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EFFECTS OF EUCALYPT DIEBACK ON BIRD SPECIES DIVERSITY IN REMNANTS OF NATIVE WOODLAND

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Data on bird species diversity, bird density, species diversity of various foraging groups and of honeyeaters were analysed in relation to mean dieback scores of woodland remnants in the Australian Capital Territory. Bird species diversity and bird density were found to be significantly reduced as dieback increased. The reduction in bird species diversity can be accounted for by the declines in subcanopy bird species diversity and insectivorous bird species diversity, the latter being restricted most to the foliage insectivores, ground insectivores and bark insectivores. Honeyeaters were also shown to decline significantly with an increase in dieback. Reasons for the decline in bird species diversity with increased dieback, the dieback-insects-birds cycle and the implications of dieback for the conservation of bird species are discussed in relation to these observations.