



Northern



Southern

Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta*

What do they look like? Brown birds, about 25 cm tall with a white belly that extends up onto the 'shoulders'. Distinctive black and white facial markings, and an eye ring that is either blue (south) or orange (north). As the name suggests, they often squat on the ground when approached.

Where do they live? They are ground-dwelling birds. They are most common in open woodlands throughout the region, especially near water sources, such as dams and rivers. The southern subspecies (blue eye ring) is threatened in Queensland because they have disappeared from much of their former range (to NSW border).

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Squatter Pigeons mainly eat seeds but also take insects. They require water to drink every day or so. They make their nests on the ground, usually partly sheltered by grass, a log or low shrubs. They sleep on the ground in small groups.

When might I see (or hear) them? Squatter Pigeons are commonly seen on roads and station tracks and are best observed from a vehicle as they allow close approach. They usually visit water points in the morning to drink and this is a good opportunity to observe them.

What management actions affect this species? Because of their ground dwelling habits, maintenance of a mixed ground layer to provide shelter and nest camouflage and healthy native pastures as food sources are important for Squatter Pigeons. Broad scale tree clearing, overgrazing and foxes have contributed to population declines in southern areas.

How do they benefit the land I manage? Along with many seed eaters, Squatter Pigeons help spread and germinate some perennial grass seeds through topsoil disturbance or direct transportation of seeds that stick onto feet or feathers. They also help perennial grass species by selectively feeding on the prolific seed produced by annual grasses and sedges.

Similar species: Common Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*), Bar-shouldered Dove (*Geopelia humeralis*).

