Buff-banded Rail (Macquarie Island)

1	Family	Rallidae
2	Scientific name	*Gallirallus philippensis macquariensis* (Hutton, 1879)
3	Common name	Buff-banded Rail (Macquarie Island)
4	Conservation status	Extinct

5 Reasons for listing

This subspecies apparently died out before 1894.

6 Infraspecific taxa

G. p. andrewsi (Cocos-Keeling Is) is Endangered.
G. p. mellori (Tasmania and mainland Australia) is Least Concern. There are at least eleven other subspecies through south-east Asia and the Pacific. Of these, *G. p. dieffenbachi* (Chatham Is) is Extinct. Most other subspecies are secure, and global status of species is Least Concern. Given the mobility of the Buff-banded Rail and its ability to colonise islands, the taxonomic status of this subspecies deserves reconsideration.

7 Past range and abundance

This subspecies of Buff-banded Rail was endemic to Macquarie Island. Though common when last seen in 1879 (Scott, 1882), it could not be found in 1894 (Hamilton, 1894).

8 Ecology

The subspecies occupied tussock grassland (Hamilton, 1894), but nothing else is known of its ecology.

9 Reasons for extinction

This rail co-existed with feral cats on Macquarie I. for at least 70 years, but Wekas *Gallirallus australis scotti*, were introduced in 1872, and may have preyed on eggs and young. The decline of the rails was particularly rapid after 1878, when rabbits became established. It is thought the rabbits reduced the area of suitable habitat by grazing tussocks and enabled the population of cats to increase. Rabbits are scarce in winter (Jones, 1977), and the cats may then have hunted rails (Hamilton, 1894).

10 Bibliography

Hamilton, A. 1894. Notes on a visit to Macquarie Island. *Trans. Proc. N. Z. Inst.* 27:559-579.

Jones, E. 1977. Ecology of the Feral Cat *Felis catus* (L.), (Carnivora: Felidae) on Macquarie Island. *Aust. Wildl. Res.* 4:249-262.

Scott, J. H. 1882. Macquarie Island. *Trans. Proc. N. Z. Inst.* 15:484-493.

Comments received from

Nigel Brother, Peter Brown, Peter Fullagar.