

## TAXON SUMMARY

# Willie Wagtail (Torres Strait)

1	Family	Dicruridae
2	Scientific name	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys melaleuca</i> (Quoy & Gaimard, 1830)
3	Common name	Willie Wagtail (Torres Strait)
4	Conservation status	Near Threatened: e

### 5 Reasons for listing

The Australian population of this subspecies is confined to three small islands with a combined area of less than 100 km<sup>2</sup> (Vulnerable: D2). The global status, however, is Least Concern and genetic interchange is likely to be substantial. The Australian status has therefore been downgraded (as per Gärdenfors *et al.*, 1999) to Near Threatened: e (genetic interchange beyond borders).

Australian population	Estimate	Reliability
Extent of occurrence	210 km <sup>2</sup>	high
trend	stable	high
Area of occupancy	100 km <sup>2</sup>	medium
trend	stable	high
No. of breeding birds:	20,000	low
trend	stable	high
No. of sub-populations	3	high
Largest sub-population	12,000	low
Generation time	4 years	low
Global population share	< 1 %	high
Level of genetic exchange	high	high

### 6 Intraspecific taxa

*R. l. picata* (northern Australia) and *R. l. leucophrys* (southern Australia) are both Least Concern. Extralimitally, there are a further three subspecies in New Guinea and nearby islands.

### 7 Past range and abundance

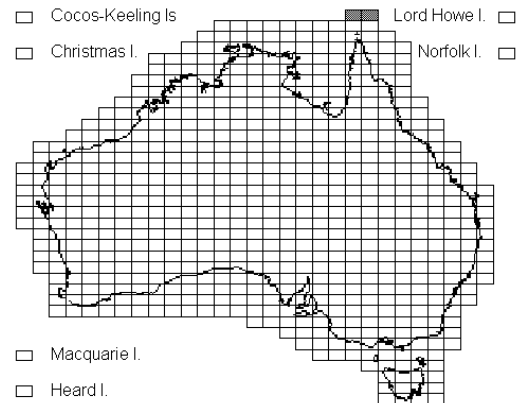
New Guinea, extending south to Boigu, Dauan and Saibai Is (Draffan *et al.*, 1983, Schodde and Mason, 1999).

### 8 Present range and abundance

As above.

### 9 Ecology

On Boigu I., Willie Wagtails are found in *Melaleuca* woodland. They feed on insects, mostly taken from the air, and lay 2-3 eggs in cupped nests on horizontal branches (Beruldsen, 1980, Blakers *et al.*, 1984).



### 10 Threats

There are no immediate threats except, perhaps, those posed to low islands by rising sea levels.

### 11 Recommended actions

11.1 Initiate community-based ecotourism business promoting the islands' unique avifauna. Monitoring of sub-populations and habitat could then be undertaken by visiting bird-watchers and local rangers.

### 12 Bibliography

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- Blakers, M., Davies, S. J. J. F. and Reilly, P. N. 1984. *The Atlas of Australian Birds*. RAOU and Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
- Draffan, R. D. W., Garnett, S. T. and Malone, G. J. 1983. Bird of the Torres Strait: An annotated list and biogeographic analysis. *Emu* 83:207-234.
- Gärdenfors, U., Rodriguez, 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.
- Schodde, R. and Mason, I. J. 1999. *The Directory of Australian Birds: Passerines*. CSIRO, Collingwood, Victoria.

### Comments received from

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