

## RECOVERY OUTLINE

# Glossy Swiftlet (Christmas Island)

1	Family	Apodidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Collocalia esculenta natalis</i> Lister, 1889
3	Common name	Glossy Swiftlet (Christmas Island)
4	Conservation status	Critically Endangered: A2ce, B1+2bce

### 5 Reasons for listing

A decline in the abundance of this subspecies of more than 80% over the next three generations (30 years) is predicted (Critically Endangered: A2) based on a decline in habitat quality (c) and the current rate of spread of introduced ants (e). The already tiny area of occupancy restricted to one location (B1) which may be reduced in area (2b), quality (c) and number of mature individuals in occupation (e)

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	137 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	3 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of breeding birds	5,000	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	4 years	low

### 6 Intraspecific taxa

There are about fifteen other subspecies in south-east Asia and the south-west Pacific.

### 7 Past range and abundance

Confined to Christmas I., Indian Ocean (Stokes, 1988).

### 8 Present range and abundance

Range as above, with little change likely since settlement (Stokes, 1988).

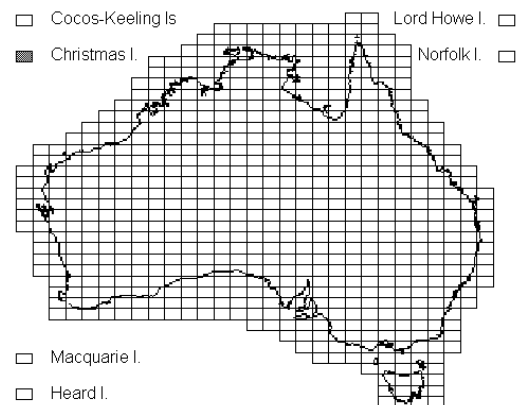
### 9 Ecology

On Christmas I., the Glossy Swiftlet nests in caves and feeds over most habitats, including settlements, regrowth, primary forests and on the terraces (Stokes, 1988).

### 10 Threats

One nesting cave may have been deserted as a result of disturbance by people, but otherwise the species has been little affected by settlement (Stokes, 1988). All native Christmas I. species, however, are threatened by the Yellow Crazy Ant *Anoplolepis gracilipes* which is thought to occupy 15-18% of the island (D. Slip), and may still be spreading rapidly. These ants are not only likely to prey directly on

nestlings but may alter the whole ecology of the island by killing the dominant life-form, the Red Crab *Gecaroidea natalis*, and by farming scale insects, which damage the trees (O'Dowd *et al.*, 1999). The ants appear to consume all invertebrates (A. Andersen) including, presumably, the flying prey of the swiftlets. They may also invade nesting sites in caves.



### 11 Information required

11.1 Refine techniques for controlling Yellow Crazy Ants.

### 12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Maintain existing population.

12.2 Control Yellow Crazy Ant.

### 13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 A three year research program has been initiated and staff have been dedicated to ant control.

### 14 Management actions required

14.1 Control abundance and spread of the Yellow Crazy Ant.

### 15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Environment Australia (including Wildlife Australia Branch; Parks Australia North; Christmas Island Rainforest Rehabilitation Program).

### 16 Other organisations involved

Birds Australia, Christmas Island Phosphates Pty. Ltd., Christmas Island Shire Council, Monash University.

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

*Staff resources required 2001-2005*

1.0	<i>Project Officer (crazy ants)<sup>1</sup></i>
4.0	<i>Technical Officer (crazy ants)<sup>1</sup></i>

*Financial resources required 2001-2005*

<i>Action</i>	<i>Conservation agencies</i>	<i>Other funding sources</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Control crazy ants<sup>1</sup></i>	\$250,000	\$12,000	\$262,000
<i>Total</i>	\$250,000	\$12,000	<b>\$262,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Costs shared with all 10 threatened Christmas I. taxa

## 18 Bibliography

O'Dowd, D. J., Green, P. T. and Lake, P. S. A. 1999. Status, impact and recommendations for research and management of exotic invasive ants in Christmas Island National Park. Report to Environment Australia.

Stokes, T. 1988. A review of the birds of Christmas Island, Indian Ocean. *Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service Occasional Paper* 16.

Comments received from  
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