

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Blue Petrel

1	Family	Procellariidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Halobaena caerulea</i> (Gmelin, 1789)
3	Common name	Blue Petrel
4	Conservation status	
	Australian breeding population	Critically Endangered: B1+2e
	Population visiting Australian territory	Least Concern

5 Reasons for listing

The Australian population occupies a tiny area at a single location (Critically Endangered: B1) and a continuing decline is inferred in the number of mature individuals (2e). The global population is Least Concern, but it is assumed there is little genetic exchange with other populations. The national status of the breeding population is therefore independent of the global status (as per Gärdenfors *et al.*, 1999).

Australian breeding colonies	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	5,000,000 km ²	high
trend	stable	medium
Area of occupancy	2 km ²	high
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	1,000	medium
trend	stable	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	10 years	low
Global population share	< 1 %	high
Level of genetic exchange	low	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

None described.

7 Past range and abundance

Within Australian territory, breeding on offshore stacks around Macquarie I. (500-600 pairs in 1979; Brothers, 1984), possibly on all lowland areas around main island, particularly along eastern coast (Campbell, 1900, but see Jones, 1980). Also breeding on numerous other subantarctic islands in Indian and Atlantic Oceans. Probably foraging around breeding colonies throughout year, but also found throughout Southern Ocean (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

8 Present range and abundance

Within Australian territory, a small population breeds on stacks offshore from Macquarie I. (Brothers, 1984), but appears to be increasingly uncommon (N. Brothers).

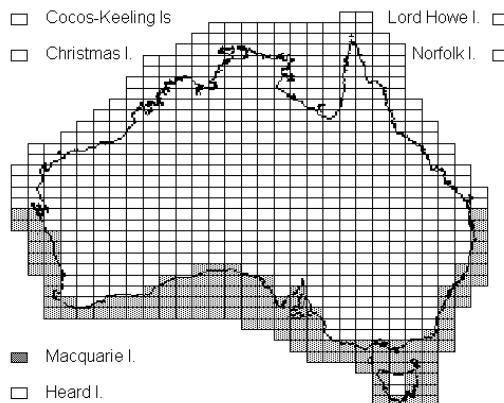
9 Ecology

Blue Petrels nest in colonies, laying a single egg in rock crevices or burrows dug among rocks or tussock grass

Poa foliosa. They forage in subantarctic waters for pelagic crustacea, fish, cephalopods and insects (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

10 Threats

All nests found in the vicinity of Macquarie I. have failed because of nest destruction or predation. Nests are frequently deserted because of trampling of burrows by Imperial Shags *Leucocarbo atriceps*, flooding of burrows or exceptionally high waves that washed part of one colony away. Many adults are taken by Subantarctic Skuas *Catharacta skua lombergi*, Black Rats *Rattus rattus* or, occasionally, feral cats. Presence during winter, when many other species are absent, makes Blue Petrels particularly vulnerable to predators (Brothers, 1984). Extinction from Macquarie I. itself may have been hastened by introduced Wekas *Gallirallus australis*, cats and rats. The latter two species are either resident on, or occasionally visit, all but one of the breeding stacks (Brothers, 1984) and, on the main island, rats are most common in the tussock grassland where the petrels were reported to breed (N. Brothers). Their persistence over several decades is the only evidence that some successful breeding must occur.



11 Information required

None.

12 Recovery objectives

- 12.1 Re-establish successful breeding on Macquarie I.

- 13 Actions completed or under way
- 13.1 Sustained feral animal control has eliminated Wekas, reduced cat and rabbit numbers and is continuing.
- 13.2 Population on stacks is monitored irregularly.
- 13.3 Bishop and Clerk Is were unsuccessfully searched for Blue Petrels in 1993.

- 14 Management actions required
- 14.1 Systematic monitoring of breeding stacks and adjacent mainland to determine whether feral animal control is being successful.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation
Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

16 Other organisations involved
None.

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

Staff resources required 2001-2005 1.0 Technical Officer (monitoring)¹

1.0 Technical Officer (ferals)¹

Financial resources required 2001-2005

<i>Action</i>	<i>Conservation agencies</i>	<i>Other funding sources</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Monitoring breeding population¹</i>	\$15,800	\$0	\$15,800
<i>Control feral animals on Macquarie I.¹</i>	\$277,900	\$0	\$277,900
<i>Total</i>	\$293,700	\$0	\$293,700

¹ Costs of Macquarie I. monitoring and feral animal control shared among 19 threatened taxa

18 Bibliography

Brothers, N. P. 1984. Breeding distribution and status of burrow-nesting petrels at Macquarie Island. *Aust. Wildl. Res.* 11:113-131.

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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.

Jones, E. 1980. A survey of burrow-nesting petrels at Macquarie Island based upon remains left by predators. *Notornis* 27:11-20.

Marchant, S. and Higgins, P. J. (eds) 1990. *The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

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