

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Island Thrush (Christmas Island)

1	Family	Apodidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Turdus poliocephalus erythropleurus</i> Sharpe, 1887
3	Common name	Island Thrush (Christmas Island)
4	Conservation status	Critically Endangered: A2ce

5 Reasons for listing

This subspecies is expected to decline by more than 80% over the next three generations (12 years) (Critically Endangered: A2) because of a decline in habitat quality (c) and the rapid spread of a new threat (e).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	137 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	100 km ²	high
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	4,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	4 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

T. p. poliocephalus (Norfolk I.) and *T. p. vinitinctus* (Lord Howe I.) are Extinct. There are about fifty other subspecies in south-east Asia and the south-west Pacific.

7 Past range and abundance

Confined to Christmas I., Indian Ocean (Stokes, 1988).

8 Present range and abundance

Range as above, with area of occupancy reduced by about a third as a result of mining (Stokes, 1988). Briefly introduced to Cocos-Keeling Is (Stokes *et al.*, 1984).

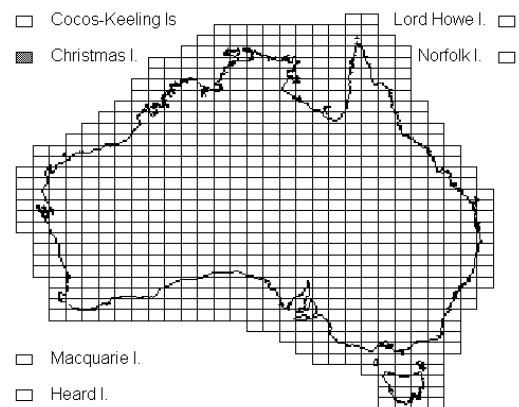
9 Ecology

On Christmas I., Island Thrushes live in most habitats, including forests and settlements, but not rank regrowth, post-mining clearing or *Pandanus* thickets (Stokes, 1988).

10 Threats

Although the Island Thrush is relatively common on uncleared parts of Christmas I., loss of subspecies from Norfolk and Lord Howe Is suggests the species is particularly vulnerable to extinction. This is supported by the disappearance of the Christmas Island subspecies from Cocos Keeling Is, although it thrived there briefly after its introduction (Stokes *et al.*, 1984). The subspecies could thus be particularly vulnerable to the rapid advance of the Yellow Crazy

Ant *Anoplolepis gracilipes*, which already occupies 15-18% of the island (D. Slip). These ants probably prey on nestlings and may alter the ecology of the island by killing the dominant life-form, the Red Crab *Gecaroidea natalis*, and by farming scale insects, which damage trees (O'Dowd *et al.*, 1999). Reduction of Red Crabs may also allow spread of introduced Black Rats *Rattus rattus*, which have been responsible for the extinction of Island Thrushes on other islands.



11 Information required

11.1 Refine techniques for controlling crazy ants.

12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Maintain existing population.

12.2 Control Yellow Crazy Ant.

13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 Contingency plans are being developed to establish a captive population on mainland Australia.

13.2 A three year research program has been initiated and staff have been dedicated to ant control.

14 Management actions required

14.1 Control abundance and spread of the Yellow Crazy Ant.

14.2 Pending control, establish a captive population with the aim of reintroduction once ant control has been achieved.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation
Environment Australia (including Wildlife Australia Branch; Parks North; Christmas Island Rainforest Rehabilitation Program).

16 Other organisations involved
Birds Australia, Christmas Island Phosphates Pty. Ltd., Christmas Island Shire Council, Monash University, Australian zoos.

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out

<i>Staff resources required 2001-2005</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>Project Officer (crazy ants)¹</i>
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>Technical Officer (crazy ants)¹</i>
<i>Financial resources required 2001-2005</i>		

<i>Action</i>	<i>Conservation agencies</i>	<i>Other funding sources</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Control crazy ants¹</i>	\$250,000	\$12,000	\$262,000
<i>Establish a captive population²</i>	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$60,000
<i>Total</i>	\$260,000	\$62,000	\$322,000

¹ Costs shared with all 10 Endangered and Vulnerable Christmas I. birds

² Costs shared among Brown Goshawk (Christmas I.), Christmas Island Imperial-Pigeon, Emerald Dove (Christmas I.), Christmas Island Owl, Island Thrush (Christmas I.), Christmas Island White-eye

18 Bibliography

O'Dowd, D. J., Green, P. T. and Lake, P. S. A. 1999. Status, impact and recommendations for research and management of exotic invasive ants in Christmas Island National Park. Report to Environment Australia.

Stokes, T. 1988. A review of the birds of Christmas Island, Indian Ocean. *Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service Occasional Paper* 16.

Stokes, A. S., Shiels, W. and Dunn, K. 1984. Birds of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Indian Ocean. *Emu* 84:23-28.

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