

RECOVERY OUTLINE

Crested Shrike-tit (northern)

1	Family	Pachycephalidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Falcunculus frontatus whitei</i> A. J. Campbell, 1910
3	Common name	Crested Shrike-tit (northern)
4	Conservation status	Endangered: C2a

5 Reasons for listing

The scarce records available suggest that this species' population contains about 2,500 mature individuals, is severely fragmented, has no sub-population more than 250, and is probably declining (Endangered: C2a).

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	300,000 km ²	low
trend	stable	low
Area of occupancy	25,000 km ²	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of breeding birds	2,500	low
trend	decreasing	low
No. of sub-populations	10	low
Largest sub-population	250	low
Generation time	10 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

F. f. leucogaster (south-western Australia) is Near Threatened, *F. f. frontatus* (eastern Australia) is Least Concern, as is the species. *F. f. whitei* is sometimes considered a distinct species (Schodde and Mason, 1999).

7 Past range and abundance

Northern Australia from McArthur R., N. T. to western Kimberley, W. A. (Blakers *et al.*, 1984).

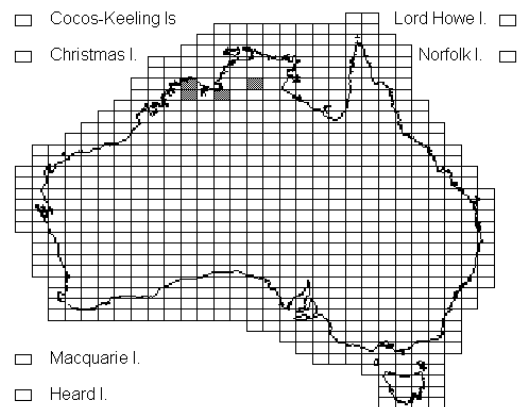
8 Present range and abundance

As above, though scattered, with 26 records from 22 locations up until 1992 (Barnard, 1914, Storr, 1977, 1980, Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Sedgwick, 1988, Holmes and Noske, 1990, Robinson and Woinarski, 1992), but no records from original collection sites in either Northern Territory (McArthur R.) for over 80 years, and only one recent record from near original collecting site in the Kimberley (Napier, Broome Bay; Vigilante, 1999). However, given the low overall density, the species may still occur in either region.

9 Ecology

Crested Shrike-tits have been recorded in eight different woodland types in northern Australia, mainly those that are dominated by Darwin Woollybutt *Eucalyptus miniata*, Darwin Stringybark *E. tetradonta* or Smooth-stemmed Bloodwood *E. bleeseri* (Robinson and Woinarski, 1992). They are presumed to feed on invertebrates gleaned from beneath ribbons of bark that peel from gum-barked trees (Blakers *et al.*, 1984),

and to lay clutches of 2-3 eggs in cupped nests built in a fork (Beruldsen, 1980).



10 Threats

Bark-foraging birds, such as the Crested Shrike-tit, occur at lower densities in the northern woodlands than they do in the south, where gum-barked eucalypts are more common (Brooker *et al.*, 1990, Woinarski and Tidemann, 1991). Nevertheless, the shrike-tits may have been particularly badly affected by hot fires in the late dry season which probably occur at a greater frequency now than under earlier Aboriginal management (Russell-Smith and Ryan, 1997), and may now occur so often that there is too little time for invertebrates to build up beneath the bark (Robinson and Woinarski, 1992). The birds now occur at such a low density that many sub-populations may now be isolated and no-longer viable.

11 Information required

- 11.1 Determine habitat use by analysing patterns of sightings in relation to fire history.
- 11.2 Determine the effects of fire on bark fauna in tropical woodlands.

12 Recovery objectives

- 12.1 Gain sufficient understanding of the biology of the species that at least one sub-population can be conserved.

13 Actions completed or under way

None.

14 Management actions required

- 14.1 Manage areas where species has been sighted by increasing interval between hot fires to more than once every 4 years.
- 14.2 Encourage searches for the species in likely habitat, especially at sites where previously recorded, to attempt to clarify distribution and abundance.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Environment Australia, Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, Western Australian Department of Conservation.

16 Other organisations involved

Bird-watching societies, traditional owners, pastoralists, fire management agencies, Northern Territory Bushfires Council.

17 Staff and financial resources required for recovery to be carried out

Staff resources required 2001-2005 *None*

Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Analysis of records from areas where fire history available and determine effects of fire on savanna bark fauna	\$3,000	\$12,000	\$15,000
Fire management of shrike-tit habitat	\$9,000	\$0	\$9,000
Total	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$24,000

1 Costs relate to planning, other costs of fire management to be met as part of routine operations

18 Bibliography

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