

TAXON SUMMARY

# Striated Grasswren (sandplain)

1	Family	Maluridae
2	Scientific Name	<i>Amytornis striatus striatus</i> (Gould, 1940)
3	Common Name	Striated Grasswren (sandplain)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: c

5 Reasons for listing

This subspecies has disappeared from the southern fringes of its historical range and declined in density over the remainder (Near Threatened: c), but the rate of decline has been too slow and the remaining range too vast for the subspecies to be considered Vulnerable.

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	2,800,000 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	32,000 km <sup>2</sup>	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of breeding birds	200,000	low
trend	stable	medium
No. of sub-populations	10	low
Largest sub-population	130,000	low
Generation time	3 years	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

*A. s. rowleyi* (Diamantina, Qld) and *A. s. whitei* (Pilbara, W. A.) are both Least Concern, as is the species.

7 Past range and abundance

Much of arid Australia, extending east from Great Victoria, Gibson and Tanami deserts through central Australia to northern Eyre Peninsula. Sub-populations east of Flinders Ra. in Murray Mallee and central New South Wales may have been isolated from the west historically (Schodde, 1982, Schodde and Mason, 1999). Existence of a sub-population on lower Namoi R., from which type specimen is supposedly derived, is disputed (McAllan, 1987, Schodde, 1982).

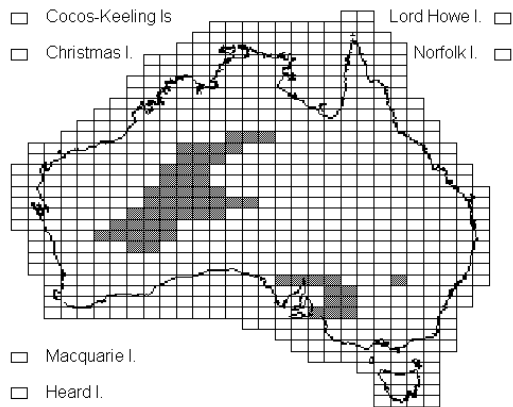
8 Present range and abundance

In south-east, now confined to isolated, if large, mallee patches in New South Wales (Smith *et al.*, 1995), Victoria (Emison *et al.*, 1987) and southern South Australia. Birds on Eyre Peninsula may now be isolated from those in central Australia (Blakers *et al.*, 1984). Scarce in southern Northern Territory and possibly elsewhere in western deserts and apparently extirpated from the Wiluna district, W. A. (P. Curry).

9 Ecology

Striated Grasswrens live on sandplains dominated by mature *Triodia* hummock grassland with an overstorey of shrubs, usually mallee eucalypts (Schodde, 1982). Occasionally, they may also occur in heathland

dominated by banksias or hakeas, from which spinifex is absent. Nests in this habitat have been recorded in cutting grass *Gahnia*, but are otherwise usually in spinifex. Clutch size is 2-3 (Eckert, 1982, Blakers *et al.*, 1984, Rowley and Russell, 1997). Recolonisation occurs in swales on Ngarkat, S. A. 7-8 years after fire (D. Paton) and abundance increased at Uluru soon after mosaic burning was reinstated (L. Pedler).



10 Threats

In the south-east of the subspecies' range, suitable habitat has been reduced and fragmented. This process has now stopped in Victoria and South Australia, but continues in New South Wales. Currently the major threat throughout the subspecies' range is fire, especially extensive fires that destroy mature hummock grassland over large areas. These prevent swift recolonisation from refuges. Excessively frequent fires are also likely to eliminate refuges, further fragmenting the population (Rowley and Russell, 1997). Grazing by stock, particularly in mallee habitats is also a threat (I. McAllan, P. Menkhorst). The effect of predation by feral cats and foxes on abundance is uncertain (G. Carpenter, P. Curry, L. Pedler).

11 Recommended actions

- 11.1 Determine ability to recolonise isolated patches of habitat that have recovered from fire.
- 11.2 Work with pastoralists and fire management authorities to minimise burning frequency in occupied mallee.
- 11.3 Work with traditional owners in arid zone to reinstate mosaic burning of sand plains.

## 12 Bibliography

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### Comments received from

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