

TAXON SUMMARY

Rufous Owl (Cape York Peninsula)

1	Family	Strigidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Ninox rufa meesi</i> Mason & Schodde, 1980
3	Common name	Rufous Owl (Cape York Peninsula)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: d

5 Reasons for listing

Although the population probably contains around 1,500 mature individuals (Near Threatened: d), this subspecies is in no immediate danger.

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	10,000 km ²	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	1,000 km ²	low
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	1,500	low
trend	stable	high
Number of populations:	1	medium
Generation time	10 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

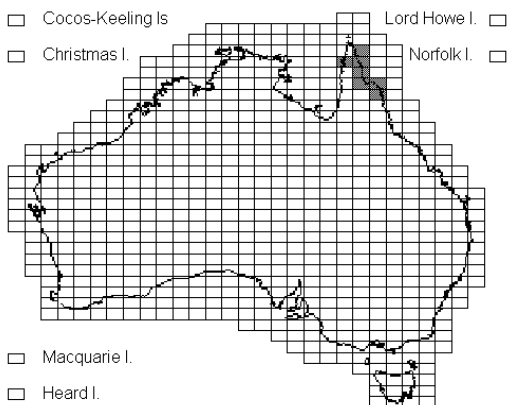
N. r. queenslandica (north-east Queensland) is also Near Threatened. *N. r. rufa* (north-western Australia) is Least Concern. Extralimital subspecies are *N. r. humeralis* (New Guinea) and *N. r. aruensis* (Aru Is). The species' global status is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

Northern Cape York Peninsula from Endeavour R. in east to at least Aurukun in the west (Higgins, 1999).

8 Present range and abundance

As above.



9 Ecology

On Cape York Peninsula, Rufous Owls are found in gallery rainforests and along the edges of mangroves, though most foraging may be in open woodland (Schodde and Mason, 1980). The owl lays 2 eggs in a large hollow, usually in a large eucalypt or paperbark,

and takes a range of birds, mammals and insects. Prey items include large bird species including Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus macgillivrayi* and Red-cheeked Parrots *Geoffroyus geoffroyi macleannani* (Schodde and Mason, 1980, Wood, 1988, Higgins, 1999).

10 Threats

There are few threats to this subspecies, although Rufous Owls may be affected by the apparent decline of arboreal mammals on Cape York Peninsula (Braithwaite and Griffiths, 1994, J. W. Winter), and nest sites may sometimes be destroyed by fire. Fire management on Cape York Peninsula has probably changed since the arrival of Europeans (Crowley and Garnett, 2000) and late dry season fires may more frequently affect rainforest pockets.

11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Investigate decline in arboreal mammals.
- 11.2 Use birdwatchers' lists from Cape York Peninsula to monitor long-term changes in abundance.

12 Bibliography

Braithwaite, R. W. and Griffiths, A. D. 1994. Demographic variation and range contraction in the Northern Quoll, *Dasyurus hallucatus* (Marsupialia: Dasyuridae). *Wildl. Res.* 21:203-218.

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