

ZOOS VICTORIA'S 20 PRIORITY SPECIES

HELMETED HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus melanops cassidix
Critically Endangered



Zoos Victoria is committed to saving the Helmeted Honeyeater. With a highly restricted distribution, this beautiful bird is at risk of extinction due to the loss of its forest streamside habitat.

Zoos Victoria has led the Helmeted Honeyeater captive-breeding program for more than 20 years. Our captive-bred birds play a crucial role in boosting wild Helmeted Honeyeater populations and maintaining genetic diversity. Interpretive displays at Zoos Victoria properties also enable the public to connect with this threatened Victorian emblem.

Zoos Victoria is committed to Fighting Extinction

We are working to ensure that no Victorian terrestrial vertebrate species goes extinct on our watch.



Zoos Victoria has been involved in the Helmeted Honeyeater recovery program since 1989. We supplement wild populations through captive breeding, and provide opportunities for visitors to connect with this iconic bird when they visit Healesville Sanctuary and Melbourne Zoo.

Zoos Victoria also plays a vital role in conducting research to improve captive breeding success and helping monitor the survival of Helmeted Honeyeaters after release.

KEY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- + Achieve a stable population of at least 1,000 Helmeted Honeyeaters in ten or more colonies along several creek systems in the mid-Yarra and Western Port catchments of Victoria
- + Protect remaining Helmeted Honeyeater habitat along forested streams
- + Raise awareness of the Helmeted Honeyeater and the importance of remnant habitat for native species.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- + Wild Helmeted Honeyeater populations boosted by nest supplementation and the release of more than 200 captive-bred birds from Healesville Sanctuary
- + Effective genetic management of wild populations by swapping eggs and nestlings between colonies to preserve genetic diversity.

SPECIES AT RISK

Victoria's only endemic bird and our state emblem, the Helmeted Honeyeater is at risk of being lost forever.

A subspecies of the Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, the Helmeted Honeyeater feeds on eucalypt sap, insects and flower nectar. Once patchily distributed from Healesville to south Gippsland, populations of Helmeted Honeyeater have declined dramatically due to the loss of their forest habitat. They are now confined to less than 10km² of streamside vegetation and are at risk of extinction due to the small number of remaining birds and their vulnerability to catastrophic events such as bushfire.

Helmeted Honeyeaters rely on a dense shrub and sedge understory, and are threatened by the die-back of eucalypt and paperbark trees in their streamside habitat. Bell Miners, *Manorina melanophrys*, also compete with them for habitat and breeding territories.

Breeding is a risky business for Helmeted Honeyeaters, as snakes, cats and birds-of-prey target their nests. Captive-bred birds and eggs from Zoos Victoria help sustain wild populations. The Recovery Team also protects nests from predators, provides supplementary nectar and monitors the success of Helmeted Honeyeaters in the wild.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Department of Sustainability and Environment
www.dse.vic.gov.au

Parks Victoria
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

University of Melbourne
www.unimelb.edu.au

La Trobe University
www.latrobe.edu.au

Bird Observers Club of Australia
www.boca.org.au

Birds Australia
www.birdsaustralia.com.au

Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
www.helmetedhoneyeater.org.au

IMAGES

Front: Unique leg bands enable researchers to identify individual Helmeted Honeyeaters at wild release sites. Photo: Matt West.

Below top: Remote cameras are used to monitor Helmeted Honeyeater nests at Healesville Sanctuary. Photo: Iain Stych.

Below Bottom: Releasing captive-bred Helmeted Honeyeaters to supplement wild populations is a key component of the recovery program for this species. Photo: Iain Stych.



FIND OUT MORE

www.zoo.org.au/conservation



Zoos Victoria is a not-for-profit, zoo based conservation organisation. We are Fighting Extinction through our local and global conservation programs, research projects and community conservation campaigns. For more information on this or any other Zoos Victoria project, visit www.zoo.org.au/conservation

