

Roads, fire and noisy miners: determinants of woodland bird distribution in southern Queensland forests.

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The Brigalow Belt contains some of the largest areas of continuous woodland in eastern Australia, yet the avifauna appears to be dominated by the aggressive noisy miner, usually considered an edge species. Over one million ha of these woodlands are to be moved from forestry to conservation tenure, but they are currently bisected by extensive road networks and all but *Callitris* woodland is subject to frequent fuel-reduction burns. We investigated the influence of road edges and vegetation type and structure on the avifauna of a 300,000ha woodland. The avifauna differed significantly among *Callitris*, grassy *Corymbia*, and shrubby *Corymbia* woodland, but not with proximity to roads. Noisy miners were rare in *Callitris* woodland but were 3x more common than any other species in *Corymbia* woodland. The presence of a shrub layer in *Corymbia* woodland was associated with fewer noisy miners. The species richness and abundance of bird species smaller than noisy miners was significantly lower in grassy *Corymbia* woodland than *Callitris* or shrubby *Corymbia* woodland, with abundance 6x higher in sites without noisy miners. We conclude that *Callitris* forest is potentially an important refuge for smaller birds, and current burning regimes which reduce the shrub layer are suboptimal for avian conservation.

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