

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Azure Kingfisher (Tasmania)

1	Family	Alcedinidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Alcedo azurea diemenensis</i> (Gould, 1846)
3	Common name	Azure Kingfisher (Tasmania)
4	Conservation status	Critically Endangered: C2b

5 Reasons for listing

Although it is ambitious to estimate numbers for this subspecies, records are few enough to suggest that the population contains fewer than 250 mature individuals (Critically Endangered: C) and appears to be declining (2b).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	2,000 km ²	medium
trend	decreasing	low
Area of occupancy	500 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	250	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	4	high
Generation time	3 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

A. a. azurea (eastern Australia) and *A. a. ruficollaris* (northern Australia) are both Least Concern. Other subspecies occur in New Guinea and Indonesia; species status is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

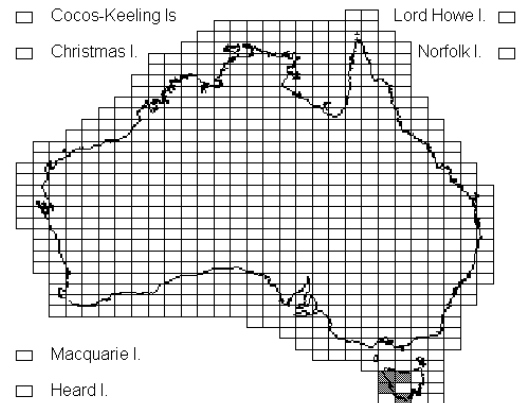
Historically recorded throughout Tasmania, although may never have been common in east and north (Thomas, 1979).

8 Present range and abundance

A few scattered recent records from rivers near north and west coasts including Birches Inlet, Detention R. and Heybridge and Cuprona Rd near Devonport (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Schulz and Kristensen, 1994, Schodde and Mason, 1997, Birds Australia Atlas). There are no recent records from north-east Tasmania. Disappeared from around Hobart around 1903, and from two areas bordering Macquarie Harbour in about 1985 (Higgins, 1999, P. Brown).

9 Ecology

The Tasmanian subspecies of Azure Kingfisher lives on small fish, probably including galaxids and whitebait, caught in lowland freshwater rivers and streams. Nests are made in burrows excavated in stream banks; the usual clutch size is 5-6 (Higgins, 1999).



10 Threats

The most likely reason for the decline in range of the Azure Kingfisher in Tasmania is competition with Brown Trout *Trutta trutta*, which are now present in all streams and probably reduce the availability of galaxids and the other small fish which are presumed to be the kingfisher's natural prey. Other suggested reasons for decline are acidic run-off from mining tailings dams (Higgins, 1999), clearing along stream banks and logging, which could all affect stream health, and the poaching of whitebait from western rivers.

11 Information required

- 11.1 Assess population size to establish a base line.
- 11.2 Characterise occupied and unoccupied streams in terms of water quality, prey availability and likely threatening processes.

12 Recovery objectives

- 12.1 Ensure population is stable or increasing over an extended period.

13 Actions completed or under way

- 13.1 None.

14 Management actions required

- 14.1 Surveys of streams in north-west, west and central Tasmania.
- 14.2 Assess possibility of establishing a captive population.
- 14.3 Remedial action based on results of 11.2.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation
Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

16 Other organisations involved
Bird-watching societies, local government, Forestry Tasmania.

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

Staff resources required 2001-2005

No additional staff for initial survey

Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Survey and characterise streams	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Remedial action ¹	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$70,000
Assess possibility of establishing a captive population	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,500
Total	\$40,000	\$61,500	\$101,500

¹ Costs highly provisional, depending on results of survey.

18 Bibliography

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Schodde, R. and Mason, I. J. 1997. Aves (Columbidae to Coraciidae). *Zoological Catalogue of Australia. Vol. 37.2*. W. W. K. Houston and A. Wells (eds). CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.

Schulz, M. and Kristensen, K. 1994. Notes on selected bird species on the south-western coast of Tasmania, between Port Davey and Cape Sorrell. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 15:265-272.

Thomas, D. 1979. *Tasmanian Bird Atlas*. Fauna of Tasmania Committee, Hobart.

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