

TAXON SUMMARY

# Cotton Pygmy-Goose (Australian)

1	Family	Anatidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus albipennis</i> Gould, 1842
3	Common name	Cotton Pygmy-Goose (Australian)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: c

5 Reasons for listing

The population of this subspecies seems small, and appears to have declined in density over at least the southern half of its historical range (Near Threatened: c).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	400,000 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	1,500 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	5,000	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	5 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

*N. c. coromandelianus* (south-east Asia) does not occur in Australia and has a status of Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

Princess Charlotte Bay, Qld, to Hunter R., N. S. W., inland in the headwaters of the Dawson, Fitzroy and Burdekin Rivers (Frith, 1982, Marchant and Higgins, 1990). From limited data, the population was estimated at 1,500 individuals in the early 1960s (Lavery, 1966).

8 Present range and abundance

Major centres of population: Dawson, Fitzroy, Burdekin and Barron R. catchments (Blakers *et al.*, 1984). Locally common in suitable habitat near Brisbane (G. Beruldsen). Now vagrant outside Queensland (Marchant and Higgins, 1990). Largest recent counts: 300 on Ross R. Dam near Townsville (Garnett and Cox, 1987) and 350 at Lake Powlathanga near Charters Towers in 1990 (P. Britton). No recent estimates of total population size. Frequency of sightings near Rockhampton has apparently declined (Longmore, 1978, M. Crawford).

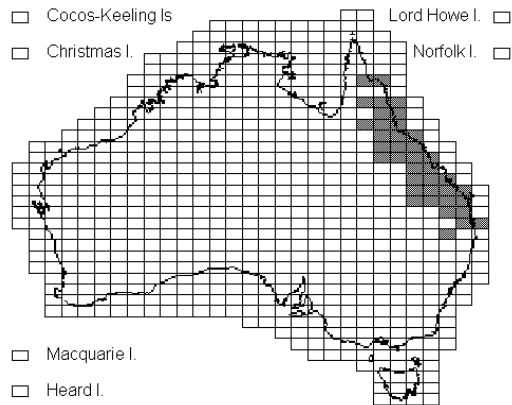
9 Ecology

Cotton Pygmy-Geese are found on freshwater lakes, swamps and large water impoundments. They congregate in flocks on permanent water-bodies during the dry season. They lay 6-9 eggs in the hollows of trees that stand in or beside water (Beruldsen, 1977, G. Beruldsen). Principal foods are Pondweed *Potamogeton* seeds and other aquatic vegetation (Frith, 1982).

10 Threats

The species has been adversely affected by drainage of wetlands or their invasion by introduced weeds, particularly water hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes* (Beruldsen, 1977) and the

exotic ponded-pastures *Echinochloa polystachya* and *Hymenachne amplexicaulis* (A. Taplin), but benefited by creation of new wetlands, such as Ross R. Dam and Tinaroo Dam.



11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Survey to determine the size and status of the population and the favoured breeding habitat.
- 11.2 Monitor spread of introduced ponded-pasture species and, if detrimental, control ponded-pasture in prime Cotton Pygmy-Goose habitat.

12 Bibliography

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