

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Rufous Scrub-bird (northern)

1	Family	Atrichornithidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Atrichornis rufescens rufescens</i> (Ramsay, 1866)
3	Common name	Rufous Scrub-bird (northern)
4	Conservation status	Vulnerable: B1+2be

5 Reasons for listing

The area occupied by this subspecies is only 1,500 km² (Vulnerable: B). The population is severely fragmented (B1), and the subspecies is thought to be declining in area of occupancy (b) and thus number of mature individuals (e).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	4,500 km ²	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	1,500 km ²	medium
trend	decreasing	low
No. of breeding birds	1,460	medium
trend	decreasing	low
No. of sub-populations	3	medium
Largest sub-population	1,000	low
Generation time	5 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

A. r. ferrieri (Dorrigo Plateau-Barrington Tops, N. S. W.; Schodde and Mason, 1999) is Near Threatened.

7 Past range and abundance

High rainfall areas between Gibraltar Ra., N. S. W. and Mistake Ra., Qld (Schodde and Mason, 1999). Population size in the 1800s is estimated to have been about 9,600. Even in suitable habitat, territories are widely spaced with a maximum density of six pairs/km² (Ferrier, 1984).

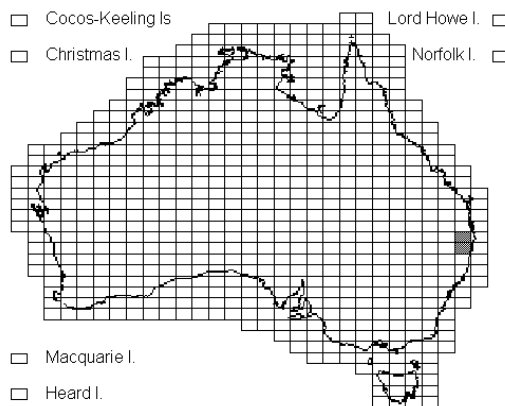
8 Present range and abundance

Known sub-populations are centred on Gibraltar Ra. and Border Ra. Now mostly confined to areas above 600 m in altitude as a result of clearing of lowland habitat (Chisholm, 1951, Smith, 1977, Ferrier, 1984). Even above 600 m, the subspecies has disappeared from the Lionsville-Washpool area, Mt Warning and Cunningham's Gap. Surveys of the Rufous Scrub-bird conducted between 1979 and 1983 estimated a total of approximately 730 territories (Ferrier, 1984). Initial indications from a survey in late 1999 suggest the population may have declined further (Ekert, 2000, A. McIntyre).

9 Ecology

Rufous Scrub-birds require dense, metre-high ground cover, a moist microclimate and deep leaf-litter, such as is found in rainforest and adjacent wet eucalypt

forest. Habitat in rainforest is usually associated with canopy openings caused by natural tree-falls, selective logging, or watercourses. Habitat in eucalypt forest is only suitable if well buffered from fire by nearby patches of rainforest (Ferrier, 1984, 1985).



10 Threats

Though most of the bird's lowland habitat was cleared in the 19th century, clearance is not a continuing threat. Remaining eucalypt forest habitat, which supports the majority of the present population, is potentially threatened by inappropriate burning and logging practices (Ferrier, 1984), but the remaining population is under relatively secure tenure.

11 Information required

- 11.1 Obtain a modern baseline of distribution and test for changes using models of Ferrier (1984).
- 11.2 Determine the effect of fire on territory occupation using sites described by Ferrier (1984) as a baseline.

12 Recovery objectives

- 12.1 Ensure each sub-population remains viable.

13 Actions completed or under way

- 13.1 Logging has been stopped in area known to contain scrub-bird territories.
- 13.2 Surveys of Scrub-bird numbers have recently been initiated.

14 Management actions required

- 14.1 Develop and implement fire management plans for all sub-populations based on 11.2.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation
New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

16 Other organisations involved
Birds Australia, State Forests New South Wales, Queensland Department of Natural Resources.

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

Staff resources required 2001-2005 0.05 Project Officer
Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Surveys and monitoring ¹	\$144,500	\$55,000	\$199,500
Mapping ¹	\$9,000	\$0	\$9,000
Fire planning and construction of firebreaks ¹	\$47,000	\$7,000	\$54,000
Vegetation monitoring ¹	\$77,000	\$0	\$77,000
Public information ¹	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Recovery process ¹	\$128,300	\$2,000	\$130,300
Total	\$410,800	\$64,000	\$474,800

¹ Costs shared with Eastern Bristlebird (northern)

18 Bibliography

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Text adapted from
Ferrier (1992).

Comments received from
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