

TAXON SUMMARY

Rainbow Pitta (Kimberley)

1	Family	Pittidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Pitta iris johnstoneiana</i> Schodde and Mason, 1999
3	Common name	Rainbow Pitta (Kimberley)
4	Conservation status	Least Concern

5 Reasons for listing

Though the sub-species occupies less than 100 km² (Vulnerable: D2), it is too well-dispersed to be vulnerable to catastrophe. Some habitat is deteriorating, but high mobility means that birds can move between habitat patches, many of which occur on islands or are protected by rough terrain.

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	25,000 km ²	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	68 km ²	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	5,000	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	medium
Generation time	5 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

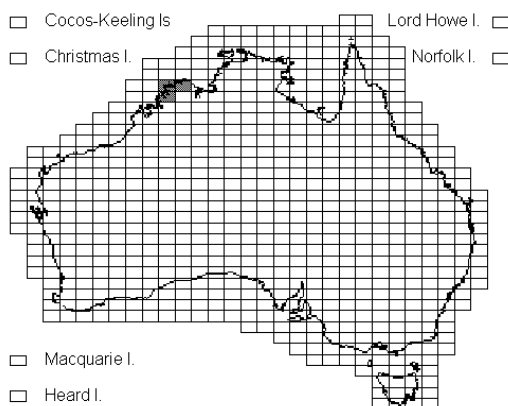
P. i. iris (Northern Territory; Schodde and Mason, 1999) is Least Concern, as is the species.

7 Past range and abundance

Kimberley, W. A., between Collier Bay and Cape Bernier, including off-shore islands (Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Schodde and Mason, 1999).

8 Present range and abundance

Found in 24% of 96 rainforest patches surveyed (Johnstone and Burbidge, 1991), but abundance in remainder of 1,500 rainforest patches covering 68 km² (Russell-Smith *et al.*, 1992) is uncertain (C. Done).



9 Ecology

Rainbow Pittas live in rainforest, mangroves and strandline eucalypt forest, and forage in leaf litter for

insects and snails. In the Kimberley, they persist in small rainforest pockets, including deciduous vine thicket, usually in rocky areas, near springs or on islands (Johnstone, 1990). They build domed nests in which to lay 3-4 eggs (Blakers *et al.*, 1984).

10 Threats

Though the area and quality of some rainforest patches have been reduced by cattle grazing and fire (Johnstone and Burbidge, 1991, C. Done), pittas persist in damaged rainforest, and many patches are naturally protected from fire by the rocky terrain. Rainbow Pittas move between rainforest fragments in the Kimberley, indicating dispersal is not restricted.

11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Determine the differences between patches that are inhabited and uninhabited by pittas.
- 11.2 Protect rainforest pockets that contain pittas against grazing, fire and other degradation.
- 11.3 Initiate monitoring.

12 Bibliography

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- Russell-Smith, J., McKenzie, N. L. and Woinarski, J. C. Z. 1992. Conserving vulnerable habitat in northern and north-western Australia: the rainforest archipelago. Pp. 63-68 in *Conservation and Development Issues in Northern Australia*. I. Moffatt and A. Webb (eds) NARU, Darwin.
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