

# State of Australia's Key Biodiversity Areas 2022



**KBA**  
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS AUSTRALIA

  
**birdlife**  
AUSTRALIA

# State of Australia's Key Biodiversity Areas Report 2022



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**Cover photo:** Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo by Diana Anderson.

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## Acknowledgements

BirdLife Australia thanks all the volunteers, staff of NGOs, Indigenous Ranger groups and government agencies who have contributed in diverse and inspired ways to the conservation and management of Australia's Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

In particular, we want to thank the KBA Guardians and Guardian Coordinators for 82 KBAs for their monitoring efforts and the KBA Health-checks they conduct to give us an insight into the state of Australia's KBAs. They have been working hard to raise awareness for KBAs and make sure they are considered in conservation planning and environmental management at many different levels.

In addition to people giving their time to KBA conservation, we also enjoy the immense generosity of our financial supporters in making the BirdLife Australia's KBA Program what it is, and we thank them for their enthusiasm and for continuing to stand with us.

BirdLife Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

## Introduction

Key Biodiversity Areas are places that have been recognised as the most important areas for nature. By identifying all the world's KBAs and effectively conserving them, the species, and ecosystems they support, and the diverse benefits they provide to people, we can halt the loss of nature. We can and will reverse the impending mass extinction of species – the largest extinction crisis to face the planet since the demise of the dinosaurs.

Key Biodiversity Areas are:

- Places of global significance for the conservation of wildlife including birds
- Recognised as a focus for practical conservation action
- Linked to internationally binding agreements and industry standards

KBAs are identified using a strict, scientific Global Standard and must meet at least one of five criteria. A KBA can be declared for a site that is important for one or more species, known as Triggers:

1. Threatened species or ecosystem
2. Geographically restricted species, species assemblage or ecosystem
3. Area of high ecological integrity
4. Biological processes such as breeding or moulting aggregations, migration bottlenecks, or ecological refugia
5. Irreplaceable part of ecological connectivity

Australia currently has 334 KBAs providing a home for a diverse range of species including many Australian icons; from the Wollemi Pine to the Regent Honeyeater and the Corroboree Frog to the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat. The map (Fig. 1) identifies the KBAs in yellow outline and those for which Health-checks were available in purple or red. KBAs in blue are KBAs in Danger for which no KBA Health-check was obtained in 2022.



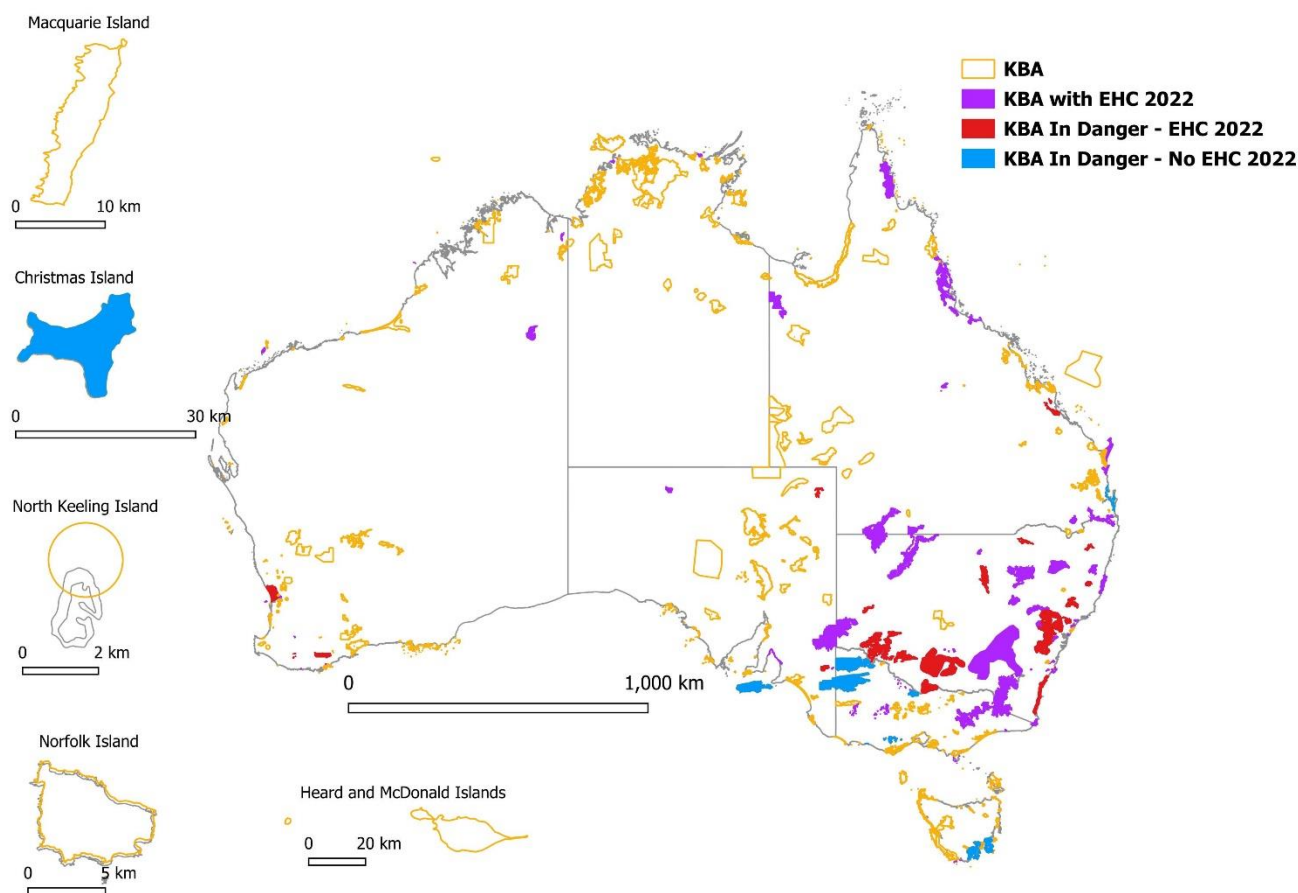


Figure 1. The map shows Australia’s 334 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs, yellow outline) and their monitoring and threat status. Eighty-two of Australia’s KBAs had a Health-check conducted in 2022 (purple or red fill). Thirty-one KBAs were considered ‘in Danger’ of which 21 (red fill) had a Health-check conducted for them, while no Health-checks were conducted for 11 KBAs in Danger (blue fill).

### KBA Health-checks

Volunteer KBA Guardians supported by BirdLife Australia have assessed 82 KBAs in 2022 using a formal process known as the KBA Easter Health-check. In the Health-check the Guardians score a KBA’s environmental health in three categories: threats (Pressure), condition (State) and conservation actions (Response). To this end they apply a simple but powerful internationally standardised protocol. It is repeatable, widely applied and detailed without being prohibitively complex. Critically, Health-checks provide an early warning system and identify conservation opportunities, helping to prevent the decline of KBAs.

## ***Guardians are the eyes and ears of what is happening locally at a KBA***

### **KBA Guardians**

Volunteer KBA Guardians are the basis of the success of KBA conservation, and they are as diverse as the places they care for. There is no one skill set or background that defines a KBA Guardian. However, KBA Guardians do share a love for nature, an ability to see how their skills can help wildlife and a readiness to use these powers for good. KBA Guardians can be individuals but increasingly comprise teams or local conservation groups such as Friends of Groups, BirdLife branches and more. The diversity of backgrounds and skills makes for a strong and inspiring national support network.

### **Indigenous Grant for Bird Research and Conservation**

In 2022, the recipients of BirdLife's Indigenous Grant for Bird Research and Conservation were the Mithaka Rangers of Channel Country in western Queensland. Mithaka Country extends from the channel country in Queensland, from south of Bedourie, to the north of Birdsville, Betoota, and across to Windorah. This area covers the Cooper Creek system and is part of the Lake Eyre Basin in the Barcoo and Diamantina Shires. The region is characterised by red dirt, gibber rock, wetlands, floodplains, spinifex, and mulga. The ranger program was established to care for Country and culture.



*Photo by Tarquin Moon*

There are four KBAs on Mithaka Country:

1. [Cooper Floodplain Below Windorah](#)
2. [Diamantina Floodplain](#)
3. [Lake Machattie Area](#)
4. [Lake Yamma Yamma](#)

For more information on Mithaka country see: <https://mithaka.org.au/>

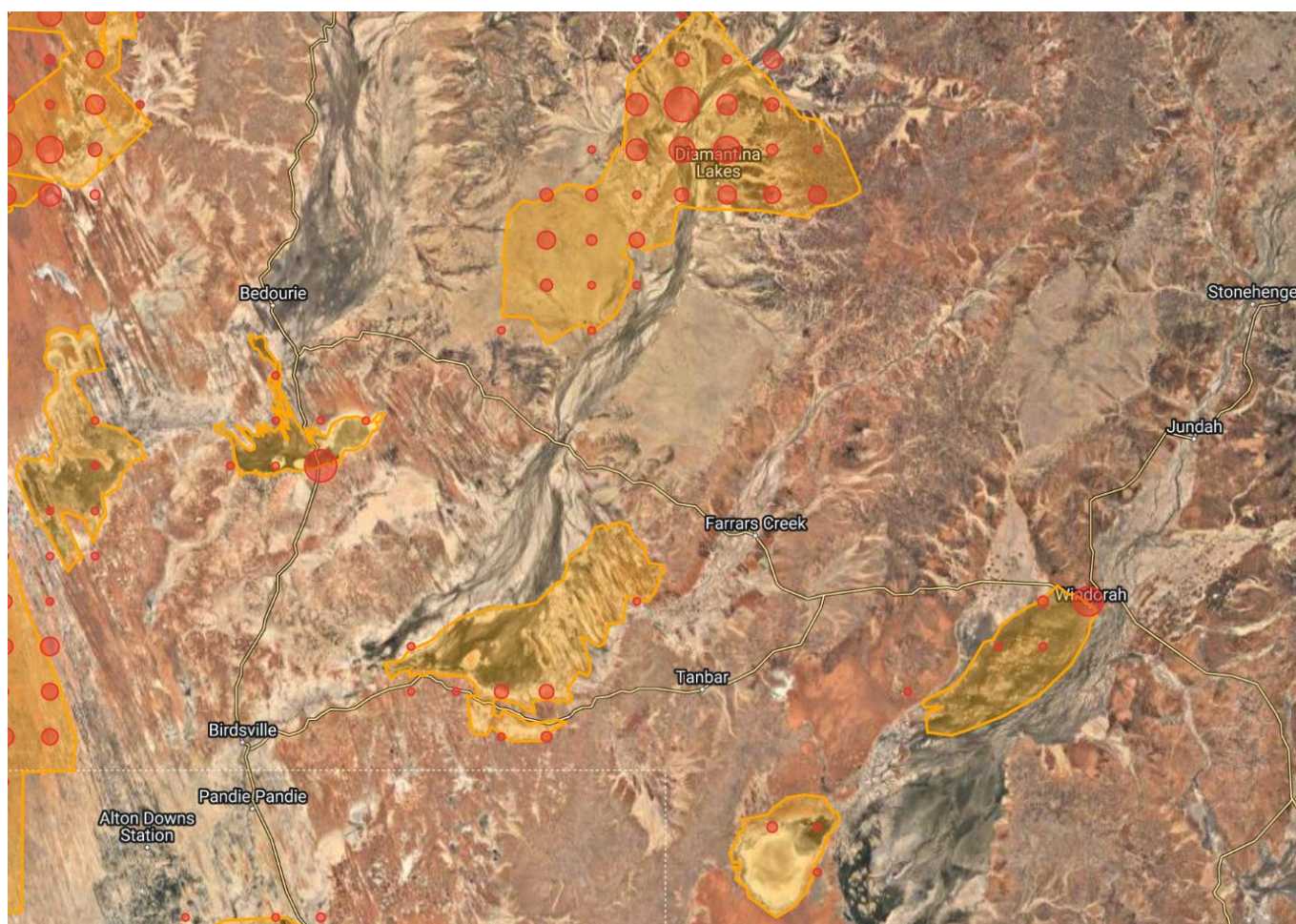


Figure 2. KBAs (in orange) on Mithaka Country with the number of Birddata surveys indicated by red circles. Source: [Birddata](#)



## **KBA Health-checks in 2022**

The reporting period for results in this report is from 1/4/2021 – 31/3/2022.

There were 82 health-checks completed across Australia's 334 KBAs, completed by 64 Guardians. Of these KBAs, there were 31 Indigenous groups active within them, and at least an additional 126 different Community groups (including 19 BirdLife branches), government departments, and community groups such as field naturalists' clubs. The efforts by volunteers across the 82 KBAs with completed Health-checks was monumental – there were 1045 volunteers who conducted monitoring and 1760 volunteers who completed conservation actions. This equated to 17,743 monitoring hours and 20,266 conservation hours. Conservation actions by BirdLife and by the community across the KBAs included habitat and species management, education, advocacy, and monitoring.

In 2022, there were KBA health-checks performed for areas protecting a range of 37 EPBC threatened listed bird species, including six Critically Endangered species, 14 Endangered and 17 Vulnerable species.

## **KBAs in Danger**

In total, 31 KBAs were listed as 'KBAs in Danger' in 2022. Of those, 21 had Health-check threat assessments completed by KBA Guardians. Based on all the KBA Health-checks, four additional KBAs were considered for in Danger listing by BirdLife's Research and Conservation Committee but none of them were considered to meet the high standard for in Danger listing. No KBAs were removed from the in Danger list.

## **Birddata Monitoring**

Birddata is a powerful citizen science platform provided for free as an app or online by BirdLife Australia with bespoke monitoring tools for threatened birds through which bird survey data is gathered. Monitoring is particularly useful when surveys are repeated over time at the same location and using the same standardised methods. Fortunately, there is a large network of 'Shared Sites' across KBAs at which repeat standardised surveys are carried out and entered into Birddata.

A total of 18,740 Birddata surveys across 210 KBAs were conducted during the Easter 2021 – 2022 reporting period, by 1115 people – mostly volunteers. Of these Birddata surveys, 4478 surveys were conducted at 1666 Shared Sites. Birddata citizen scientists were in the field surveying KBAs for 35,588 combined 'person hours', over 4 years in total! This massive effort produced sightings of 685 bird species in KBAs this year. These data form the basis for BirdLife population estimates, conservation planning and advocacy to improve the fate of threatened birds and keep common species common.

## Ways to get involved

There are many ways to volunteer in the KBA program. With KBAs being so diverse there is bound to be something you enjoy and are good at! Help protect Australia's most important nature hotspots and take action for KBAs.

## KBA contacts and local coordinators

Dr Anna McCallum, BirdLife Australia, KBA Program Coordinator  <i>Formerly Dr Amanda Lilleyman (KBA Program Coordinator 2022 – 2023)</i>	Anna.McCallum@birdlife.org.au
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## **KBA Resources**

[KBA website](#)

[Australia's KBA Health-check data portal](#)

[KBA-criteria](#)

[Guidelines for using the KBA standards](#)

[BirdLife Australia KBA Program](#)

[Detailed information on KBAs](#)