

RECOVERY OUTLINE

# Imperial Shag (Heard Island)

1	Family	Phalacrocoracidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Leucocarbo atriceps nivalis</i> Falla, 1937
3	Common name	Imperial Shag (Heard Island)
4	Conservation status	Vulnerable: D1+2

5 Reasons for listing  
 The subspecies has a small population (Vulnerable: D1) found at a single location (D2).

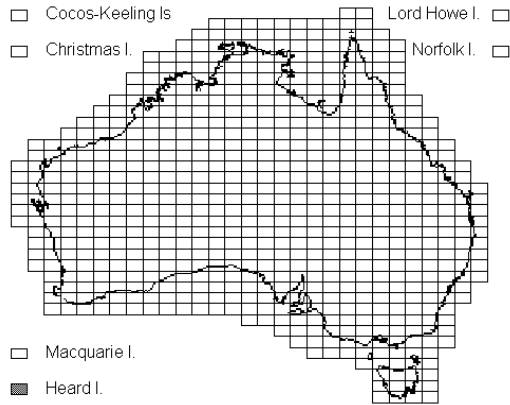
	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	60 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	3 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	500	medium
trend	fluctuating	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	15 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa  
*L. a. purpurascens* (Macquarie I.) is also Vulnerable. The other 6 subspecies on remote subantarctic islands are more numerous and widespread. Globally, the species is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance  
 Endemic to Heard I. and not recorded from nearby McDonald or Shag Is. Breeding confined to three sites on north-western coast, Stephenson Lagoon, Saddle Point and Sydney Cove. Roosting sites are more widespread (Pemberton and Gales, 1987, Woehler, 1991, Green, 1997a). Population has varied between 40 and 100 breeding pairs over the last 40 years (Woehler, 1991, Green, 1997b, Green and Williams, 1997).

8 Present range and abundance  
 As above.

9 Ecology  
 The Heard Island subspecies of Imperial Shag feeds on polychaete worms and benthic fish caught off the island's coast (Green *et al.*, 1990, Green and Williams, 1997). Two of the breeding colonies are on the north-western coast on cliff tops, the other on a boulder beach. The birds roost on offshore stacks, boulder and sand beaches, areas of volcanic sand and cliff tops.



10 Threats

The species is considered threatened because the population is small and variable. However, fluctuations in population size and breeding success can be attributed to frequently inclement weather (Pemberton and Gales, 1987) or cycles of abundance over resource availability (E. Woehler). The subspecies could be adversely affected by offshore fishing or the effects of climate change on sea temperature and food supply.

11 Information required

None.

12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Persistence of existing population.

13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 Population is monitored opportunistically.

14 Management actions required

None.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Australian Antarctic Division.

16 Other organisations involved

None.

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out  
 Staff resources required 2001-2005 0.1 Technical Officer (monitoring)<sup>1</sup>  
 Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Monitoring breeding population <sup>1</sup>	\$6,100	\$0	\$6,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,100</b>	<b>\$0,000</b>	<b>\$6,100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Costs of Heard I. monitoring divided among 19 Vulnerable spp.

## 18 Bibliography

Green, K., Williams, R., Woehler, E. J., Burton, H. R., Gales, N. J. and Jones, R. T. 1990. Diet of the Heard Island Cormorant *Phalacrocorax atriceps nivalis*. *Antarctic Sci.* 2:139-141.

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Woehler, E. J. 1991. The status and conservation of the seabirds of Heard Island and the McDonald Islands. *ICBP Tech. Publ.* 11:263-277.

### Comments received from

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