

Media Release

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Minister for Environment
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INTO THE WILD FOR ENDANGERED HELMETED HONEYEATERS

Critically endangered Helmeted Honeyeaters have had their population boosted with more zoo-bred birds released into the wild as part of the Allan Labor Government's efforts to save the species.

Today 18 Helmeted Honeyeaters - one of the state's faunal emblems - made the journey from Healesville Sanctuary to the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Area where they were released.

The release of zoo-bred birds, combined with supplementary feeding in the wild has seen Helmeted Honeyeater numbers more than triple over the past three decades — one of Victoria's most significant threatened species success stories.

The newly released Helmeted Honeyeaters were hatched at Healesville Sanctuary as part of Zoos Victoria's conservation breeding program and are now joining the established wild population at their new home.

To strengthen genetic diversity and reduce the risk of losing the species through bushfire or disease, an additional 12 zoo-bred birds from Healesville Sanctuary will be released in the forest near Warburton next week, bolstering efforts started in 2021 to establish a second population.

Through the Government and conservation partners' support, the Helmeted Honeyeater population has risen to more than 250 in the wild.

The Government has invested \$6 million since 2018 to support the recovery of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possums— improving the long-term conservation and health of both animals.

The recovery program is delivered in partnership with Zoos Victoria, Parks Victoria, The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater Inc., Melbourne Water, Monash University, University of Melbourne, Yarra Ranges Shire Council, Cardinia City Council, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature and generous philanthropic support.

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

"The Helmeted Honeyeater is unique to Victoria – we're proud to be protecting our precious biodiversity and native species so that future generations can see and enjoy these rare birds."

Quote attributable to Member for Monbulk Daniela De Martino

"Yellingbo is home to the last naturally occurring population of Helmeted Honeyeaters in the world and we take pride in all of the conservation work undertaken to ensure their numbers flourish."

Quote attributable to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action Senior Ornithologist Bruce Quin

"The importance of today's release of zoo-bred birds cannot be understated. It continues our work to increase both size and genetic diversity of this wild population."