

TAXON SUMMARY

Rufous Fieldwren (western wheatbelt)

1	Family	Pardalotidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Calamanthus campestris montanellus</i> Milligan, 1903
3	Common name	Rufous Fieldwren (western wheatbelt)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: a

5 Reasons for listing

More than half of the habitat of this subspecies has been cleared (Near Threatened: a), but there has probably not been a population decline of 20% over the last three generations (so not Vulnerable: A1).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	360,000 km ²	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	10,000 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of breeding birds	100,000	low
trend	decreasing	medium
No. of sub-populations	20	low
Largest sub-population	90,000	low
Generation time	4 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

C. c. dorrie (Dorre I.) and *C. c. hartogii* (Dirk Hartog I.) are Vulnerable. The remaining subspecies, *C. c. campestris* (South Australian gulfs), *C. c. isabellinus* (northern Eyre-Frome basin), *C. c. wayensis* (central Western Australia) and *C. c. rubiginosus* (Pilbara coast) are Least Concern, as is the species. *C. c. montanellus* is sometimes considered a separate species (Schodde and Mason, 1999).

7 Past range and abundance

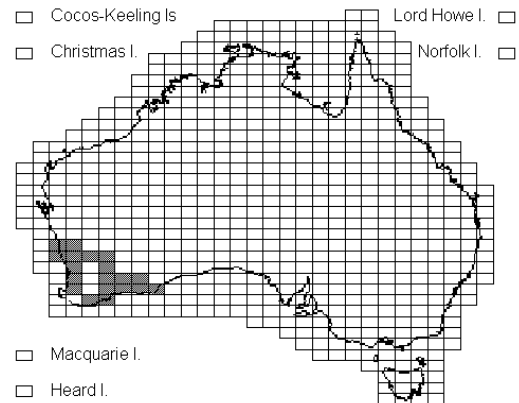
Endemic to south-western Western Australian wheatbelt where average annual rainfall is between 300 and 600 mm (Saunders and Ingram, 1995, Schodde and Mason, 1999), and, in lower densities, in some coastal heathlands to the south-west (Blakers *et al.*, 1984).

8 Present range and abundance

Although the extent of occurrence has remained the same, there has been a massive reduction in area of occupancy in second half of 20th century (Saunders and Curry, 1990, Saunders and Ingram, 1995). Sub-populations are probably genetically isolated.

9 Ecology

Fieldwrens live in low, sparse heath, saltmarsh or samphire, with or without emergent trees and feed on insects, spiders and seeds. They build domed nests near the ground in which they lay 2-3 eggs (Beruldsen, 1980, Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Saunders and Ingram, 1995).



10 Threats

Clearance for agriculture has removed most of the Rufous Fieldwren's habitat in the wheatbelt of Western Australia (Sedgwick, 1974, Saunders and Curry, 1990, Saunders and Ingram, 1995). Although the species persists in the continuous habitat that surrounds the wheatbelt (Blakers *et al.*, 1984), habitat degradation of fragments by stock and weeds has probably reduced the number of fragments occupied, a decline that is likely to continue (Saunders and Ingram, 1995). Grazing, particularly in chenopod shrublands, is also likely to have been detrimental (Reid and Fleming, 1992).

11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Cease clearance of habitat.
- 11.2 Support rehabilitation of fragments.
- 11.3 Determine characteristics of fragments that continue to support the subspecies.
- 11.4 Undertake regular monitoring, particularly in relation to habitat rehabilitation.

12 Bibliography

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