

# SAVING THE MT VICTORIA SOOTY-EYED OWL FROM EXTINCTION

SPECIES PROFILE

## LOCALITY



Native only to the **Adelaide Hills & Barossa** regions

## CONSERVATION

The 1980s saw the population at an all-time low of **3,000 owls**, through conservation efforts the population grew to **5,900** by 2000.

## THREATS

**44%** decline in population between 2010-2019  
**ONLY 3,300 LEFT**



## HABITAT

Home range with **1km radius**. Nest in hollows in mature and dead trees.

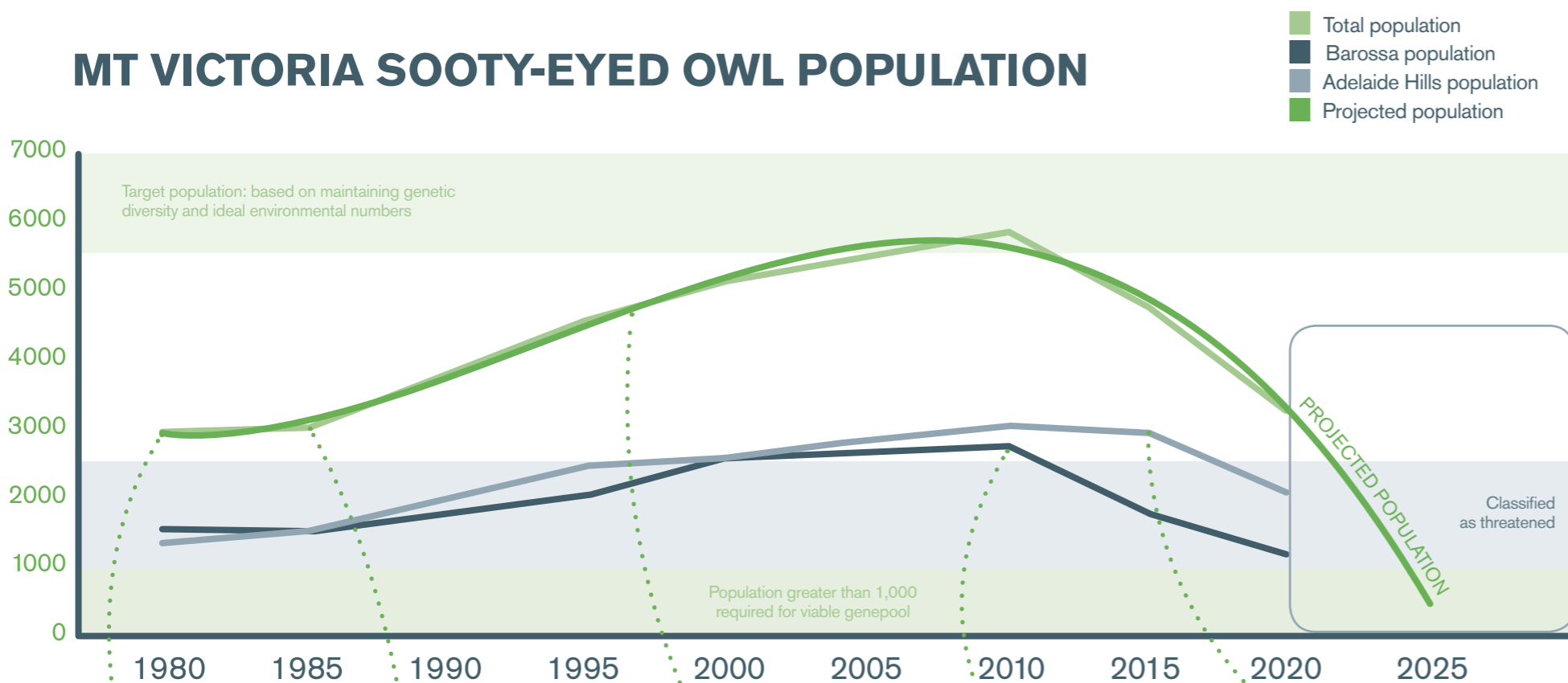


## DIET

Consume approx **25,000** rodents per year per breeding couple



## MT VICTORIA SOOTY-EYED OWL POPULATION



Conservation efforts implemented

Native Vegetation Act 1985 stops the clearing of native forest in South Australia

Increased urbanisation of habitat

Barossa rodent baiting program commenced

Habitat cleared in response to Adelaide Hills and Pinery bushfires

We have a **5-YEAR** window to act.

Doing nothing will result in **TOTAL SPECIES LOSS BY 2026**

Total population needs to **STAY ABOVE 1000** for the genepool to remain viable

**Increased urbanisation** between 1997-2010 **DID NOT** impact negatively on the growing **POPULATION**

## THREATS

- Significantly impacted by rodent baiting
- Nesting trees cleared following bushfires
- Loss of habitat due to urbanisation

## OPPORTUNITIES

- New 'Owl-Safe' bait (high cost)
- High community interest
- Local councils engaged to take action

## CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of data
- Ineligible for Commonwealth funding unless population is below 2,500.
- Planning regulations don't recognise individual species

Sensitive: SA Cabinet I2A2

**SAMPLE ONLY**



Government of South Australia  
 Department of the Premier and Cabinet


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OPTION	WHO	ACTIONS	CONSIDERATIONS	COSTS
<b>Amend current rodent baiting program</b>	Council and State Government	Amend legislation to ban harmful baits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x High conflict</li> <li>x Difficult to police</li> <li>✓ Phase in by 2024</li> </ul>	Nil
	(Department for Health – Poisons Act)	Subsidise costs associated with new 'owl safe' baits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$ New bait currently expensive to produce</li> <li>✓ Higher rate of uptake expected</li> </ul>	\$20m 2019 - 2024

**Preferred for Barossa**  
- High impact

OPTION	WHO	ACTIONS	CONSIDERATIONS	COSTS
<b>Breeding program</b>	State Government (Cleland, Zoos)	Breeding program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide 'back up' population in natural habitat.</li> <li>✓ Opportunity to cross breed populations to increase genetic diversity</li> </ul>	\$5m 2019 - 2024

**Preferred**  
- Long term 'insurance policy'



OPTION	WHO	ACTIONS	CONSIDERATIONS	COSTS
<b>Education campaigns</b>	State Government	'Save Sooty' campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Raise awareness of the effects of baiting and tree clearing</li> </ul>	\$100,000
	NGO (Schools, Community groups) (Department for Local Government)	Grant program: Produce and sell birdboxes as a supported fundraising initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Replace nesting options lost through tree clearance.</li> <li>✓ School involvement to facilitate wide reaching public education</li> </ul>	\$200,000
	NGO (Universities, Environment Groups)	Grant program: Develop community-based owl monitoring program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Similar programs (eg Koala Count) have been highly popular.</li> <li>x Limited evidence of reliable or useful data</li> </ul>	\$100,000

**Preferred for Adelaide Hills**  
- High impact, low cost

OPTION	WHO	ACTIONS	CONSIDERATIONS	COSTS
<b>Habitat protection</b>	State Government (Lands Department)	Proclaim Mt Victoria Reserve as a national park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$ Acquire land from Council</li> <li>✓ Supported by council</li> </ul>	\$8m
	State Government (Department for Environment)	Amend regulations to protect dead trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Protect nesting trees</li> <li>✓ Restrict urbanisation</li> <li>x Planning reform</li> <li>x High conflict</li> <li>x Difficult to police</li> </ul>	Nil
	Federal Government	Apply for federal government assistance via the 20 Million Trees Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase local biodiversity</li> <li>x Competitive funding</li> <li>x Final Round to close next month</li> </ul>	Nil

**Preferred**  
- High impact, no cost

