

# Habitat association and population size of the Madeira Firecrest (*Regulus madeirensis*)

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1 **Habitat association and population size of the Madeira Firecrest (*Regulus***  
2 ***madeirensis*)**

3

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24 **Abstract**

25 Basic population information is often lacking for recently recognised species, yet such  
26 information is essential for conservation and management. This study provides a detailed  
27 assessment of population size and habitat association in a recently recognised species, the  
28 Madeira Firecrest (*Regulus madeirensis*). Species abundance data and habitat data were  
29 collected using a point transect distance sampling method. Estimates of density per habitat  
30 type were made, in conjunction with presence and absence data derived from the Madeira  
31 bird atlas, to estimate population size and habitat associations. We estimate the population  
32 size of the Madeira Firecrest to be 698,300 (95% CI: 523,540 and 869,960) which greatly  
33 exceeds the 10,000 threshold for the IUCN 'Vulnerable' category. Distribution and abundance  
34 were strongly linked with laurel and heath forest, with 56% of the population found in these  
35 two habitat types. Historically, much of the native laurel and heath forest was lost on Madeira,  
36 but these native forest habitats are now protected. Based on the large population size and  
37 successful management of the laurel forest habitat, our results suggest there is a no  
38 immediate risk of a change in conservation status for the Madeira Firecrest.

39

40 **Keywords**

41 conservation, density estimates, endemic, , laurel forest, management.

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49 The loss of biodiversity due to anthropogenic factors is recognised as one of the predominant  
50 conservation issues of our time and it is estimated that the extinction rate of species is up to  
51 1,000 times greater than the natural background rate (Pimm *et al.* 1995). While the taxonomic  
52 categorisation of species is fundamental to biology, ecology and conservation of species (May  
53 1990), it is thought that most species remain undescribed and effort is needed to identify,  
54 catalogue and evaluate species to help avoid extinctions (Bickford *et al.* 2006). The term  
55 species is ambiguous, with different concepts about what a species actually is; e.g., the  
56 biological species concept (BSC – defined as populations of species that cannot interbreed) and  
57 the phylogenetic species concept (PSC – defined as a group that shares at least one unique  
58 derived character) may arrive at different conclusions when studying the same group (Agapow  
59 *et al.* 2004). The rate at which new species have been recognized has increased rapidly with  
60 the development of new tools (e.g. molecular genetics, acoustic analysis) to identify distinct  
61 taxonomic units (Köhler *et al.* 2005; Sangster 2009). Thus, there has been rapid change in the  
62 recognition of species limits, with a general trend leading to a larger number of less inclusive  
63 taxonomic units (Agapow *et al.* 2004). The identification of such taxonomic units for  
64 conservation, described as a discrete population or populations comprised by a single species  
65 or variant thereof, has been recognised as conceptually and legally important in the context of  
66 conservation monitoring and management (Frankham *et al.* 2010; Tobias *et al.* 2010).

67

68 Recently recognised cryptic species constitute a special case because their conservation status  
69 may not be well understood and relevant data may be difficult to assemble or collect. Yet  
70 cryptic species are thought to be common across a variety of taxa and geographical regions  
71 (Pfenniger and Schwenk 2007). It has been suggested that the increasing recognition of cryptic  
72 species with genetics tools results in a significant challenge for conservation management, as it  
73 is concomitant with an increase in the recognized number of threatened or endangered

74 species experiencing range or population size decline (Tobias *et al.* 2010; Agapow *et al.* 2004;  
75 Sangster *et al.* 2016). For example, in species exhibiting a wide geographical range, there might  
76 be several subspecies recognized or merely considered populations of the same species.  
77 However, if a discrete population becomes recognized as a distinct species, it follows that it is  
78 found in a smaller geographical range, and that a finite, global population size estimate may or  
79 may not be known (Isaac *et al.* 2004). A study by Lohman *et al.* (2010) on Southeast Asian bird  
80 species, using genetic and phylogenetic evidence with supporting morphological data, found  
81 cryptic diversity in a number of widespread species with findings that suggest that many  
82 insular populations of these widespread species may be overlooked endemics that lack  
83 protection and recognition. The Madeira Firecrest (*Regulus madeirensis*) provides an example  
84 of a cryptic, polytypic, recently recognized island endemic (Clarke 2006; Sangster *et al.* 2005).  
85 Yet, while it is categorized by the IUCN as 'Least Concern', there are limited data on habitat  
86 association, population size and susceptibility to disturbance (del Hoyo *et al.* 2006).

87

88 The Madeira Firecrest is one of six species in the genus *Regulus* (del Hoyo *et al.* 2006), formerly  
89 treated as a conspecific of *Regulus ignicapilla* but which is now recognized as a distinct species  
90 based on genetic divergence, morphology, and call structure (Päckert *et al.* 2003; 2006;  
91 Rodrigues *et al.* 2014). Globally, *Regulus* spp. are categorised as being of 'Least Concern', with  
92 the Madeira Firecrest recognised as 'Least Concern' in 2008 (IUCN 2016).

93 The Common Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*) breeds in the west Palearctic between July  
94 isotherms of 16 and 24°C with the core distribution in Central Europe and Iberia (Snow and  
95 Perrin 1998; Hagenmeijer and Blair 1997). The Madeira Firecrest is found only on the main  
96 island of the Madeiran Archipelago (Clarke 2006). Firecrests tend to breed in broad-leaved and  
97 mixed woodland and their diet is primarily arthropods, including springtails (Collembola),  
98 spiders (Araneae), moth and caterpillars (Lepidoptera) and aphids (Aphidoidea) (Snow and

99 Perrins 1998; Martens and Päckert, 2018). The Madeira Firecrest has been observed in a range  
100 of habitats including laurel forest (*Laurus*), woody heath, mixed forest and mountain  
101 vegetation (low tree heath) (Oliveira et al. 2002; Oliveira and Menezes 2004; Martens and  
102 Päckert 2015). Until recently, the best population estimate was > 10,000 individuals globally  
103 (Oliveira and Menezes 2004); a more recent estimate by BirdLife International (2015) suggests  
104 the population was 100,000-200,000 individuals. However, because of the lack of quantitative  
105 data underlying these estimates, the extent to which the endemic Madeira Firecrest  
106 population meets or exceeds the IUCN's 'Least Concern' threshold of 10,000 individuals is  
107 unclear. Recent contraction of laurel forest (during the 20th century), due to introduced  
108 *Eucalyptus* plantations, is of conservation concern, potentially affecting the breeding success  
109 of Madeira Firecrest (del Hoyo et al. 2006; BirdLife International 2015). Finally, while the  
110 Madeira Firecrest is an endemic species, there is no specific management or conservation  
111 initiative directed towards the species (Oliveira and Menezes 2004).

112

113 The aim of this study was to estimate the population size and habitat use of the Madeira  
114 Firecrest to understand better the status of the newly recognised species and to inform its  
115 management and conservation. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to: (1) identify  
116 habitat correlates of Madeira Firecrest presence and abundance; (2) estimate population  
117 density as a function of habitat types; and (3) evaluate the effect of habitat disturbance on  
118 presence and density. We discuss our results in relation to the IUCN conservation status  
119 designation for a newly recognized species and, specifically, in the context of management of  
120 the Madeira Firecrest.

121

## 122 **Methods**

123 Study area

124 Madeira is a volcanic island located in the eastern Atlantic and is approximately 5.2 million  
125 years old (Jones *et al.* 1987). Madeira has an area of 742 km<sup>2</sup> with a maximum elevation of  
126 1,861 m along a mountainous central ridge (Jones *et al.* 1987). The island consists of several  
127 habitat types including agriculture, urban, coastal, heath, upland, indigenous forest, and exotic  
128 forest (Jones *et al.* 1987; Oliveira and Menezes 2004). Indigenous forest on Madeira is the  
129 Laurisilva or laurel forest that once covered most of the island and is considered a relict forest  
130 type (Clarke 2006; Jones 1988; Oliveira and Menezes 2004). Laurel forest (characteristic  
131 species include *Laurus azorica*, *Ocotea foetens* and *Myrica faya*) covers an area of  
132 approximately 15,000 ha representing around 20% of Madeira, a reduction from historical  
133 cover due to habitat loss and degradation as a result of clearance for crops and cattle (*Bos*  
134 *taurus*) grazing (Oliveira *et al.* 2002; Fernandez-Palacios *et al.* 2011; Marrero *et al.* 2004).

135

## 136 **Data Collection**

### 137 *Distance sampling*

138 Data on Madeira were collected between March and June during the breeding season in 2008,  
139 2010, and 2011. Surveys were conducted using a point transect distance sampling method  
140 (Buckland *et al.* 2001). A total of 55 transects were conducted resulting in 584 census points.  
141 Transect locations were selected based on a stratified design to include all major habitat types  
142 on Madeira (any change in habitat type at a census point was noted). The starting point of  
143 each transect was chosen randomly in the field using a stopwatch (seconds and 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a  
144 second displayed were added together upon arrival in a survey area and this was then used to  
145 select the number of metres into the transect the start point was positioned). Habitat types  
146 sampled were categorised according to the predominant habitat types occurring on Madeira,  
147 laurel forest, heath forest (*Erica* spp.), planted exotic forest (mostly pine, *Pinus pinaster* or  
148 Eucalyptus, *Eucalyptus globules*), mixed forest (mixture of exotic and indigenous tree species),

149 agriculture, upland (high altitude regions not dominated by forest), urban (evidence of human  
150 presence), and coastal (similar to Jones *et al.* 1987). At each census point, the percentage  
151 cover of each habitat type was estimated and the dominant habitat type was recorded (similar  
152 to Jones *et al.* 1987; Jones 1988).

153

154 Surveys were conducted in the morning between 07:00 and 11:30 (GMT +1) to coincide with  
155 the peak activity of forest birds (Bibby *et al.* 1999). However, surveys were not conducted  
156 during inclement weather (high winds, rainfall and low clouds). Point counts were positioned  
157 systematically at intervals of 200 m and conducted over 4-minute periods. Where points were  
158 positioned along paths, roads, or watercourses, they were positioned 10-30 m perpendicular  
159 to the transect when possible to avoid bias (Lee and Marsden 2008). A single observer (JN) was  
160 used throughout the study to remove the effect of inter-observer variability, although a digital  
161 recorder or a research assistant was used to record observations. Birds in flight were ignored  
162 unless their point of origin could be identified. However, birds disturbed or flushed before  
163 counts were recorded as present. Point counts were conducted immediately after arrival, as  
164 the use of a settling down period has been identified as negatively biasing the number of  
165 contacts of many bird species (Lee and Marsden 2008). A range finder (Bushnell Yardage Pro)  
166 was used to estimate distances to visual contacts and to train estimates for call contacts. The  
167 method of contact recorded (sight or sound) was also noted. The contacts identified by sound  
168 were placed in distance bands if an accurate distance could not be taken due to the likelihood  
169 of error in the estimation. The bands used were 0-10, 11-30, 31-100, and > 100 m. The  
170 presence of disturbance was also noted in the laurel and heath forest with the occurrence of  
171 exotic forest species or agriculture exceeding 10% at each point used as an indication of  
172 anthropogenic disturbance.

173



174 *Madeira breeding bird atlas data*

175 Information on the general distribution of firecrest on Madeira was provide by a systematic  
176 survey of Madeira carried out by the Parque Natural da Madeira. It was conducted over three  
177 breeding seasons from between 2009 and 2011 (inclusive) (Atlas das Aves do Arquipélago da  
178 Madeira 2011). The survey took place within an existing system comprised of 291 grid squares  
179 of 4-km<sup>2</sup> quadrats, 181 on the main island Madeira (where the Madeira Firecrest is found).  
180 Each quadrat was surveyed at least once (Atlas das Aves do Arquipélago da Madeira 2011).  
181 Each transect lasted 1-hour, split into six 10-minute increments walked at a constant speed  
182 (2.5-3 km/hour) using a GPS (Garmin eTrex) and a stopwatch. During each of the six transect  
183 increments, the total number of individuals observed, habitat type and any indication of  
184 breeding were noted. Habitat types recorded in the Madeira bird atlas have been placed into  
185 the broader habitat types defined in the distance sampling bird survey using the detailed  
186 description of each habitat type provided by the bird atlas for the purpose of this analysis.  
187

188 **Analysis**

189 Density was estimated using the program Distance 6.2 (Thomas *et al.* 2010), following  
190 guidelines described in Buckland *et al.* (2001). Briefly, exploratory analysis was undertaken on  
191 the data to identify the presence of errors, outliers and variation in detectability based on the  
192 method used (sight or sound). Outliers were removed (contacts in the band > 100 m) and then  
193 contacts were placed into distance bands to improve the fit of detection curves. To maximise  
194 the number of contacts used in the analysis, both aural and visual contacts were used, with the  
195 type of contact added as a covariate to account for difference in detection between the two  
196 types of contact. Density and population size estimates were made at the habitat level using a  
197 global detection function with covariates added to account for difference in detectability  
198 between habitat types and also forest versus non-forest habitats. A visual inspection of

199 detection curves and histograms was made. AIC was used to select the best model fit from a  
200 selection of detection functions and series expansions (Half-normal and Hazard-rate with  
201 cosine, hermite polynomial and simple polynomial series expansions)(Thomas *et al.* 2010), and  
202 goodness of fit test and visual inspection of histograms were used to select the covariate  
203 combination, truncation distance and number of intervals. Variance was estimated using  
204 bootstrapping for the final chosen model (Thomas *et al.* 2010).

205

206 The number of quadrats occupied in each habitat type from the Madeira bird atlas was used to  
207 estimate distribution and was then used in conjunction with the density calculated for each  
208 habitat type to estimate habitat-specific population estimates using Distance. Habitat-specific  
209 population estimates were then summed to estimate the total population size by multiplying  
210 habitat specific density estimates by the area represented by that habitat (e.g. see Newson *et*  
211 *al.* 2005). These estimates were then summed to calculate an overall population estimate. Chi-  
212 squared goodness of fit was used to examine the partitioning of the Madeira Firecrest density  
213 and population across habitat types (both measured in number of individual birds).

214

215 In order to determine whether habitat disturbance, modification, and human presence each  
216 has a significant effect on focal species presence using the bird atlas data, habitat types were  
217 ranked roughly from 1-8 based on the degree of anthropogenic disturbance and change they  
218 have been exposed to since the arrival of the first settlers (ad 1420–1430; Fernandez-Palacios  
219 *et al.* 2011); a score of 8 indicated the maximum level of disturbance represented by urban  
220 areas and a score of 1 the least amount of disturbance represented by the indigenous laurel  
221 forest. This now protected on Madeira, followed by indigenous heath forest which often  
222 buffering the laurel forest, both habitats being those least changed by humans (Jones *et al.*,  
223 1987) (8 = urban, 7 = coastal, 6 = agriculture, 5 = exotic forest, 4 = mixed forest, 3 = mountain,

224 2 = heath forest, 1 = laurel forest). A generalised additive model (GAM) with a binomial link  
225 function (Wood, 2006) and thin plate splines as smoothers (K = 5 as suggested by Keele 2008,  
226 in Zuur et al. 2009 for datasets with >100 observations) was used to determine if habitat  
227 disturbance has a significant effect on species presence using the R package 'mgcv' (Wood,  
228 2003). The number of contacts per point was compared between pristine laurel forest and  
229 disturbed laurel forest using a t-test to examine the effect of disturbance. Average abundance  
230 per quadrat (mean individuals per quadrat) were calculated using the Madeira bird atlas  
231 sampling data. The relative abundance for each quadrat was then calculated (quadrat  
232 abundance / total species abundance across Madeira). Average relative abundance was  
233 mapped along with human disturbance level, which was categorised as low, which included  
234 laurel and heath forest, intermediate including mountain, mixed and exotic forest and high  
235 including agriculture, coastal and urban habitat to identify spatial patterns in relative  
236 abundance associated with habitat disturbance. Mapping was conducted in QGIS (QGIS.org,  
237 2015). Spearman rank correlation was used to test for a correlation between relative  
238 abundance and human disturbance across Madeira. Unless otherwise specified, all analyses  
239 were conducted using R version 3.3.2 (R Core Team 2016).

240

## 241 **Results**

242 A Half-Normal model with truncation at 60 m and eight intervals was chosen to estimate  
243 density and population size with covariates for contact type and forest included to account for  
244 differences in detectability based on goodness of fit (summary in table 2). Density estimates  
245 are expressed as the number of individuals per km<sup>2</sup> (Table 1). The total population size of  
246 Madeira Firecrest, accounting for habitat weighting, was estimated to be 698,300 individuals  
247 (95% CI: 523,540 and 869,960). Density estimates for the Madeira Firecrest (Individuals per  
248 km<sup>2</sup>), calculated for each habitat type are shown in Table 1. The highest density was observed

249 in heath forest (3,716 /km<sup>2</sup>), followed by laurel forest (2,572 / km<sup>2</sup>) (Table 1). Madeira Firecrest  
250 population estimates within each habitat type are shown in Fig 1 and table 1. The population  
251 was not evenly distributed across habitat types (Chi-square:  $\chi^2 = 464,840$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ),  
252 with the largest density occurring in laurel forest (195,530 individuals; 28%) and heath forest  
253 (193,250, 27.67%). The remainder of the population was supported by exotic forest, mixed  
254 forest, upland and agricultural habitats with no individuals recorded in coastal and urban  
255 habitats during distance sampling (Fig 1, Table 1).

256

257 We found Madeira Firecrest presence to have a highly dependent, non-linear, negative  
258 relationship with habitat disturbance (GAM: Deviance explained= 29.8%,  $K = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; Fig  
259 2). However, the number of contacts per point count did not differ between pristine laurel  
260 forest and disturbed laurel forest (t-test:  $t = 1.2$ ,  $df = 169.3$ ,  $p = 0.21$ ). Spatially, we found a  
261 strong negative correlation between Madeira Firecrest abundance and habitat disturbance (Fig  
262 3: Spearman Rank Correlation,  $\rho = -0.56$ ,  $df = 179$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The distribution of the Madeira  
263 Firecrest was concentrated in central and northern areas of the island that coincided with the  
264 distribution of primary habitat. High levels of relative abundance (proportion of total contacts  
265 observed in each grid square) were measured in low (laurel and health forest) or intermediate  
266 (mountain, mixed and exotic forest) levels of disturbance. Low relative abundance and  
267 absence of the Madeira Firecrest were associated with areas of high disturbance (agriculture,  
268 coastal and urban habitat; see Fig 3).

269

## 270 **Discussion**

271 In this study we present the most recent estimate of Madeira Firecrest population size based  
272 on detailed point counts across all prevalent habitat types on the island. We report an  
273 estimated population size for Madeira Firecrest of 698,300 individuals, which, although

274 consistent with the IUCN designation as of 'Least Concern' (IUCN 2016), is higher than previous  
275 estimates. A high density of an island *Regulus* species has been observed by Carrascal *et al.*  
276 (2008) on La Palma, Canary Islands, with the Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) being the second  
277 most abundant terrestrial species. A significant percentage of the Madeira Firecrest population  
278 was concentrated in the laurel and heath forest (56%), with the primary range being much  
279 smaller than the estimated extent of occurrence. Approximately 20% of the island is covered  
280 by laurel forest (Marrero *et al.* 2004; Fernandez-Palacios *et al.* 2011; IUCN 2016). These  
281 remaining indigenous habitats are concentrated in the northern and central areas of Madeira  
282 (Oliveira *et al.* 1999). The 'Vulnerable' (VU) IUCN Red List criteria for area of occurrence is  
283 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Although a significant percentage of the Madeira Firecrest was concentrated in a  
284 small area of occurrence of <20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, there is no evidence for a decline in population or  
285 habitat size or quality that is associated with the 'Vulnerable' IUCN classification (IUCN 2016).  
286 Martin (2009) suggested that the criteria set by the IUCN for distribution ranges may not be  
287 applicable equally to all taxa or when assessing the extinction risk and conservation urgency of  
288 island species that occur across small geographical areas naturally. Martin (2009) suggested  
289 that the natural restricted range of occurrence of island species is a factor must be taken into  
290 account in order to not overestimate the potential threat to a species and its IUCN  
291 classification.

292

293 We found evidence of a negative relationship between Madeira Firecrest presence and human  
294 disturbance. This relationship is possibly explained by a link between Madeira Firecrest and  
295 laurel and heath forest, habitats where anthropogenic disturbance is relatively low. However,  
296 the analysis from distance sampling and of bird atlas data suggest that the Madeira Firecrest  
297 utilises disturbed remnants of the indigenous forest on Madeira and, to a lesser extent, the  
298 exotic forest, which is consistent with previous observations (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). While we

299 also found the Madeira Firecrest in agriculture habitat, most of these sites were classified as  
300 “agriculture with forest nearby” (Atlas das Aves do Arquipélago da Madeira 2011).

301 Some of the agriculture on Madeira is subsistence farming on terraces at relatively high  
302 elevations in close proximity to well-preserved laurel forest (Marrero *et al.* 2004), which may  
303 contribute to the population estimate attributed to this habitat class.

304

305 An association of Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*) with mature, mixed hardwood forest has been  
306 identified by Kosicki *et al.* (2015) in a study in Poland, where the species avoided pine forest  
307 and favoured areas with high tree species richness. Kosicki *et al.* (2015) also found Firecrest (*R.*  
308 *ignicapilla*) to be abundant in upland regions, similar to our findings. Previous studies have  
309 found that the Firecrest (*R. ignicapilla*) will use a range of tree species (i.e. coniferous and non-  
310 coniferous (Leisler and Thaler 1982), will forage on a relatively wide species diversity of  
311 arthropods (Kralj *et al.* 2013) and exhibit relatively broad habitat choice (Hagenmeijer and Blair  
312 1997) in comparison to otherwise ecologically similar, sympatric species (such as the  
313 Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus*). The Madeira Firecrest may be able to use resources that on the  
314 mainland may be limited by competition (such as food or nesting habitat), used by other  
315 firecrest (*R. Regulus*), tit (Paradae) and warbler (Sylviidae) species, which may promote the  
316 high densities found on Madeira. Further research could investigate whether any behavioural  
317 differences between the mainland Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*) in the presence of the  
318 sympatric Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) and the Madeira Firecrest are present that may indicate  
319 niche change or expansion.

320

321 A large proportion of the Madeira Firecrest population occurs within nature reserves (around  
322 56% in laurel and heath forest) under the jurisdiction of the Parque Natural da Madeira or  
323 Madeiran Natural Park (Oliveira & Menezes, 2004; Oliveira and Heredia 1995). This habitat is

324 considered a priority habitat under the EU Habitat Directive, as part of the Macaronesian laurel  
325 forest (Oliveira and Menezes 2004; Oliveira and Heredia 1995). These protective measures  
326 have halted the impact of habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation which reduced the  
327 native laurel forests to its present cover (Oliveira *et al.* 1999). In addition, the laurel forest  
328 features in the successful programme of conservation management for the endemic Madeira  
329 Laurel Pigeon (*Columba trocaz*; Oliveira and Heredia 1995), which has likely imparted indirect  
330 benefit to the status of the Madeira Firecrest.

331

### 332 **Conclusions**

333 While our findings are consistent with the classification of the recently recognised Madeira  
334 Firecrest as of 'Least concern', being a single-island endemic, it is inherently vulnerable to  
335 natural disasters and to anthropogenic habitat loss or introduced species (Pimm *et al.* 1995).  
336 Although our results suggest that conservation management has been effective for the  
337 Madeira Firecrest, continued monitoring remains important to enable intervention due to  
338 unforeseen changes in its status. Ideally, this would be through continuous monitoring or a  
339 census scheme, perhaps in conjunction with development of a volunteer based Madeira bird  
340 atlas project or breeding bird survey. This would provide information on any changes in species  
341 distribution and population trends on a continual yearly basis and would provide information  
342 on other bird species on Madeira. Madeira is also covered by the SPEA (Portuguese Society for  
343 the Study of Birds) Breeding Bird Atlas that is collected over 5 years that could also provide  
344 monitoring data. Finally, the loss and replacement of laurel forest with eucalyptus plantations  
345 may pose a potential threat to this species in the future. Madeira is an Endemic Bird Area  
346 (EBA) and so protection of its habitats and endemic species is a priority for the preservation of  
347 biodiversity (Martens and Päckert 2015). While we focussed on a single species, we suggest  
348 that population monitoring for island endemics, especially for newly recognised species, is

349 crucial for species management, conservation and prevention of extinctions (Sangster *et al.*  
350 2016).

351

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355 assistance, data and advice whilst undertaking fieldwork in Madeira. We would like to confirm  
356 that this research complies with current laws in the location of study.

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#### 510 **Figure legends**

511 **Fig 1.** Population size and 95% confidence interval estimate for each habitat type on Madeira.  
512 Laurel, heath, exotic and mixed are all forest types. Coastal and urban habitat types are not  
513 shown in the figure as population size in these habitat types was 0 ) (based on data collected  
514 on Madeira between 2008 – 2011).

515

516 **Fig 2.** Non-linear effect of human presence and habitat disturbance on the presence of the  
517 Madeira Firecrest (1 = No disturbance – indigenous laurel forest; 8 = Maximum disturbance –  
518 Urban areas) (based on data collected on Madeira between 2008 – 2011).

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520 **Fig 3.** Map of the relationship between habitat disturbance and the distribution and  
521 abundance of the Madeira Firecrest (based on data collected between 2008 – 2011).

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536 **Table 1.** Madeira Firecrest density estimates (individuals per km<sup>2</sup>) and population estimates  
 537 across habitat types on Madeira (based on data collected between 2008 – 2011). Results are  
 538 from a Half-Normal model with truncation at 60 m and eight intervals was chosen to estimate  
 539 density and population size with covariates for contact type and forest included to account for  
 540 differences in detectability (estimates bootstrapped – 999).

Habitat (Quadrats survey / occupied)	Density/ km <sup>2</sup>	Coefficient of variation (%)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Population size (95% CI)
Laurel Forest (19 / 19)	2,527	13.01	1,938.5	3,229.9	195,530 (147,320– 245,470)
Heath Forest	3,716.3	11.91	2,833.2	4,530.6	193250

<b>(13 / 13)</b>						(147,320– 235,590)
Exotic Forest	769.43	25	442.92	1,172.2		104,640
<b>(36 / 34)</b>						(60,237 – 159,420)
Mixed Forest	2,367.5	15.58	1,680.6	3,142.3		66,289
<b>(7 / 7)</b>						(47,058 – 87,984)
Upland	901.97	18.98	609.25	1,259.2		46,902
<b>(20 / 13)</b>						(31,681 – 65,477)
Coastal	0	-	-	-		0
<b>(10 / 3)</b>						
Agricultural	533.08	27.82	274.88	841.37		91,690
<b>(68 / 43)</b>						(47,280 – 144,720)
Urban	0	-	-	-		0
<b>(8 / 0)</b>						
Total						698,300
population						(523,540 –
estimate						869,960)

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Model	Key Function (Automatically selected in Distance using AIC)	AIC	Estimate (Individuals per km <sup>2</sup> )	% CV	95 % CI		GOF Chi-p
<b>* Truncation 60 m (8 bands) Forest and Contact covariate</b>	<b>Half-normal (cosine)</b>	<b>1027.7</b>	<b>1404.9</b>	<b>7.14</b>	<b>1215.9</b>	<b>1623.2</b>	<b>0.238</b>
Truncation 65 m (8 bands) Forest and Contact covariate	Half-normal (cosine)	1029.4	1314.4	7.4	1137.7	1518.5	0.074
Truncation 60 m (6 bands) Forest and Contact covariate	Half-normal (cosine)	1052.1	1673.5	7.4	1448.1	1933	NA
Truncation 70 m (7 bands) Forest and Contact covariate	Half-normal (cosine)	1235.6	1511.7	7.2	1312.8	1740.9	NA
Truncation 80 m (8 bands) Forest and Contact covariate	Half-normal (cosine)	1272.4	1324.7	7.2	1151	1524.7	<0.001
Truncation 90 m (9 bands) Forest and Contact covariate	Half-normal (cosine)	1347.9	1120.85	7.2	973.6	1290.4	<0.001
Truncation 100 m (10 bands) Forest and Contact covariate	Half-normal (cosine)	1396	977.1	7.2	848.7	1124.8	<0.001

558

559 Table 2. Model summary with different truncations and bands. Key function selected from  
560 Half-normal and Hazard-rate with cosine, hermite polynomial and simple polynomial series  
561 expansions using AIC in Distance. CI – Confidence intervals. CV – Coefficient of variation. GOF  
562 chi-p – goodness of fit test results. \* indicates model that was bootstrapped to calculate  
563 population estimates.

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