

RECOVERY OUTLINE

White-tailed Tropicbird (Indian Ocean)

1	Family	Phaethontidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Phaethon lepturus lepturus</i> Daudin, 1802
3	Common name	White-tailed Tropicbird (Indian Ocean)
4	Conservation status	Endangered: D

5 Reasons for listing

The Australian population contains fewer than 250 mature individuals (Endangered D). Site fidelity is probably high, especially given the high rate of subspeciation in White-tailed Tropic-bird, so immigration rate is assumed to be low. National status of breeding population is therefore assessed independently of global status (as per Gärdenfors *et al.*, 1999).

Australian breeding colonies	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	10 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	4 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	120	low
trend	stable	high
No. of sub-populations	3	high
Largest sub-population	120	low
Generation time	10 years	low
Global population share	< 1 %	medium
Level of genetic exchange	low	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

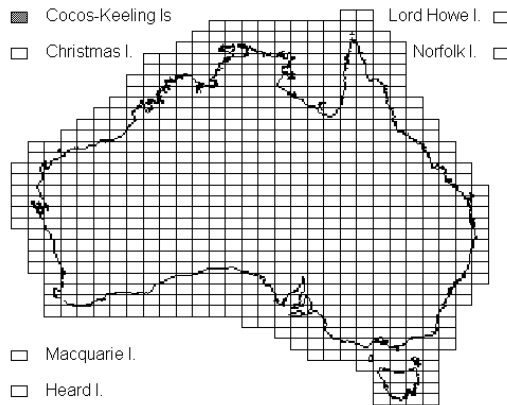
Endangered *P. l. fulvus* is endemic to Christmas I., Indian Ocean. *P. l. dorotheae* of the Pacific Ocean is a non-breeding visitor to eastern Australian waters. Two other subspecies in Atlantic Ocean and one on Europa I., Mozambique Channel (Le Corre and Jouventin, 1999). Species status is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

In Australian territory, breeding on 3 islands of Ashmore Reef (up to 10 pairs) and Rowley Shoals, W. A. (1 pair), as well as on North Keeling I. (40-50 pairs; Stokes *et al.*, 1984, Marchant and Higgins, 1990, Burbidge *et al.*, 1996). Also breeding on islands across the northern Indian Ocean; foraging in oceanic water throughout region (Marchant and Higgins, 1990, Burbidge *et al.* 1996). May also visit Christmas I. (Stokes, 1988).

8 Present range and abundance

As above, with numbers breeding on North Keeling I. appearing to fluctuate between years (Stokes, 1998).



9 Ecology

The nominate White-tailed Tropicbird breeds in hollows on islands and atolls, in fact, in almost any protected setting. It forages in warm waters for fish and cephalopods (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

10 Threats

The main potential threat to White-tailed Tropicbirds on North Keeling would be the accidental introduction of exotic predators. Outside Australian Territory, the species is harvested for food. Predation by cats and rats, clearance of breeding habitat for settlements and mining have all been implicated in nest failures and/or desertion of breeding colonies (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

11 Information required

- 11.1 Determine sub-population size and populations trends on North Keeling I.

12 Recovery objectives

- 12.1 Maintain sub-populations on North Keeling I. and other islands.

13 Actions completed or under way

- 13.1 None.

14 Management actions required

- 14.1 Through education and other means, ensure strict quarantine on North Keeling I.
14.2 Monitor sub-populations opportunistically.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Environment Australia.

16 Other organisations involved
Cocos-Keeling Island residents.

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out
Staff resources required 2001-2005 0.05 Technical Officer¹
Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Monitor North Keeling I. ¹	\$3,800	\$0	\$3,800
Ensure quarantine for North Keeling I. ¹	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Total	\$8,800	\$0,000	\$8,800

¹ Costs shared among Round Island Petrel, Masked Booby, White-tailed Tropicbird and Buff-banded Rail.

18 Bibliography

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Corre, M. and Jouventin, P. 1999. Geographical variation in the White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*, with the description of a new subspecies endemic to Europa Island, southern Mozambique Channel. *Ibis* 141:33-239.

Gärdenfors, U., Rodríguez, J.P., Hilton-Taylor, C., Hyslop, C., Mace, G., Molur, S. and Poss, S. 1999. Draft guidelines for the Application of IUCN Red List Criteria at National and Regional Levels. *Species* 31-32:58-70.

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