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EFFECT OF WILDFIRE ON BIRDS AT WEDDIN MOUNTAIN, NEW SOUTH WALES

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Members of the New South Wales Field Ornithologist's Club counted the number of species and individual birds in Weddin State Forest and Weddin Mountain National Park, parts of which were affected by fire in January 1975. This was the first study of the effects of fire on bird populations in White Cypress Pine habitat. Counts were made eight months after the fire in October 1975 and again eight years later in October 1983, comparing the birds seen in burnt and unburnt bush. At the eight month count, there were 59 species and 400 individuals recorded in the unburnt area, compared with 50 species and 225 individuals in the burnt area. In 1983, however, over the same areas, there were 87 species and 660 individuals in the burnt area and 63 species and 340 individuals in the unburnt area. The increase in the diversity of birds eight years post-fire occurred in the insectivorous ground, shrub and foliage foraging guilds.