

17 April 2020

Our ref: 20CAN_15738

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Email: Barry.Osmond@qprc.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Barry Osmond

Dear Barry,

Targeted Glossy Black-Cockatoo Surveys, Burra Road, Burra

BACKGROUND

In October 2019, Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd (ELA) prepared a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) on behalf of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (Council) to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed road reconstruction of 1.7 km of Burra Road, Burra, from Little Burra Road to London Bridge Road (ELA 2019). As part of the assessment, field surveys were undertaken to record the ecological features of the site, including the presence of, or potential habitat for, threatened flora and fauna.

The Glossy Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathamii*), which is listed as Vulnerable under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) is known to breed in trees with hollows greater than 15 cm diameter and more than 5 m above ground (DPIE 2020a). The species breeds from March to August (DPIE 2020b). Of the 37 hollow-bearing trees recorded within the survey area, 14 trees were considered potential Glossy Black-Cockatoo breeding habitat. Those 14 trees also provide potential habitat for the Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*), which is known to breed from October to January (DPIE 2020c).

The REF (ELA 2019) recommended that hollow bearing trees containing potential breeding habitat for threatened cockatoos be checked for breeding birds within the relevant breeding season, concluding that trees that do not contain breeding birds can be removed. The REF stated that the proposal is unlikely to result in a significant impact provided that:

- Potential breeding trees are removed outside of the respective breeding seasons; or
- During the breeding season, targeted pre-dusk hollow bearing tree watching surveys are undertaken for the relevant cockatoo species, based on the time of year and recommended mitigation measures are followed.

Consequently, targeted surveys (see below) have therefore been undertaken to determine whether the Glossy-black Cockatoo is currently breeding in any of the trees within the study area.

METHODS

Targeted surveys for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo were undertaken by Clare Duck and Andrew Mitchell over four nights, on 18, 19, 24 and 25 of March 2020. Each of the 14 potential Glossy Black-Cockatoo breeding trees were observed for one hour before sunset and one hour after sunset (two hours total) to determine

whether any Glossy Black-Cockatoos were using these trees as breeding habitat at the time of survey. All 37 hollow-bearing trees within the study area were marked with pink flagging tape (Figure 1).

Weather

The weather conditions for each day of surveys are shown in Table 1. All data is from the closest weather station, Tuggeranong, where available. Some data (wind on 24 March and rain on 25 March) was recorded at the Canberra weather station (BOM 2020).

Table 1: Daily weather conditions in Tuggeranong/Canberra (BOM 2020)

Date (2020)	Temperature (max) °C	Temperature (min) °C	Rain (mm)	Max wind speed (km/h)
18 March	26.0	6.4	0	30
19 Marc	28.9	10.5	0	24
24 March	22.9	8.7	0	26
25 March	25.2	13.8	0.2	39

RESULTS

No Glossy Black-Cockatoos were recorded during the targeted survey. One Common Wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) was recorded in its burrow, and one of the trees surveyed for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo contained a Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) (Figure 1). Several common woodland birds and some microbats were also recorded foraging within the study area.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the recommendations of the REF (ELA 2019), ELA have now completed targeted pre-dusk hollow bearing tree watching surveys within the breeding season of the Glossy Black Cockatoo. No Glossy Black Cockatoo breeding pairs, nor individuals were recorded. As such, hollow bearing trees may be removed during the Glossy Black Cockatoo breeding season, subject to the work being carried out in accordance with all biodiversity mitigation measures detailed in the REF. It is important to note that, should works continue beyond the Glossy Black Cockatoo breeding season and into the Gang-gang Cockatoo breeding season (October to January), further targeted survey will be required to check potential habitat trees for Gang-gang Cockatoos.

Any clearing of trees that contain hollows must also follow the procedures specified in Table 16 of the REF (ELA 2019) and should be supervised by a qualified ecologist or fauna handler. It is recommended that the supervising ecologist or fauna handler arrive on site early on each clearing day to carry out dawn pre-clearing surveys to confirm that no Glossy Black Cockatoo nesting activity has occurred between the targeted surveys the subject of this letter, and commencement of the clearing works.

If you have any questions in relation to this brief letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at Skye.O'Brien@ecoaus.com.au.

Regards,



Skye O'Brien

Senior Environmental Consultant, Canberra Office

Hollow Bearing Trees - Glossy Black-Cockatoo Breeding Habitat



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Area Strahler Stream Order — 1st Order Stream — 2nd Order Stream — 3rd Order Stream 	<p>Hollow Bearing Trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Hollow-bearing tree - surveyed ▲ Hollow-bearing tree- not potential Glossy Black-Cockatoo breeding habitat <p>Protected Fauna Records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Common Brushtail Possum ● Wombat 	<p>0 100 200 400 Meters</p> <p>Datum/Projection: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55 Scale: 1:8,000 @ A4 page size</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>N</p> </div> <div> <p>eco logical AUSTRALIA <small>A TETRA TECH COMPANY</small></p> </div> </div> <p>Prepared by: KR Date: 2020-03-31</p>
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Figure 1: Hollow-bearing trees within the study area

REFERENCES

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