-wide extent of occurrence for this subspecies estimated at 120 km<sup>2</sup> (high reliability), area of occupancy estimated at 60 km<sup>2</sup> (medium reliability) and number of breeding birds estimated at 10,000 (low reliability). There are four sub-populations, with the largest sub-population estimated to contain 4,000 birds (low reliability).<sup>3</sup>

Now patchily distributed along the northern shores of the Gulf of St Vincent from St Kilda to Ardrossan with three population foci: Price (fewer than 1,000 individuals), Clinton CP to Sandy Point (4,000), and Port Prime south to Torrens Island (4,000). An estimated 1,000 individuals also occur on the shores of Spencer Gulf, although there have been no records from Port Broughton since 1917 (J. Cox; Matthew 1994). Has also probably disappeared from around Port Adelaide (Matthew 1994).<sup>3</sup>

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records restricted to the coastal and near coastal area between St Kilda and Port Gawler.<sup>2</sup> Specific records are from Penrice Saltfields, Buckland Park Lake, St Kilda, Port Gawler, Port Prime, and Thompson Beach mangroves and sapphire flats.<sup>5,6</sup>

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records indicate a similar distribution.<sup>2</sup>

#### Habitat

Occupies samphire shrublands on narrow coastal saline mudflats often behind mangrove fringes. Appears to be highly selective of particular species of samphire. Although, the subspecies is capable of crossing some gaps of unsuitable habitat, gaps between sub-populations appear to be insurmountable (J. Cox in Garnett 1992).<sup>3</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation group is Coastal.<sup>2</sup>

#### Biology and Ecology

Breeds in any month following rain, but most commonly from July to November. Nests in dense, low samphire and saltbush, constructing a small globular nest of grass and bark fibre bound with webs and lined with feathers, fur and plant material. Clutch size probably three to four (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).<sup>4</sup>

#### Further information:

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region  
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<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





## ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Threatened Species Profile

Department  
for Environment  
and Heritage

### Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the entire AMLR distribution occurs in Kaurna Nation.<sup>2</sup>

### Threats

Threats to this species include:

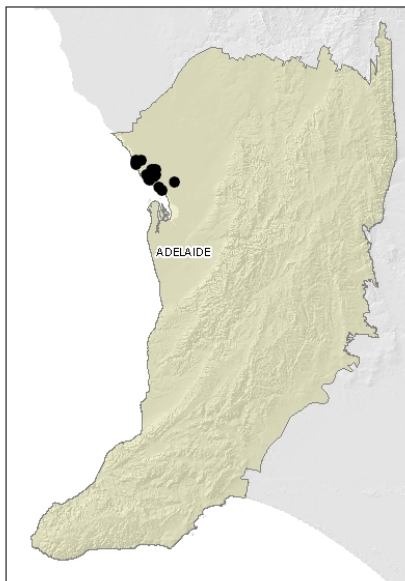
- loss or degradation of habitat, e.g. reclamation of coastal flats for recreational or industrial purposes, rubbish dumping and off-road vehicle damage
- climate change and associated sea level rise
- potentially coastal marina and residential development.

(G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*, Garnett and Crowley 2000).<sup>5</sup>

The proposed residential development in the Buckland Park area could have a significant impact on this species (G. Carpenter *pers. comm.*).

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>2</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 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.

2 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.

3 Garnett, S. T. and Crowley, G. M. (2000). *The Action Plan for Australian Birds*. Environment Australia, Commonwealth of Australia.

4 Morcombe, M. (2000). *Field Guide to Australian Birds*. Steve Parish Publishing Pty Ltd, Queensland.

5 Turner, M. S. (2001). *Conserving Adelaide's Biodiversity: Resources*. Urban Forest Biodiversity Program, Adelaide.

6 Waanders, P. I. (2004). *A Birdwatching Guide to South Australia*. Available from [www.sabirding.com/sites-6.htm](http://www.sabirding.com/sites-6.htm) (accessed November 2007).

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