



Government agencies dismiss heart-breaking loss of endangered wildlife habitat as “not a breach of guidelines”

WA Government agencies responsible for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity have dismissed a complaint about a significant loss of nesting habitat for endangered wildlife in a South West logging operation, saying it was not a breach of guidelines.

The WA Forest Alliance (WAFA) carries out regular surveys in the forests, and earlier this year exposed a particularly severe case of endangered wildlife habitat that had been deliberately destroyed.

“In Channybearup forest near Pemberton we documented 18 destroyed tree hollows in one part of the coupe,” said WAFA convener, Jess Beckerling,

The hollows were photographed and their coordinates documented, and WAFA lodged an official complaint with the Conservation and Parks Commission (CPC). The CPC, on advice from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), dismissed the complaint.

“Black Cockatoos and other wildlife are being pushed to the brink of extinction because the hollows that they breed in are being destroyed. A group of endangered Baudin’s Cockatoos flew over slowly while we were there. It was heart breaking,” said Ms Beckerling.

The letter WAFA received from the CPC says that the guidelines “do not require all mature trees with nesting hollows to be retained during harvest operations” and “it follows that some of the larger trees felled within coupes may contain hollows.”

“The scarcity and ongoing loss of nesting hollows are pushing Black Cockatoos towards extinction.

“The Recovery Plan for the Baudin’s and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos calls for more protected areas and the protection of nesting hollows in logging and clearing operations.

“The Departments are knowingly flouting the science by continuing to allow this destruction of critical habitat.

“I wasn’t surprised that the CPC and DBCA dismissed the complaint. This is a deep-rooted and systemic problem. The CPC and DBCA are not doing what the community expects of them.

“When it comes to the forests, their focus is on prescribed burning and on working with the Forest Products Commission to facilitate logging operations.

“In the meantime the forests and their wildlife are in decline. We need environmental policies, laws and agencies that actually have a bit of backbone,” said Ms Beckerling.

WAFA is calling on the McGowan Government to fully protect old-growth forests by fixing the flawed definition of old-growth still in place in WA. It must fully protect all threatened species habitat from logging and other threatening processes and work proactively on a rapid and equitable transition of the timber industry from native forests to sustainably managed plantations and farm forestry.

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