

RECOVERY OUTLINE

White Tern (Indo-Pacific)

1	Family	Laridae
2	Scientific Name	<i>Gygis alba candida</i> (Gmelin, 1789)
3	Common Name	White Tern (Indo-Pacific)
4	Conservation status	Least Concern

5 Reasons for listing

The subspecies is found at fewer than five locations, but these are well-dispersed and its recent arrival on Lord Howe I. indicates a capacity to increase in range.

	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	5,000,000 km ²	medium
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	20 km ²	medium
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds	6,500	low
trend	stable	high
No. of sub-populations	4	high
Largest sub-population	4,000	medium
Generation time	5 years	low
Global population share	< 1 %	high
Level of genetic exchange	low	low

6 Intraspecific taxa

There are three extralimital subspecies. The species is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

Norfolk I. and Cocos-Keeling Is. Extralimitally, numerous islands across Indian and south-west Pacific Oceans (Higgins and Davies, 1996).

8 Present range and abundance

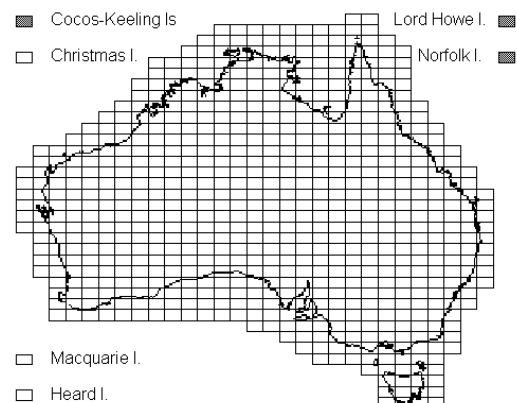
As above. Population estimates: Norfolk I., 2,000-2,500 pairs, North Keeling I., up to 1,000 pairs, and an unknown number on West I. First breeding record on Lord Howe I. in 1942 (O. Evans), where sub-population now fluctuates between 60 and 100 pairs (Schodde *et al.*, 1983, Stokes and Goh, 1987, Higgins and Davies, 1996, Priddel, 1996).

9 Ecology

White Terns nest on wooded islands and lay their single eggs on horizontal branches, although either the egg or the chick is often blown off. On Lord Howe and Norfolk Is, they most frequently use the horizontal branches of pines. They feed in inshore waters on small fish and squid (Higgins and Davies, 1996).

10 Threats

For a bird with such a fragile nest, the species has proved remarkably resilient to rats and other accidents. The newly established sub-population on Lord Howe I. has persisted despite predation by introduced predators and the endemic subspecies of Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina crissalis*, itself Endangered (Hutton, 1991, Higgins and Davies, 1996, Priddel, 1996). Similarly the population on Norfolk I. is persisting despite predation from cats, rats, Nankeen Kestrels *Falco cenchroides* and Marsh Harriers *Circus approximans* (M. Christian).



11 Recommended actions

11.1 Monitor sub-populations during routine monitoring of other seabird species.

12 Bibliography

- Higgins, P. J. and Davies, S. J. J. F. (eds) 1996. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Vol. 3. Snipe to Pigeons*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
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- Priddel, D. 1996. The status of seabirds in New South Wales. Pp. 201-208 in G. J. B. Ross, K. Weaver and J. C. Greig (eds) *The Status of Australia's Seabirds: Proceedings of the National Seabird Workshop, Canberra, 1-2 November 1993*. Biodiversity Group, Environment Australia, Canberra.

Schodde, R., Fullagar, P. and Hermes, N. 1983. *A Review of Norfolk Island Birds: Past and Present*. Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canberra.

Stokes, T. and Goh, P. 1987. Records of Herald Petrels and the Christmas Frigatebird from North Keeling Island, Indian Ocean. *Australian Bird Watcher* 12:132-133.

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