

Bird faces extinction

A threatened bird faces possible extinction if the health of the Murray-Darling Basin does not improve, animal groups say.

The fairy tern relies on a healthy Coorong for food and safe nesting, but that is threatened by poor water management in the basin, according to Birds South Australia president John Gitsham.

"We need to protect our natural environment and preserve our bird life, but the state and federal governments are ignoring science, putting commercial interests

ahead of our unique and threatened species," Mr Gitsham said.

The fairy tern is listed as a vulnerable species, with a recent study recording an 82 per cent decline in the bird's population between 1985 and 2010.

"This is an urgent issue. The fairy tern is a gorgeous bird, beloved in South Australia," Mr Gitsham said.

The bird has a white body with light bluish wings and is native to Australia and New Zealand.



Pest control . . . Feral cat control practices are set to be implemented by the Victorian Government to protect biodiversity and threatened wildlife. Picture: Mark Marathon

Killer feral cats declared pest

Feral cats have been declared a pest animal by the Victorian Government, with a code of practice set to be developed to manage numbers.

The announcement comes after research released in October last year revealed feral cats kill more than one million native Australian birds across the country each day.

The declaration applies to areas of Crown land, including land managed by DELWP and Parks Victoria, and Victoria's four alpine resorts.

"Feral cats have a devastating impact on our native species and it's important we manage them properly — that's what this declaration will enable," Victorian Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio said.

Feral cats will not be declared a pest animal on private land, meaning farmers and

other private landholders will not be required to control feral cats.

Private land owners will still be able to manage cats roaming on their property in accordance with current laws.

Feral cats are a threat to some of Victoria's most critically endangered native wildlife, including the mountain-pygmy possum, helmeted honeyeater, orange-bellied parrot and plains wanderer.

University of Melbourne researchers have also detected feral cats preying upon two nesting boxes containing critically endangered Leadbeater's possums, with seven feral cats captured in 10 days.

Two of the cats were found to have remains of the possums in their stomachs.

Feral cats are also estimated to kill 466 million reptiles in Australia every year.