

## RECOVERY OUTLINE

# Australian Owlet-nightjar (Tasmanian)

1	Family	Aegothelidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Aegotheles cristatus tasmanicus</i> Mathews, 1918
3	Common name	Australian Owlet-nightjar (Tasmanian)
4	Conservation status	Vulnerable: C2b

### 5 Reasons for listing

There are probably only 5,000 mature individuals in the single sub-population of this subspecies, which is declining (Vulnerable: C2b).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	60,000 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	10,000 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	5,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	3 years	low

### 6 Intraspecific taxa

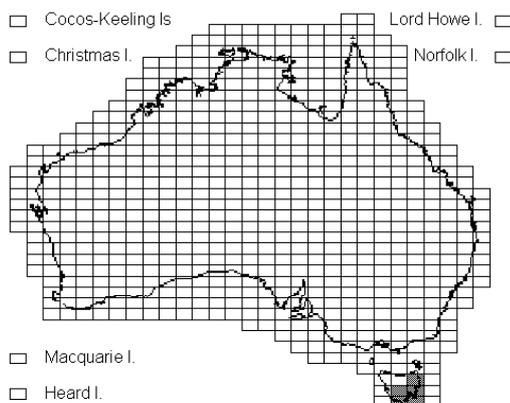
*A. c. cristatus* (mainland Australia and main off-shore islands, southern New Guinea) is Least Concern.

### 7 Past range and abundance

Endemic to mainland Tasmania with most records from the drier south-eastern part of the state, but isolated records from south-west, western coast, Central Plateau and south of Hobart (Thomas, 1979, Blakers *et al.* 1984, Higgins, 1999).

### 8 Present range and abundance

As above, though now absent from cleared agricultural land. Low recording frequency (N. Mooney) suggests density lower than the 0.01-0.2 pairs/ha (Higgins, 1999) recorded on mainland Australia.



### 9 Ecology

The Tasmanian subspecies of the Australian Owlet-nightjar is most frequently recorded in eucalypt woodland, and more rarely, in wet eucalypt forest

and rainforest (Higgins, 1999). It eats a wide range of insects, and nests and roosts during the daytime in hollow limbs (Schodde and Mason, 1980). Radio-tracked birds of the nominate subspecies used up to 6 cavities in a three month period, preferentially selecting trees with numerous hollows, particularly those near other hollow-bearing trees (Brigham *et al.*, 1998). Clutch size is 3-4 (Brigham and Geiser, 1997).

### 10 Threats

Clearance for agriculture in eastern and central Tasmania has probably removed much of the habitat that was once suitable for Australian Owlet-nightjars. Clearance is continuing apace, and without legislative control. In other areas, the subspecies has been affected by intensive forestry operations, particularly firewood collection and clearfelling for woodchips. In northern New South Wales, the nominate subspecies was recorded more frequently in forest that had been heavily logged (Kavanagh *et al.*, 1995). However, woodchipping removes trees bearing multiple hollows that are unlikely to be taken selectively, thus causing a shortage of suitable hollows. An additional threat is competition for limited nest space with the introduced Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (Schodde and Mason, 1980), an aggressive competitor that is widespread in Tasmania, particularly in disturbed habitats (Thomas, 1979).

### 11 Information required

11.1 Develop a repeatable survey technique.

### 12 Recovery objectives

12.1 A stable population over at least five sites as established by monitoring.

### 13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 None.

### 14 Management actions required

14.1 Undertake repeatable surveys to establish a baseline density against which trends can be determined.

14.2 Identify and map suitable habitat.

14.3 Protect all woodland in which Owlet-nightjars have been recorded from clearing, and monitor compliance biennially.

- 14.4 Place all Owlet-nightjar breeding areas that are on public land under secure conservation management, particularly those in timber reserves, transport corridors and local government land.
- 14.5 Within the subspecies' 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.
- 14.6 Undertake extension, with appropriate incentives, to land-holders with suitable woodland habitat to promote sound management.

- 14.7 Promote revegetation and land reclamation that recreates woodland habitat with a full complement of biodiversity, including this subspecies.
- 14.8 Control and reduce firewood collection from areas occupied by owlet-nightjars, promoting wood-lot development close to markets.

#### 15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

#### 16 Other organisations involved

Forestry Tasmania, Australasian Raptor Association of Birds Australia, timber extraction companies, private land-holders.

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

Staff resources required 2001-2005

0.2	Project Officer
0.5	Extension Officer <sup>1</sup>

Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Develop monitoring protocol	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$72,000
Survey forests to establish baseline	\$30,000	\$16,000	\$46,000
Identify and map habitat	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000
Protect and encourage suitable management of habitat on private land	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$70,000
Develop and implement management guidelines for timber and firewood production <sup>1</sup>	\$68,000	\$24,000	\$92,000
Promote re-vegetation and rehabilitation of habitat <sup>1</sup>	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$120,000
Undertake public information and education program	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$324,000</b>	<b>\$156,000</b>	<b>\$480,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Costs shared with Forty-spotted Pardalote

### 18 Bibliography

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#### Comments received from

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