

## RECOVERY OUTLINE

# White-headed Petrel

1	Family	Procellariidae
2	Scientific name	<i>Pterodroma lessonii</i> (Garnot, 1826)
3	Common name	White-headed Petrel
4	Conservation status	
	Australian breeding population	Vulnerable: D2
	Population visiting Australian territory	Least Concern

### 5 Reasons for listing

A decrease in population size from 1960 to the late 1970s has apparently halted, but the area of occupancy by the single sub-population is less than 100 km<sup>2</sup> (Vulnerable: D2). The global population is listed as Least Concern but, as it is assumed that there is little genetic exchange with other populations, the national status of the breeding population is determined independently of the global status (as per Gärdenfors *et al.*, 1999).

Australian breeding colonies	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	60 km <sup>2</sup>	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	40 km <sup>2</sup>	medium
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	16,000	medium
trend	stable	medium
No. of sub-populations	1	high
Generation time	10 years	low
Global population share	< 5 %	high
Level of genetic exchange	low	medium

### 6 Intraspecific taxa

None described.

### 7 Past range and abundance

Circumpolar, pelagic distribution. In Australian territory, breeding on Macquarie I. Extralimital breeding on other subantarctic islands of the Indian and south-western Pacific Oceans (Marchant and Higgins, 1990). Most abundant petrel breeding on Macquarie I. in 1960 (Warham, 1967). In the late 1970s, population estimated at about 8,000 pairs, though thought to have declined greatly from former population size, with about 3,000 birds a year being killed by predators (Brothers, 1984). Many thousands thought to nest on the Crozet and Kerguelen Is (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

### 8 Present range and abundance

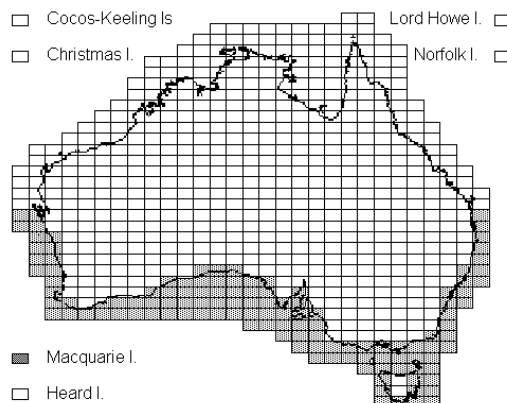
As above. A survey in 1993 suggested numbers had changed little since the 1970s (N. P. Brothers).

### 9 Ecology

White-headed Petrels breed alone or in colonies in burrows dug among tussocks and herbfields on subantarctic islands. They appear to feed pelagically on cephalopods and crustaceans (Marchant and Higgins, 1990).

### 10 Threats

The decrease in population size at Macquarie I. was probably caused by predation on White-headed Petrels by introduced cats, wekas *Gallirallus australis*, Black Rats *Rattus rattus* and Subantarctic Skuas *Catharacta lonnbergi*, whose numbers were elevated as a result of the introduction of rabbits (Brothers, 1984). The elimination of Wekas and control of cats and rabbits has apparently halted the decline.



### 11 Information required

None.

### 12 Recovery objectives

12.1 Maintain or increase existing population.

### 13 Actions completed or under way

13.1 Successful eradication of Wekas.

13.2 Continued monitoring of breeding population size and breeding success.

13.3 Continued rabbit and cat control.

14 Management actions required

14.1 Eradication of the Black Rat from Macquarie I., possibly using techniques developed in New Zealand.

15 Organisations responsible for conservation

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

16 Other organisations involved

None.

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

Staff resources required 2001-2005 1.0 Technical Officer (monitoring)<sup>1</sup>

1.0 Technical Officer (ferals)<sup>1</sup>

Financial resources required 2001-2005

Action	Conservation agencies	Other funding sources	Total
Monitoring breeding population <sup>1</sup>	\$15,800	\$0	\$15,800
Control feral animals on Macquarie I. <sup>1</sup>	\$277,900	\$0	\$277,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$293,700</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$293,700</b>

<sup>1</sup> Costs of Macquarie I. monitoring and feral animal control shared among 19 threatened taxa

18 Bibliography

Brothers, N. P. 1984. Breeding distribution and status of burrow-nesting petrels at Macquarie Island. *Aust. Wildl. Res.* 11:113-131.

Gärdenfors, U., Rodríguez, J.P., Hilton-Taylor, C., Hyslop, C., Mace, G., Molur, S. and Poss, S. 1999. Draft guidelines for the Application of IUCN Red List Criteria at National and Regional Levels. *Species* 31-32:58-70.

Marchant, S. and Higgins, P. J. (eds) 1990. *The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds.* Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Warham, J. 1967. The White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessonii* at Macquarie Island. *Emu* 67:1-22.

Comments received from

Barry Baker, Nigel Brothers, Rosemary Gales, Tim Reid.