



Pulu Keeling National Park

PROTECTING THE ENDANGERED COCOS BUFF-BANDED RAIL

*This project involves practical action to improve the long-term viability of the Cocos buff-banded rail (*Gallirallus philippensis andrewsi*) through improved monitoring of populations.*

End of Project Update (2-year project)

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

- This project is now complete and all key outcomes and outputs have been delivered, as follows.
- A comprehensive camera monitoring system was established on Horsburgh Island, to monitor the second insurance population of Cocos buff-banded rails translocated from Pulu Keeling National Park. Camera images were inspected monthly to gather data on presence, recruitment, behaviour and dispersal. The cameras also functioned as a biosecurity system, to detect any incursion of introduced species such as cats and rats.
- Monitoring results show that the reintroduced Cocos buff-banded rails have dispersed across different habitats on Horsburgh Island, as well as self-dispersing to other nearby islands, including Direction Island and Home Island.
- Monitoring also confirmed that Horsburgh Island and Direction Island have remained free from invasive species such as rats and cats.
- Transect surveys were undertaken several times throughout the life of the project to monitor population size. By mid-2016 the Horsburgh population was estimated to have grown to 97 rails, up from the initial founder population of 39 in 2013.
- This project has contributed to the National Recovery Plan for the Cocos Buff-banded Rail by reducing the risk of species extinction and enhancing knowledge about the species ecology.
- Monitoring of the original founder population on Pulu Keeling will be ongoing as part of the national park's management.



Camera image of five Cocos buff-banded rail chicks.