

TAXON SUMMARY

Black Bittern (Australasian)

1	Family	Ardeidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis australis</i> (Lesson, 1831)
3	Common name	Black Bittern (Australasian)
4	Conservation status	
	Australian population	Least Concern

5 Reasons for listing

The subspecies' extensive range in northern Australia is intact, despite declines along the southern margins. The global status is Least Concern and, given the likely extent of genetic interchange, corroborates national listing (as per Gärdenfors *et al.*, 1999).

Australian population	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	3,000,000 km ²	medium
trend	decreasing	medium
Area of occupancy	500,000 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	20,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	3	medium
Largest sub-population	19,500	low
Generation time	5 years	low
Global population share	50 %	low
Level of genetic exchange	medium	medium

6 Intraspecific taxa

The two other subspecies do not occur in Australia. Globally, the species is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

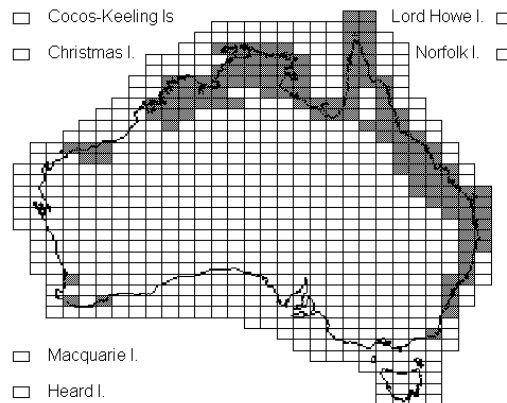
In Australia, found in near-coastal northern and eastern Australia, with an isolated sub-population in south-western Australia. It was also recorded in western New South Wales (Smith *et al.*, 1995). Extraliminally in New Guinea and nearby islands (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

8 Present range and abundance

As above, though disappeared from western New South Wales (Smith *et al.*, 1995) and parts of central Queensland (Barnard and Barnard, 1925), and is now very scarce in south-west Western Australia (Johnson and Storr, 1998).

9 Ecology

Black Bitterns occupy vegetated wetlands, breeding in trees, and feeding on aquatic fauna along streams, in the upper reaches of estuaries, and beside billabongs and pools (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).



10 Threats

Salinisation of waterways, wetland drainage and clearance of creek-side vegetation have probably been responsible for the decline in south-western Australia. Clearance is also likely to be affecting the species along the south-east coast (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

11 Recommended actions

11.1 Retain and manage riparian vegetation.

12 Bibliography

- Barnard, C. A. and Barnard, H. G. 1925. A review of the bird life on Coomoooolaroo Station, Duaringa, Queensland, during the past fifty years. *Emu* 24:252-265.
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- Johnstone, R. E. and Storr, G. M. 1998. *Handbook of Western Australian Birds. Vol. 1. Non-passerines (Emu to Dollarbird)*. W. A. Museum, Perth.
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