

REGENT HONEYEATERS – MAPPING THEIR MOVEMENTS THROUGH SONG

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The endangered Regent Honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia* once occurred over a wide range including South Australia, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Queensland, but now has only three core breeding sites: at Chiltern in Victoria, at Capertee Valley in New South Wales and west of Armidale in New South Wales. Breeding also occasionally takes place near Warwick in Queensland. Anecdotal evidence suggests that due to a population contraction Regent Honeyeaters may have formed three discrete populations each with its own dialect. This study investigates that proposal. An analysis of recorded song phrases 1977–2008 showed links between Chiltern, Capertee Valley and Armidale, and unexpectedly, that songs change over time at any one location. This paper compares and illustrates, with sonograms, the known main songs and calls of this species, including those of captive-bred birds. There have been no previous geographical comparisons of Regent Honeyeater vocalisations, very few sonograms have been published, and descriptions of calls in the literature are confusing. This study shows that there are stronger links between the three main population centres than colour banding has so far indicated.