TAXON SUMMARY

Diamond Firetail

1	Family	Estrildidae
2	Scientific name	*Stagonopleura guttata* (Shaw, 1796)
3	Common name	Diamond Firetail
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: c

5 Reasons for listing

This species has declined over most of its historical range (Near Threatened: c), though not at a rate or scale that warrants its listing as Vulnerable.

	Estimate	*Reliability*
Extent of occurrence	*1,000,000 km²*	*high*
trend	*decreasing*	*high*
Area of occupancy	*50,000 km²*	*low*
trend	*decreasing*	*high*
No. of breeding birds	*200,000*	*low*
trend	*decreasing*	*high*
No. of sub-populations	*20*	*low*
Largest sub-population	*50,000*	*low*
Generation time	*3 years*	*low*

6 Infraspecific taxa

None described.

7 Past range and abundance

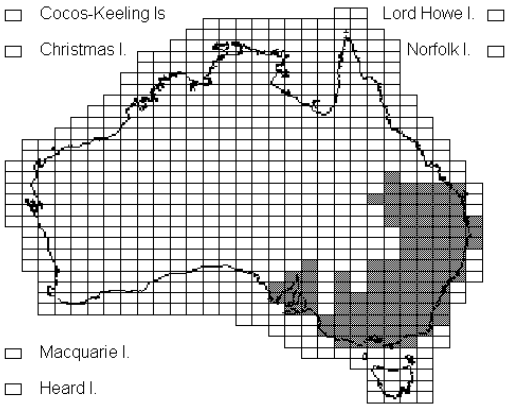
Eastern Australia, from Eyre Peninsula, S. A., to Cardwell, Qld, mostly on the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Ra., (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Schodde and Mason, 1999).

8 Present range and abundance

No longer recorded north of Clermont, Qld, and is probably lost from this area (D. Hannah) as well as the Lockyer Valley (R. Hobson). Apparently declined in density throughout New South Wales (Smith *et al.*, 1995, Reid, 1999), particularly in areas where only small habitat fragments remain (Traill and Duncan, 2000). Numbers have also decreased in Victoria (Robinson, 1993) and South Australia (Paton *et al.*, 1994), with Eyre Peninsula, Flinders Ra. and Mt Lofty Ra. sub-populations all likely to be isolated (O'Gorman, 1981, Blakers *et al.*, 1984).

9 Ecology

Diamond Firetails live in a wide range of eucalypt-dominated vegetation communities that have a grassy understorey, including woodland, forest and mallee. Most occur on the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Ra., with only small pockets near the coast (Blakers *et al.*, 1984). They feed on seeds, mostly of grasses (Read, 1994), build a bottle-shaped nest, and have a usual clutch size of 4-5 eggs (Immelmann, 1982).



10 Threats

The Diamond Firetail is one of a suite of species that have declined from woodlands in south-eastern Australia (Robinson and Traill, 1996, Reid, 1999). Much of its habitat has been cleared, and remaining fragments are gradually becoming unsuitable. Factors that have been postulated to be adversely affecting Diamond Firetails in particular include loss of key food plants and habitat as a result of invasion by exotic grasses that are more suitable for flock-foraging Red-browed Finches *Neochmia temporalis*, whose expansion in some areas may have disadvantaged Diamond Firetails (Read, 1994). Isolated sub-populations may be susceptible to illegal trapping.

11 Recommended actions

11.1 Determine characteristics of biology that make species susceptible to fragmentation.

11.2 Protect all woodland in which Diamond Firetails are known to be resident from clearing, monitoring compliance biennially.

11.3 Place all Diamond Firetail sub-populations on public land under secure conservation management, particularly those in timber reserves, transport corridors and local government land.

11.4 Within the firetail's range, manage at least 15% of the pre-European area of all woodland communities on public or private land for nature conservation, using incentives where necessary.

11.5 Using appropriate incentives, undertake extension with land-holders that have suitable

woodland habitat to promote sound management of remnants, particularly the retention of native grasslands, and encourage greater connectivity between sub-populations.

11.6 Promote revegetation and land reclamation that recreates woodland habitat with a full complement of biodiversity, including the firetail.

11.7 Control and reduce firewood collection from areas occupied by Diamond Firetails, promoting wood-lot development close to markets, and reduce grazing densities where necessary.

11.8 Undertake long-term monitoring of remnant sub-populations.

12 Bibliography

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