

COORDINATED CONSERVATION PLAN

Subtropical forests

1 Description

East coast and tablelands between Barrington Tops, N. S. W. and Gladstone, Queensland. Rainfall generally exceeds 800 mm per year. The major vegetation types are eucalypt forests, with rainforests on the alluvial fans, moist gullies and mountain tops, and heath on areas of nutrient-poor sands and/or poor drainage. The region is one of intense, multiple land-use, with clearance for agriculture and associated drainage of swamps, much of the country's production forestry and one of the fastest growing populations in Australia.

2 IBRA Regions

Wet subtropical coasts (Southeastern Queensland, New South Wales North Coast).

3 Core taxa

Critically Endangered

Coxen's Fig-Parrot

Eastern Bristlebird (northern)

Vulnerable

Red Goshawk

Black-breasted Button-quail

Albert's Lyrebird

Rufous Scrub-bird (northern)

Near Threatened

Glossy Black-Cockatoo (eastern)

Masked Owl (southern Australian)

Plumed Frogmouth

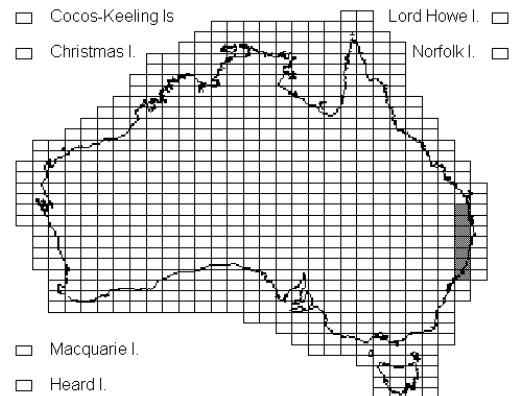
Rufous Scrub-bird (southern)

Forest Raven (New England)

4 Conservation issues

Up to 90% of the habitat of some species has been cleared for agriculture, timber plantations and rural-residential development. Although clearance is generally not a continuing threat except on the fringes of cities and where forests are to be cleared for plantations, and much habitat is now protected by conservation reserves, clearance has probably removed the most fertile habitats, and much of that which remains is fragmented, impeding the movement of birds dispersing to obtain food or find mates. Restoration of connectivity is probably most important for Coxen's Fig Parrot, Eastern Bristlebirds, Black-breasted Button-quail and Plumed Frogmouths.

The opening and fragmentation of habitat have increased competition with, and predation from, open-country species, such as introduced Long-billed Corellas *Cacatua tenuirostris*, Galahs *Eolophus roseicapillus*,



Noisy Miners *Manorina melanocephala*, Australian Ravens *Corvus coronoides*, Torresian Crows *C. orru* and Common Brushtail Possums *Trichosurus vulpecula*.

Fire management is the major issue in remaining forests, and is vital for the northern subspecies of Eastern Bristlebird, both subspecies of Rufous Scrub-bird in open forests, and Ground Parrots in heath. Maintenance of the necessary fire mosaic requires an annual allocation of management resources and sustained political will.

Forest management, though increasingly sensitive to the requirements of threatened taxa, is an issue for several of the core taxa because it alters the structure of the forest or removes hollow-bearing trees.

Feral cats, foxes and pigs, may be a problem for Black-breasted Button-quail; urban development has impinged on the habitat of Black-breasted Button-quail and Glossy Black-Cockatoos; Plumed Frogmouths are killed along roads; recreational activities, including those of bird-watchers, may affect Eastern Bristlebirds; shooting may be a threat for Red Goshawks and Forest Ravens; and egg-collecting to Red Goshawks.

Captive breeding and release programs are recommended for Coxen's Fig-Parrots, Ground Parrots and Eastern Bristlebirds.

5 Recommended management

- 5.1 Develop monitoring techniques for core taxa.
- 5.2 Determine distributions of core taxa, identify key habitat and monitor population size and trends.
- 5.3 Identify and implement appropriate fire regimes that produce a mosaic of fire ages required for the persistence core taxa in wet eucalypt forest and heath.
- 5.4 Discourage clearance, logging, roading, grazing or drainage of habitat that contains core taxa.

- 5.5 Incorporate protective measures into production forestry practices, including buffers around nest trees, retention of corridors between occupied forest blocks, generous retention rates of habitat trees within cut forest, and fire breaks.
- 5.6 Prepare a management plan for remaining vine thickets.
- 5.7 Rehabilitate and consolidate habitat fragments, particularly of rainforest and vine thickets.
- 5.8 Protect, manage and rehabilitate wetlands that are important for Australasian Bittern, Painted Snipe and near threatened wetland taxa.
- 5.9 Where cats, foxes and pigs are a recognised problem, maintain or establish predator control programs.
- 5.10 Investigate the need for traffic calming in key areas.
- 5.11 Develop and/or improve appropriate capture, release and husbandry techniques and facilities for Coxen's Fig-Parrot, Ground Parrot and Eastern Bristlebirds.
- 5.12 Coordinate conservation management and recovery planning at a regional level.

6 Organisations responsible for conservation

New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

7 Other organisations involved

Birds Australia, Bird Observers Club of Australia, Queensland Ornithological Society, Australian Bird

Study Association, other bird-watching societies, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Parks Victoria, Natural Heritage Trust, Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Greening Australia, World Wide Fund for Nature (Australia), Adelaide Zoo, University of Queensland, University of New England, Queensland Department of Natural Resources, State Forests New South Wales, Southern Cross University, Threatened Species Network, private land-holders local government authorities, Landcare groups.

8 References

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