

COORDINATED CONSERVATION PLAN

King Island

1 Description

King I., Bass Strait, Tasmania. The island receives over 800 mm annual average rainfall. Vegetation ranges from wet scrub and sclerophyll forest, to woodland and heath, but most has been now largely cleared for grazing dairy cattle. Coastal and lagoon shores, and associated saltmarsh, are also important habitat.

An endemic species of Emu was found on the island, but is now extinct. Other endemic taxa are at least Vulnerable because their already restricted habitat has been reduced by clearing and three are Critically Endangered. The island is used as a staging point for migrants crossing Bass Strait, particularly the Orange-bellied Parrot.

2 IBRA Regions

Woolnorth.

3 Core taxa

Extinct

King Island Emu

Locally Extinct

Grey Goshawk

Glossy Black-Cockatoo (eastern)

Gang-gang Cockatoo

Forty-spotted Pardalote

Eastern Spinebill

Critically Endangered

Orange-bellied Parrot

Brown Thornbill (King Island)

Scrubtit (King Island)

Vulnerable

Australasian Bittern

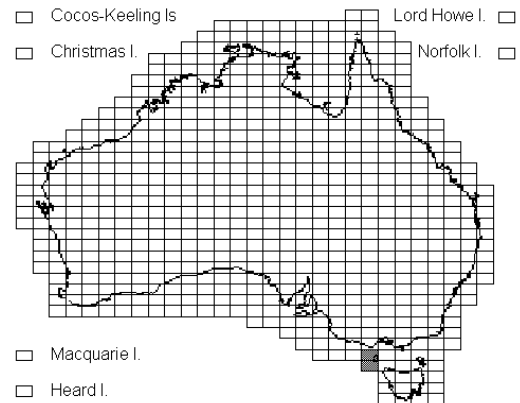
Green Rosella (King Island)

Yellow Wattlebird (King Island)

Black Currawong (King Island)

4 Conservation issues

Most endemic taxa are at least Vulnerable, because their restricted distribution has been further reduced by clearing. Most of the native vegetation has been cleared, particularly the wet sclerophyll forest. Species that depend on wet sclerophyll forest, Brown Thornbills and Scrubtits, have been reduced to critical levels. Uncontrolled fire is a threat to remaining pockets of natural habitat.



Other problems are probably a by-product of clearance and habitat fragmentation. Tick parasitism has been recorded as high in Scrubtits and may affect other taxa. There may no longer be ecological space for two thornbills, the Tasmanian Thornbill now being abundant, the Brown Thornbill possibly extinct. Competition with Common Starlings for nest hollows may have adversely affected Green Rosella breeding success by clearing.

5 Recommended management

- 5.1 Determine abundance and trends of core taxa.
- 5.2 Prevent the uncontrolled wild-fire in habitat remnants.
- 5.3 Manage impact of Common Starlings on nest hollow availability as necessary.
- 5.4 Initiate management of Scrubtit populations, and of Brown Thornbills if rediscovered, possibly including treatment for ectoparasites or localised removal of competitors.
- 5.5 Coordinate conservation management of threatened species at an island-wide level.

6 Organisations responsible for conservation

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

7 Other organisations involved

Local government, Tasmanian Forestry Commission, bird-watching societies.

8 References

Green, R. and McGarvie, A. M. 1971. The birds of King Island. *Rec. Queen Vic. Museum* 40: -42.

McGarvie, A. M. and Templeton, M. T. 1974. Additions to the birds of King Island, Bass Strait. *Emu* 74:91-96.