



Bush Stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius*

What do they look like? Long-legged, mottled grey bird with very large yellow eyes and dark mask. Camouflaged like a dead log when lying motionless on the ground. Obvious white patches visible on the wings during flight and in threat posture (spread wings to deter attack). Skulking attitude and wailing call are useful identifiers.

Where do they live? Ground dwelling in woodland and open forest throughout the region, especially frontage country. Preferred habitat has moderate shrub and grass layer, leaf litter and fallen timber. Will also use more open country (e.g. urban parklands).

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Curlews eat invertebrates (e.g. grasshoppers and spiders) and small vertebrates (e.g. skinks, small snakes) which they hunt on the ground. Some shade and fallen timber may be required for breeding. They lay their camouflaged eggs, usually two, on the ground, often partly sheltered by fallen timber.

When might I see (or hear) them? Heard more than seen, their distinct wailing call is generally heard at night. Away from towns, they are very shy.

What management actions affect this species? As ground dwellers, Bush Stone-curlews are sensitive to management actions which reduce ground cover and structural diversity over extensive areas (e.g. land clearing, overgrazing, wildfire). Maintain special areas, particularly frontage country; keep tree lines and woodland windrows around cleared paddocks. Bush Stone-curlews are particularly vulnerable to predation from foxes, cats and domestic dogs which disturb nests, eat eggs, chicks and adults. Controlling feral animals will benefit them.

How do they benefit the land I manage? Bush Stone-curlews hunt small, ground-dwelling animals and invertebrates, keeping the numbers of these in check. They are especially valuable in times of insect plagues (e.g. grasshoppers and locusts).

