

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Buff-banded Rail (Cocos-Keeling Islands)

1	Family	Rallidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Gallirallus philippensis andrewsi</i> (Mathews, 1911)
3	Common name	Buff-banded Rail (Cocos-Keeling Islands)
4	Conservation status	Vulnerable: D1+2

5 Reasons for listing

The population of this subspecies contains fewer than 1000 mature individuals (Vulnerable: D1) on a tiny island (D2).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	4 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	1.3 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	500	medium
trend	stable	low
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	3 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

G. p. mellori (Tasmania and mainland Australia) is Least Concern. *G. p. dieffenbachi* (Chatham Islands, N. Z.) and *G. p. macquariensis* (Macquarie I.) are Extinct. There are at least ten other subspecies through south-east Asia and the Pacific. The species' global status is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

Widespread and common until early 1900s on all islands of Cocos-Keeling Is (Wood Jones 1909, Stokes *et al.*, 1984). Suggestion that presence on islands is a result of introduction (Gibson-Hill 1948, 1949) considered unlikely, based on distinctive morphology (Reid, 2000).

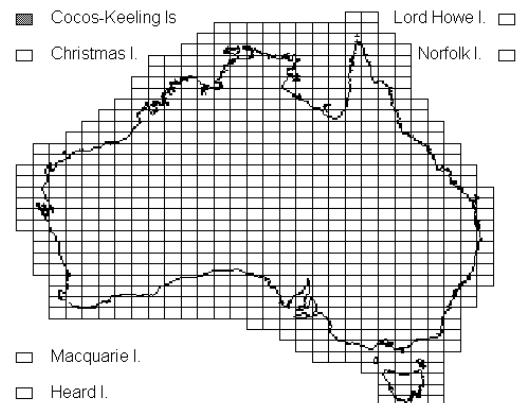
8 Present range and abundance

Now confined to North Keeling I., but persisted on South I. (Pulu Atas) and West I. (Pulu Panjang) of the main atoll; Marchant and Higgins, 1993), until early 1980s (Stokes *et al.*, 1984), with a single record from West I. in August 1991 (P. Stevenson in Garnett, 1992). Population on North Keeling I. estimated at 750-800 individuals (Reid, 2000).

9 Ecology

On North Keeling I., Buff-banded Rails occupy all habitats, foraging along the lagoon shore and nesting in *Pisonia grandis* debris, grass tussocks or similar ground layer vegetation, the forks of *Pisonia grandis* trees, and the bases of coconut palms. On West I., they were seen feeding on the airstrip and sheltering in *Scaevola taccada* thickets. Buff-banded Rails are omnivorous, taking mostly crustaceans, molluscs,

worms and insects, but also plants, seeds, fruits, frogs, eggs, carrion and refuse. The clutch size of mainland birds is 5-8 (Stokes *et al.*, 1984, Marchant and Higgins, 1993, Reid 2000).



10 Threats

Conversion of *Pisonia* forest to Coconut plantation, and predation by feral cats, Black Rats *Rattus rattus* and, perhaps, people have probably caused the extinction of the subspecies on the main atoll. The greatest threat is now the possible, accidental introduction of predators to North Keeling I. (Stokes *et al.*, 1984, Reid, 2000).

11 Information required

11.1 None.

12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Maintain sub-population on North Keeling I.

12.2 Reintroduce sub-population to Horsburgh I. (Pulu Luar).

13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 A pilot population study has been completed and a monitoring program devised.

13.2 A revegetation program is being undertaken on Horsburgh I.

14 Management actions required

14.1 Through education and other means ensure strict quarantine on North Keeling I.

14.2 Monitor sub-population on North Keeling I.

14.3 Secure Horsburgh I. as a safe reintroduction site by eradicating cats, rats and feral chickens.

14.4 Reintroduce to Horsburgh I directly from North Keeling I., once 14.3 complete.

16 Other organisations involved
None.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation
Environment Australia.

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out			
<i>Staff resources required 2001-2005</i>	0.05	<i>Technical Officer¹</i>	
<i>Financial resources required 2001-2005</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Conservation agencies</i>	<i>Other funding sources</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Monitor North Keeling I.¹</i>	\$3,800	\$0	\$3,800
<i>Ensure quarantine for North Keeling I.¹</i>	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
<i>Remove cats, rats and feral chickens from Horsburgh I.</i>	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
<i>Reintroduce to Horsburgh I.</i>	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
<i>Total</i>	\$58,800	\$0	\$58,800

¹ Costs shared among Round Island Petrel, Masked Booby, White-tailed Tropicbird and Buff-banded Rail

18 Bibliography

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Comments received from
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