

Malleefowl

Leipoa ocellata

Fact sheet

SHARK BAY World Heritage

Description



The malleefowl is one of just fourteen megapodes, birds distinguished by their large feet. It is well camouflaged with its upper body patterned with bars, fringes and streaks of grey, white, black and chestnut. Its breast and belly are creamy-white. The malleefowl's face is grey with a chestnut chin and a white line under each eye. It has short, broad wings rounded at the tip and it only flies when frightened or chased.

Head-body	Lifespan	Weight
500-600mm	30 years	2.5 kg

Diet and habitat



Malleefowls live on the ground and use their large powerful feet to build giant nest mounds.

They are well adapted to their dry habitats, getting sufficient water from their diet of leaves, fruits, flower buds, seeds and insects. Although they can live without additional water they will drink if water is available.

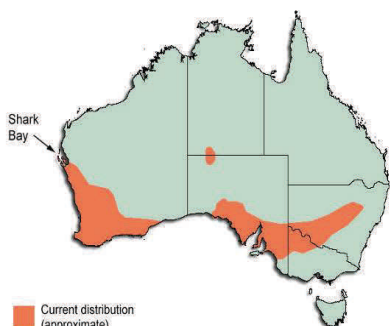
Breeding



Malleefowl mate for life. After the male builds a nest mound in August his mate repeatedly visits it from September to April. During each visit she lays a single egg weighing 10% of her body weight and there may be 5 to 17 days between each visit. Nests are reused each year and can reach 1m high, 5m wide and 20m in circumference. Moist decaying leaf litter inside the mound produces heat that incubates the eggs.

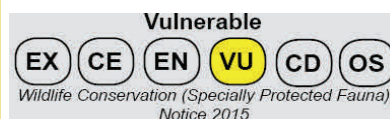
Incubation	No. eggs	Mature
60 days	Up to 35	2 years

Distribution



The malleefowl was once common in arid and semi-arid tall mallee and low wattle scrub across much of western, southern and central Australia. Today its range is restricted to scattered pockets in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Project Eden successfully reintroduced malleefowl into Francois Peron National Park in Shark Bay.

Status



Threats to the malleefowl include foxes, feral cats, land clearing, bushfires and competition with introduced species.

