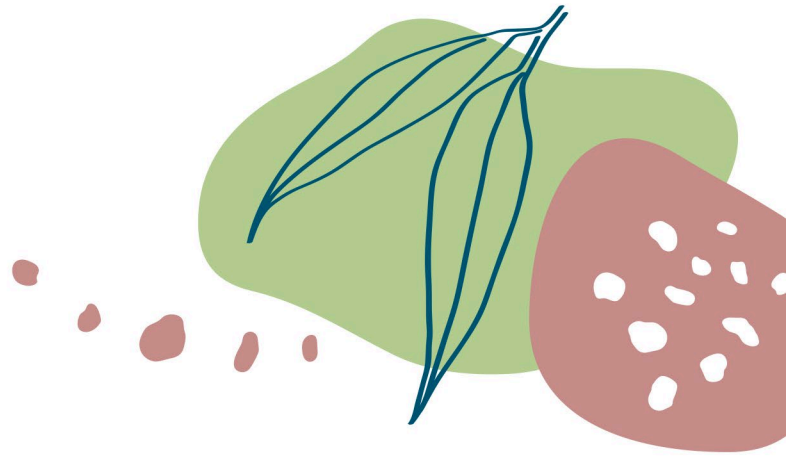


Media Release



April 13, 2026

VOLUNTEER RED-TAIL SPOTTERS NEEDED FOR MAY 2

The 30th annual count of the endangered South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 and volunteer spotters are needed across southwest Victoria and southeast South Australia to count these special birds.

Recent reports of increased bird sightings across the species' range are a welcome boost leading into this year's count and it is hoped these early observations translate into the coordinated monitoring of the birds to better understand population trends and breeding success.

"For 30 years, volunteers have searched the region's stringybark forests for flocks of these elusive birds," Rachel Farran, South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Project Coordinator, said.

"We've already seen a lift in reported sightings this season, which is exciting, but it makes this year's count more important than ever to understand what's really happening across the landscape."

Last year, in very challenging weather conditions, volunteers recorded 885 birds.

This was less than previous years, but the cold, rainy and windy weather conditions on the count day contributed to this.

For the annual count, volunteers will be assigned to one of about 60 survey sites across the cockatoo's range, from Nelson to Little Desert National Park in Victoria, and from Mount Gambier to Keith in South Australia.

At each site, participants will drive and stop at intervals to listen for the cockatoo's distinctive 'karak-karak' call.

Landholders with stringybark habitat are also encouraged to get involved by surveying their own properties.

“Seasonal conditions, including recent dry periods and fire impacts, can influence food availability and bird movement,” Glenelg Hopkins CMA senior biodiversity officer Ben Zeeman said.

“Local knowledge from landholders is incredibly valuable in contributing to the annual count and so we encourage landholders to take a wander in their paddocks on May 3 and report any sightings,” Ben said.

No prior bird survey experience is necessary - all volunteers need is a willingness to learn what Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos look and sound like.

Rachel said the red-tailed birds can sometimes be confused with the more common Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, but resources are available on the Birdlife website to help people tell the difference.

A training session will be held on the morning of the count at the Information Shelter in Casterton, with an online training video also available.

The primary goal of the count is to locate large flocks for follow-up monitoring. These flock counts are essential for assessing breeding success and tracking the overall health of the population.

“With increased sightings already being reported, this year presents a valuable opportunity to build a clearer picture of the population,” Rachel said.

Community members who spot a Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo before the count are encouraged to report their sightings by calling 1800 262 062, emailing redtail@birdlife.org.au, or visiting www.redtail.com.au.

These reports help guide survey planning and improve count outcomes.

This project is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by Birdlife Australia for Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Wimmera CMA, and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board, members of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.

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IMAGES: Red-tail flock spotted in last year's count. Stringybark woodland areas which are prime South-eastern Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo habitat.

BELOW: South-Eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. IMAGE: Ben Zeeman, Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

