

CARNABY'S BLACK COCKATOO

877. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to National Threatened Species Day on 7 September 2014.

- (1) What is the current rate of decline in the population of Carnaby's black cockatoo observed in the recent study undertaken by Birdlife Australia and the Department of Parks and Wildlife?
- (2) Does the minister agree that the decline is primarily due to the loss and fragmentation of habitat?
- (3) Will the government prohibit any further clearing of Carnaby's black cockatoo roosting sites?
- (4) How will the government protect Carnaby's black cockatoo feeding vegetation?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The 2014 Great Cocky Count report estimates that the current rate of decline in the total number of Carnaby's cockatoos on the Perth–Peel coastal plain is around 15 per cent per year. The report acknowledges that the study covers only a part of the overall population of Carnaby's cockatoos—approximately a quarter—and that a wider survey effort is required in order to understand population trends across the south west of Western Australia. It also recognises that because this species is highly mobile, it is also possible that the birds have dispersed to locations not included in the count.
- (2) Multiple factors could potentially contribute to any decline of the Carnaby's cockatoo, one of which is loss and fragmentation of foraging and night roost habitat in the non-breeding parts of their range. Other factors as identified in the Carnaby's cockatoo recovery plan 2012 include loss of breeding habitat, including suitable hollows; collision with motor vehicles; disease; and declining rainfall trends.
- (3) Clearing of native vegetation is only lawful when a clearing permit has been granted or when an exemption applies. Significant habitat for fauna is considered in principle (b) of schedule 5 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 when determining whether or not to grant a clearing permit.
- (4) Carnaby's cockatoo has been listed as a threatened species under both Western Australian and national environmental legislation. As such, it receives special protection and any proposal that may impact on this species or its habitat, including feeding vegetation, must undergo environmental assessment to ensure the conservation of this species. More than 15 000 hectares of Carnaby's cockatoo habitat has been purchased and transferred into the conservation estate as part of environmental offsets since 2008.

The state and commonwealth environment ministers are developing a number of measures to avoid and mitigate impacts to Carnaby's cockatoo as part of the strategic assessment of the Perth and Peel regions being conducted under the commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.