

COORDINATED CONSERVATION PLAN

Norfolk Island

1 Description

Norfolk I. and associated offshore rock stacks and islets, including Phillip and Nepean Is. Volcanic in origin and positioned along the Norfolk Ridge between New Zealand and New Caledonia, the group shares faunal elements with both countries as well as with Lord Howe I., although there is a high level of endemism. The vegetation on Norfolk I. was formerly rainforest dominated by Norfolk Island pines. About 80% of the original vegetation on Norfolk I. has been cleared while that on Phillip and Nepean Is was lost almost entirely. Much remaining rainforest has been invaded by weeds.

2 IBRA Regions

Not applicable.

3 Core taxa

Extinct

New Zealand Pigeon (Norfolk Island)

Norfolk Island Ground-Dove

Norfolk Island Kaka

Southern Boobook (Norfolk Island)

Grey-headed Blackbird

Tasman Starling (Norfolk Island)

Locally Extinct

Pycroft's Petrel

Critically Endangered

Kermadec Petrel (western)

White-breasted White-eye

Endangered

Grey Ternlet

Norfolk Island Green Parrot

Slender-billed White-eye

Vulnerable

Providence Petrel

White-necked Petrel

Little Shearwater (Tasman Sea)

Masked Booby (Tasman Sea)

Sacred Kingfisher (Norfolk Island)

Norfolk Island Gerygone

Scarlet Robin (Norfolk Island)

Golden Whistler (Norfolk Island)

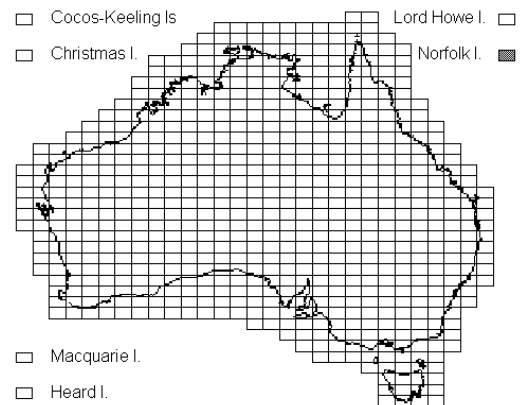
Grey Fantail (Norfolk Island)

Near Threatened

Red-tailed Tropicbird

4 Conservation issues

Hunting by convicts and land clearing resulted in the first wave of extinctions early in the 19th century,



causing the loss of two pigeons, the Kaka and several petrel species, at least from the main island. Exotic competitors and predators, particularly Black Rats *Rattus rattus* caused further extinctions in the 20th century. These included the Boobook, Grey-headed Blackbird and Tasman Starling. Only concerted conservation action has saved the Norfolk Island Green Parrot and has allowed the persistence of the robin, whistler and both species of white-eye. Other endemic forest taxa have persisted despite this litany of threats and are Vulnerable simply because their populations are so small and the could be affected should another novel predator be introduced.

A number of seabird species no longer breed on the main island but do so on Phillip or Nepean Is or offshore stacks from which rats and cats are absent. Some seabirds seem to have arrived as breeding species in the last few decades.

Protection of the remaining large block of vegetation in Norfolk Island National Park, in which intensive trapping for rats and cats and the erection of nest boxes is ongoing, may allow all remaining endemic forest birds to survive, although White-breasted White-eyes are perilously scarce. The offshore islands provide natural protection for nesting seabirds, although they too may recolonise the main island if predator control is effective.

5 Recommended management

- 5.1 Census seabird sub-populations on Phillip and Nepean Is every three years.
- 5.2 Continue to maintain strict quarantine on any vessels visiting Phillip I.
- 5.3 Continue rat baiting and cat trapping in Norfolk Island National Park and monitor its efficacy.
- 5.4 Establish cooperative rodent control programs throughout Norfolk I, with a view to rat eradication.

- 5.5 Continue to encourage responsible cat ownership on Norfolk I. is being encouraged through sponsorship of a cat de-sexing clinic, and a ban on the importation of reproductively-competent cats is being supported.
- 5.6 Continue to provide and maintain rat-proof nesting hollows in Norfolk Island National Park, on adjacent private land and on Phillip I.

6 Organisations responsible for conservation

Environment Australia, Norfolk Island Administration.

7 Other organisations involved

Norfolk Island Flora and Fauna Society.

8 References

Mathews, G. M. 1929. *The Birds of Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands*. The Author, London.

Green, P. S. 1994. Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island. Pp 1-26. in *Flora of Australia*. Volume 49. Oceanic Islands 1. AGPS, Canberra.

Schodde, R., Fullagar, P. and Hermes, N. 1983. A review of Norfolk Island birds: Past and Present. *Aust. Nat. Parks Wildl. Serv. Spec. Publ.* 8:1-119.