

KARAK'S BIOGRAPHY



Karak
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

Name: Karak

Species: South-eastern Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo

Where Found: Victoria and South Australia

Birthplace: First Dead Log, Noisy Nest, Second Hollow, Stringy Bark Lane. Now cleared away unfortunately. Karak is sad about losing his memories. The South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo likes to breed in the dead logs of Stringy Bark trees which are often cleared away, so it's difficult to keep the species replenished. But he's moved on and is looking to the future!

Family History: Comes from a long line of squawkers. His Mum nested at an early age and foraged for the family. His Gran was famous in the area for her seed cakes. He has two brothers who were well-known badminton shuttlecocks, and a sister who passed her school exams with flying colours!

Education: Four years at Treetops College studying Australian Endangered Species. Ran the Uni Sports Society. Apparently egged the principal's car during Orientation Week but nothing's ever been proven.

Hobbies: Sport Sport Sport! Karak loves nothing better than to play sport and talk sport. He's also mad for saving the environment, and especially preserving the South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

He's so passionate about both subjects that he will happily fly from one corner of the country to the other, from the bush to the city and the outback to the suburbs to get his views across. He'll stick his beak in anywhere now that he's got the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games to promote!



Stringybark and other seeds
favoured by Karak

Career Goals: He's achieved them! To get everyone fired up for the Commonwealth Games! Now that's his job, he couldn't be happier. He'll go from Tasmania, to Brisbane, to Perth and all over Australia, to catch up with his mates at their favourite watering holes. All he's ever wanted to do is to fly high in any sport and to spread the word about his favourite city, Melbourne.

Favourite Film: "Travelling Birds", "Flying High".

Favourite Songs: "When Doves Cry", "Up There Cazaly", "I'm Like A Bird", "Shake Your Tail Feather".

Favourite Food: Stringybark Seeds and lots of them, so Karak wants to see lots more Stringybark trees planted!

THE SOUTH-EASTERN RED-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO



The South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

Playful. Loud. Friendly. Energetic. Handsome. Cheeky. Endangered. That's Karak, For more information (*Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*) who is the Official Mascot of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games (15-26 March 2006).

With the moniker 'Karak' - after his distinctive birdcall - this native bird was chosen because he embodies the spirit of the Games. He is uniquely Australian and welcoming to all. His gregarious nature and rugged good looks make Karak the perfect Mascot to unite city and bush.

The South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo is threatened with extinction. Fewer than 1000 remain, living in small pockets of native woodland in Victoria's west, between Portland and the Little Desert. Estimates put the number of mating pairs at around 300. And despite extensive rescue efforts, their numbers continue to fall.

The future of this cockatoo depends on trees. He feeds almost entirely on the seeds of Brown Stringybarks and Bulokes. Since settlement, 60% of Stringybarks and 98% of Bulokes have been cleared for agriculture.

The bird will usually only nest in hollowed-out eucalypts. He particularly favours dead River Red Gums in farmed paddocks. And these trees usually need to be within 2km of the food source. Dead eucalypts are often cleared for firewood, or felled to make way for farm forestry or cropping.



Stringybark habitat

In his role as Official Mascot, Karak is promoting the Games, and spreading the word about the importance of preserving old growth trees for nesting and feeding.

Through Karak, and his little cousin Karak Junior, the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games aims to work in conjunction with the Victorian Government and Healesville Sanctuary to raise awareness of the plight of this stunning bird. With your help, he hopes to continue flying with his mates for generations to come.



Single Buloke in Cereal Paddock

How can people help protect the South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo?

Farmers are working with both the Australian and Victorian Governments, and local communities, to preserve and increase its habitat. The most important step is the protection of existing Stringybark and Buloke trees. All grazing stock should be fenced out to prevent ringbarking and promote natural revegetation. Eucalypt trees with hollows should also be protected for

nesting sites.

Once a year, volunteers gather in western Victoria to count the elusive cockatoo. Any sightings can be reported to a toll-free hotline: 1800 262 062.

KARAK JUNIOR



Karak with Karak Junior




Karak Junior

The Official Mascot of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, Karak, has a new addition to the family. Karak's younger cousin, Karak Junior, was born at Victoria's Healesville Sanctuary on 26 March 2004.

Karak Junior, who is a Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, is the first such bird successfully bred at Healesville in more than a decade. Coincidentally, Karak Junior's birthday is the same date as the Closing Ceremony of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

Commonwealth Games Minister Justin Madden and his family celebrated Father's Day, Sunday 5 September, at Healesville with Karak and his little cousin, both of whom will now spend their time promoting the Games, and spreading the word about the importance of preserving old growth trees for nesting and feeding.

 For more information visit the Healesville Sanctuary website:
www.zoo.org.au/healesville/karak.htm .

 For more information on the South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo visit the Birds Australia website:
www.birdsaustralia.com.au/rtbcd/index.html