

COORDINATED CONSERVATION PLAN

Eastern Tasmania

1 Description

Eastern Tasmania and its near-shore islands. The drier forests and woodlands of eastern Tasmania. Many Tasmanian birds are distinct at subspecies or species level and, because the island is small, large predators are never likely to occur in large numbers. Much of the area has been cleared for agriculture, and continues to be cleared for plantation timber and semi-rural development.

2 IBRA Regions

Wet temperate coasts (Ben Lomond, D'Encasteaux, Freycinet), Temperate highlands (Tasmanian Midlands).

3 Core taxa

Extinct

Emu (Tasmanian)

Locally Extinct

Orange-bellied Parrot

Azure Kingfisher (Tasmanian)

Endangered

Wedge-tailed Eagle (Tasmanian)

Swift Parrot

Masked Owl (Tasmanian)

Forty-spotted Pardalote

Vulnerable

Australasian Bittern

Hooded Plover (eastern)

Australian Owlet-nightjar (Tasmanian)

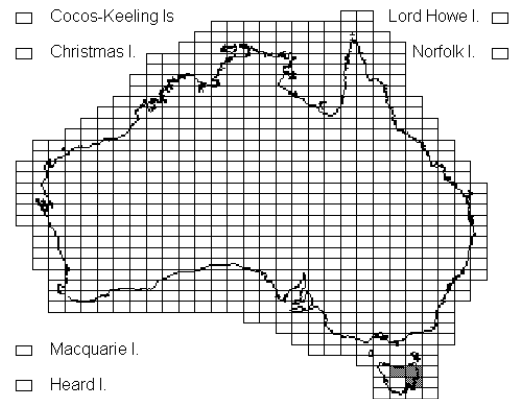
Near Threatened

Eastern Rosella (Tasmanian)

4 Conservation issues

Habitat clearance and modification through logging are the most significant problems in this region. Clearance for agriculture, grazing, pine plantations and rural-residential development is continuing at a rate unequalled since settlement and has removed much suitable feeding or breeding habitat for Wedge-tailed Eagles, Swift Parrots, Masked Owls, Australian Owlet-nightjars and Eastern Rosellas.

Clearance and fragmentation also favours competitors and predators that are adapted to open conditions such as Laughing kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*, Noisy Miners *Manorina melanocephala*, Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* and Common Brushtail Possums *Trichosurus vulpecula*. Competition, with Brown Trout *Trutta trutta*, is also thought to be the reason for the disappearance of Azure Kingfishers.



The increase in direct interactions with people as a result of closer settlement also has unfortunate consequences for many several taxa. Hooded Plover have declined on much-visited beaches and Wedge-tailed Eagles are particularly sensitive to disturbance and rarely breed in isolated trees or copses of less than 10 ha or close to rural-residential development. Many are also shot, as happens to Eastern Rosellas on crops. Many Swift Parrots and Wedge-tailed Eagles also die as a result of collisions with overhead wires, fences or vehicles.

The many National Parks in Tasmania do not ensure the persistence of threatened avifauna. The habitat of some species is well protected (as is the case for the Forty-spotted Pardalote, for which about 60% of habitat is reserved), but needs to be managed in conjunction with private land. Also, the reserves themselves need managing, particularly for fire.

5 Recommended management

- 5.1 Legislate to prohibit clearance of critical habitat.
- 5.2 Manage at least 15% of the pre-European area of all woodland communities on public and private land for nature conservation, using incentive, where appropriate.
- 5.3 Undertake extension, with appropriate incentives to land-holders, to promote sound management of native forests.
- 5.4 Promote community involvement in and awareness of appropriate conservation measures.
- 5.5 Develop a strategy to safeguard a continued supply of suitable nest hollows.
- 5.6 Strategically control Common Starlings.
- 5.7 Establish wood-lot developments close to markets.
- 5.8 Promote, and if appropriate subsidise, forms of heating that do not require firewood.

- 5.9 Identify and implement appropriate fire regimes that produce a mosaic of fire ages required for the persistence core taxa.
- 5.10 Develop appropriate techniques to monitor core species, where these do not exist.
- 5.11 Determine distributions of core taxa, identify key habitat and monitor population size and trends.
- 5.12 More rigorously enforce restrictions on shooting and poisoning wildlife.

6 Organisations responsible for conservation

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

7 Other organisations involved

Birds Australia (including Australasian Raptor Association), other bird-watching societies, Forestry Tasmania, Hobart Botanic Gardens, Landcare groups, private land-holders and residents, school groups, timber extraction companies, Threatened Species Network, University of Tasmania, World Wide Fund for Nature (Australia).

8 References

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