

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF SUBURBAN BUSHLAND AS FORAGING HABITAT FOR THE GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOO

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An understanding of habitat suitability and utility across a given landscape is fundamental in effective threatened species management; particularly in regions where decisions are being made that cause habitat loss. This study develops the use of chewed *Allocasuarina littoralis* cone fragments as an index of foraging habitat suitability for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*, and demonstrates a practical methodology to evaluate and compare Glossy Black-Cockatoo foraging habitat within a landscape. Abundance of 'foraging sign' and stem-density was measured to produce an index of foraging habitat utility across a 4 300-hectare study area. All sites surveyed (n = 46) showed evidence of Glossy Black-Cockatoo foraging, with a mean of 16 per cent of cone bearing trees (n = 2 300) exhibiting foraging sign. Foraged *A. littoralis* trees were categorised individually according to the degree they were used as a food resource by Glossy Black-Cockatoos. Within the study area, five per cent of cone-bearing *A. littoralis* displayed greater than 20 cone fragments, and less than two per cent displayed greater than 100 fragments, highlighting the importance of feed tree retention when land use changes are proposed. The study found that high value foraging habitat occurs outside the protective boundaries of conservation reserves, and on the suburban edge, emphasising the importance of off-reserve conservation strategies to protect this threatened species.