

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Masked Owl (Tiwi Islands)

1	Family	Tytonidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Tyto novaehollandiae melvillensis</i> Mathews, 1912
3	Common name	Masked Owl (Tiwi Islands)
4	Conservation status	Endangered: C2b

5 Reasons for listing

The subspecies is restricted to two islands, on which there are probably fewer than 2,500 mature individuals, and is likely to decline in abundance as a result of a new threat (Endangered: C2b).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	8,000 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	5,000 km ²	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	1,000	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	5 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

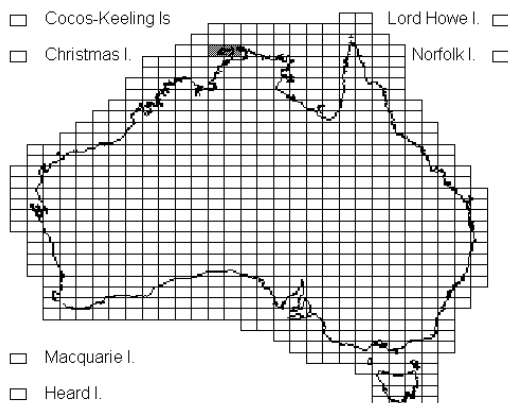
T. n. castanops (Tasmania, introduced Lord Howe I.) is Endangered, *T. n. novaehollandiae* (southern mainland Australia) and *T. n. kimberli* (northern mainland Australia) are Near Threatened. There are four subspecies in New Guinea or nearby islands. The species' global status is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

Endemic to Tiwi Is (Melville and Bathurst Is), N. T., (Schodde and Mason, 1980), where said to be common relative to subspecies on the mainland (Zietz, 1914, Fensham and Woinarski, 1992, Mason and Schodde, 1997).

8 Present range and abundance

As above.



9 Ecology

Masked Owls in the Tiwi Is occur primarily in tall open eucalypt woodland, and occasionally in plantations of introduced Caribbean Pine *Pinus elliotti* (Mason and Schodde, 1997). They probably nest in eucalypts that grow into large trees with numerous hollows, and feed primarily on rats.

10 Threats

Extensive clearing for a short-term rotation of *Acacia mangium* will remove nesting trees and probably reduce rat populations. Trial plots of 6,000 ha have been approved with 30,000 ha planned and options for at least 100,000 ha (J. Woinarski). The owls may also be adversely affected by changes in vegetation structure, as a result of a trend away from traditional burning practices, and weed invasion (J. Woinarski, Fensham and Cowie, 1998).

11 Information required

11.1 Baseline data on population size, habitat use and potential effects of clearing.

12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Maintain a viable population on the Tiwi Is.

13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 None.

14 Management actions required

14.1 Before proceeding with further large-scale clearing, assess likely effects on owls and adjust plans accordingly.

14.2 Work with land-owners to ensure management is adequate to conserve Masked Owls on the Tiwi Is.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.

16 Other organisations involved

Tiwi Land Council.

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

Staff resources required 2001-2005

0.1

Project Officer

Financial resources required 2001-2005

<i>Action</i>	<i>Conservation agencies</i>	<i>Other funding sources</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Survey and assessment of clearing impacts¹</i>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
<i>Collaborative land management</i>	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$25,000
<i>Total</i>	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$55,000

¹ Costs shared with Tiwi Is subspecies of Hooded Robin

18 Bibliography

Fensham, R. J., and Cowie, I. D. (1998). Alien plant invasions on the Tiwi Islands: extent, implications and priorities for control. *Biol. Conserv.* 83:55-68.

Fensham, R. J. and Woinarski, J. C. Z. 1992. Yawalama: the ecology and conservation of monsoon forest on Tiwi Islands, Northern Territory. Report to DASET. Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory.

Mason, I. J. and Schodde, R. 1997. Bird survey of the Tiwi Islands, October 1996. Report to Tiwi Land Council, Northern Territory.

Schodde, R. and Mason, I. J. 1980. *Nocturnal Birds of Australia*. Lansdowne, Melbourne.

Zietz, F. R. 1914. The avifauna of Melville island, Northern Territory. *S. Aust. Ornithol.* 1:11-18.

Comments received from

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