



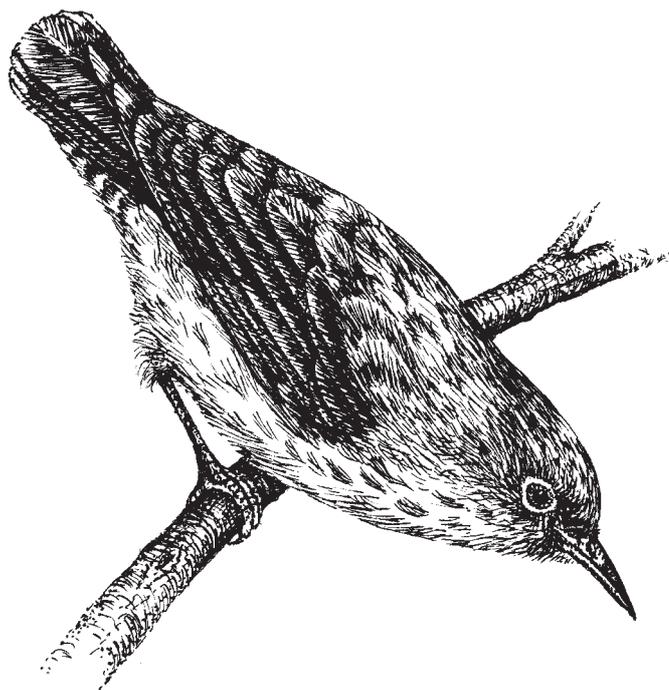
THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ACT

Varied Sitella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*)

A vulnerable species

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The Varied Sitella is a small bird, 135 to 170 mm in length. In the ACT region, its head, nape and chin are sooty grey in both sexes, although sometimes paler on the face in males. The mantle and back are pale grey, streaked finely dusky. The wings are dark with a bar of cinnamon-rufous, spanning both primaries and secondaries and most conspicuous in flight. The rump is whitish and the tail is black with a white tip. Underparts are pale streaked rather finely with dusky brown.



It is a climbing species which actively hunts for invertebrate prey on tree trunks, branches, crevices and under bark. It is highly social, forming breeding groups of 5-7 and gathering in large winter flocks. Members of the flock cooperate in breeding, although one female usually

does most of the building and incubating. The nest is a deep, well-camouflaged cup of bark and lichen bound with cobwebs, usually situated in an upright, thin (usually dead) fork, 5–20 metres above ground.

Critical habitat features include:

- large living and dead trees, particularly rough-barked eucalypts, which are essential for foraging, roosting and nesting sites; and
- relatively well-treed habitats (rather than sparsely treed habitats).

The species is distributed across much of continental Australia. In the ACT it is recorded in Aranda bushland, O'Connor and Bruce Ridges, Black Mountain, the Pinnacle Stringybark forest, Mt Ainslie–Campbell Park, Mulligan's Flat, Bluett's Eucalypt forest, Naas and Ororal valleys, Shepherd's Lookout and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. In this region the species has a preference for areas with Red Stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*).

CONSERVATION THREATS

- Uncontrolled grazing by livestock.
- Clearing of both living and dead trees.
- Rural tree dieback.
- Use of chemicals.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS

- Identification of key habitats and potential habitats.
- Protection and management of habitat, including:
 - limitation on removal of live and dead timber;
 - regeneration of habitat; and
 - minimisation of adverse effects of fire.

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- Monitoring long terms trends and status.
- Research into the ecology and conservation requirements of the species.
- Liaison to achieve regional approach to conservation.
- Education and community liaison to raise community awareness.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The primary source of information for this Information Sheet is the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy— Action Plan No. 27 where a full bibliography is available. Action Plans are available from the Environment ACT Website: www.environment.act.gov.au or the Arts, Heritage and Environment Information Centre at 12 Wattle Street, Lyneham ACT.

Acknowledgement

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