

LOCAL EXTINCTION AND DECLINE OF BIRDS IN A WOODLAND REMNANT AT INVERLEIGH, VICTORIA

L. E. CONOLE

2/37 Myrnong Crescent, Ascot Vale, Victoria 3032
E-mail <ocoineoil@bluep.com>

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Between 1979–2000 data about the presence or absence of birds were opportunistically collected from a grassy woodland reserve on the edge of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (38°04'S, 144°03'E), Victoria. Whilst no estimates of absolute abundance were made, the observations over 20 years are representative of avifaunal change during that period. In the last three decades of the twentieth century, 22 bird species have either declined or become locally extinct in the reserve — 23 per cent of locally breeding species. These changes are important because they involve some species not known to be in decline elsewhere, and because they are occurring in a relatively large woodland remnant (1 050 ha). The opportunities for small, woodland-specialist birds to recolonize from nearby areas are extremely limited, as most nearby remnants are not connected and are generally smaller, species-poor and experiencing species loss. Many of the local extinctions are probably not naturally reversible in the current landscape.