

Scarlet robin declared a vulnerable species in the ACT

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Faizul Khan



A female scarlet robin. The species is at risk of extinction in the next 50 years.

Photo: Geoffrey Dabb

An iconic robin facing the threat of extinction in the ACT within the next five decades has been declared a vulnerable species by the government.

Environment Minister Simon Corbell has moved to protect the scarlet robin, which has faced serious long-term population decline in the ACT. The species had already been declared vulnerable in NSW.

"The scarlet robin (*Petroica multicolor*) is an iconic, well-known bird familiar to many Canberrans, so I am pleased that we are working to secure its long-term future in the ACT," Mr Corbell said in a statement.



A male scarlet robin. The bird has been declared a vulnerable species. *Photo: Geoffrey Dabb*

The ACT Flora and Fauna Committee previously identified the scarlet robin as vulnerable, which meant the species was at risk of premature extinction in the ACT region in the next 25 to 50 years, based on historic and current records.

Adult and immature birds descend from the forested slopes into the more open valleys around Canberra in autumn, when they sometimes appear in suburban gardens, and return to their breeding territories in the higher altitude open forests and woodlands in March and August.

The decline of the bird population in the ACT has been documented by research from the Canberra Ornithologists Group and an Australian National University post-doctoral fellow. The scarlet robin occurs widely in eucalypt woodlands and open forest in south-east Australia, particularly where shrubs, logs, coarse woody debris and native grasses are present, but is

absent from open grassland where there are no trees.