

Baga National Park

Management Statement

2013

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

This management statement does not intend to affect, diminish, or extinguish native title or associated rights.

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Disclaimer

All due diligence and care has been taken in the preparation of this document based on the information in the 2013 management statement. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

The Baga National Park Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2024 in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made, notably the renaming of the protected area to Baga National Park as of December 2018. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	144ha
Bioregion:	Brigalow Belt North Bioregion
QPWS region:	Central
Local government estate/area:	Rockhampton
State electorate:	Keppel

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 Pest Strategy
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Throughout the Baga National Park Management Statement 2013 (this document) the term 'Baga National Park' is used to refer to the protected area estate (gazetted 14 December 2018 under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*).

Vision

The natural ecosystems, plants and animal populations in Baga National Park are conserved.

The park is managed to conserve the biological values found within it, to preserve the scenic landscape and to allow for nature-based recreation.

Partnerships are established with the Traditional Owners, local community, research institutes, conservation groups, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Rockhampton Regional Council, neighbours, and the community to identify and protect the natural and cultural values of the area.

The visitor experiences and recreation opportunities are in keeping with the undeveloped natural environment of the management area.

Conservation purpose

The objectives of management for Baga National Park are to:

- protect regional ecosystems and species of conservation significance and their habitats.
- conserve and protect the management areas natural, cultural and scenic values.
- minimise the impact of pests and inappropriate fire regimes on the natural environment.
- incorporate the interests and rights of the Traditional Owners and their affiliations to the area by co-operatively, protecting and managing cultural heritage of significance.
- provide and maintain visitor opportunities that are in keeping with the area's natural values.
- provide direction and actions to protect the natural, cultural and social values of the area through appropriate research and monitoring.
- foster cooperative relationships with interested parties to build stronger partnerships to assist management.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

The peak of Mount Baga rises from the open plains between Rockhampton and Yeppoon. It is the only exposed volcanic plug on protected estate in central Queensland—with the remaining 13 on freehold property. The Baga National Park is bordered on three sides by grazing properties. The southern boundary partly adjoins Yeppoon–Rockhampton Road and a disused quarry site owned by Rockhampton Regional Council. Mount Baga is strikingly attractive and rises 221 metres (m) from the surrounding flat, cleared landscape.

The rock of Baga National Park is a medium-grey trachyte with small diffuse clusters of pink feldspar crystals (Willmott 2006). The flat alluvial plain of Hedlow Creek surrounds Mount Baga. Hedlow Creek sediments are derived from serpentinite rocks, and have developed a soil and vegetation community which is not represented elsewhere in the area due to the land being cleared for agriculture or mining exploration.

Walking off designated tracks, some cliff-based activities and vandalism have damaged geological values of the park. Where recreation activities have impacted on the geological and natural values, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) will investigate and implement appropriate management actions.

Regional ecosystems

There are six regional ecosystems represented in Baga National Park, five have low representation in protected area estate, three are listed as of concern and one endangered (Table 1). Eucalypt open forest on serpentine derived alluvium is located in the south-east corner of the park while dry rainforest remains on the lower slopes of the mountain.

Plants and animals

Two species of conservation significance are located on the park, *Leucopogon cuspidatus* and *Psydrax reticulata*. A representation of hoop pine *Araucaria cunninghamii* is located on the mountains summit. This species is believed to be a remnant of ancient vegetation from the Gondwanaland super-continent.

There are 15 animal species of conservation significance identified as having habitat occurring, or potentially occurring, in the national park.

There are 12 bird species in the area listed under international agreements that occur, or are likely to occur, in the national park (Table 3).

The major management activities that will aid in maintaining native species diversity and numbers are the control of pest plant and animal species, implementing appropriate fire regimes, and managing visitor impacts.

Aboriginal culture

The Darumbal people are the registered claimants over Baga National Park (QC97/21). Mount Baga is a significant place to the Darumbal people as it tells a creation story of the mountain by the Rainbow Serpent. No formal cultural heritage assessments have been undertaken in the national park. However, it is reasonable to expect that cultural places and artefacts occur in the area.

It is important for QPWS to continue to work with Traditional Owners to identify cultural connections and ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect known places in the area. QPWS will work towards ensuring Traditional Owners are actively participating in the day-to-day management and that cultural heritage is protected.

Shared-history culture

Mining and resource extraction occurred throughout Capricorn Coast area and visitors can see evidence of this at Baga National Park. Mining interest ranged from tin, gold and rock for local developments, such as the Rosslyn Bay harbour wall.

During World War II Australian defence forces were stationed at Shoalwater and used Baga National Park for military exercises and training. The United States of America Army used the park as a storage area for supplies.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Baga National Park is bordered by private property, a public road and council managed reserve. Baga National Park is managed as a natural setting with no visitor facilities. The park is a popular site for visitors seeking an adventure and fitness challenge, and to experience the spectacular views of the Capricorn Coast and Hedlow Creek catchment. There is no formal track to the top of Mount Baga. Climbing to Mount Baga's peak is considered an unsafe activity by QPWS, as no track has been marked for visitors. Significant impact still occurs on the park's natural values due to visitors ascending and descending the mountain—particularly on its vegetation. It is important to manage visitor use at this site to ensure the geological and natural values are protected. A site assessment to investigate the feasibility of developing a safe access track to the peak is required.

Baga National Park is a popular site for cliff-based activities. A small car park on the south side allows easy access to the mount. Cliff-based activities are becoming popular because of outdoor education and commercial promotion. Visitors undertaking these activities include emergency services training and rock-climbing and abseiling groups and individuals.

Education and science

The national park offers learning opportunities in geology and biology. Public education increases community awareness of the national park values, conservation principles and practices. Education also encourages access to, and appropriate behaviour at, specific sites.

The national park provides opportunities for scientific research and monitoring. Any research conducted in the national park must be conducted under the appropriate permit. Results from research and monitoring can benefit the park's management and educate staff and the community. It is important that knowledge is extended to the local community and included in the park's interpretive products.

Partnerships

QPWS is directly responsible for planning, managing and regulating activities in the management area. Working with neighbours, Traditional Owners, Rockhampton Regional Council, user groups, and individuals with similar interests in managing the area is highly desirable to achieve the vision. Efficiencies in resource sharing, improved communications, decision making and enhanced on-ground outcomes, is to be facilitated, where possible, through working partnerships.

A working relationship with the Traditional Owners is essential so that their views and aspirations for the land can be included in planning and management. Traditional Owners have a role to protect cultural heritage in the management area and a role to educate QPWS staff and visitors on cultural heritage management.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

QPWS is responsible for controlling declared and non-declared pests in the management area. A Level 2 pest management strategy exists for the management area.

Hymenachne *Hymenachne amplexicaulis* is considered a threat to Baga National Park. It is a declared Class 2 pest plant within the Weeds of National Significance Database. A small population is located in Hedlow Creek and is the source population for areas downstream including Lake Mary. Control is currently done in conjunction with Rockhampton Regional Council on adjoining land. The aim is to continue control as hymenachne reappears after flooding events. Rubbervine *Cryptostegia grandiflora* is considered a moderate threat to Baga National Park. It is a declared Class 2 pest plant within the Weeds of National Significance Database. The aim is to reduce the infestation by 50% with chemical, biological and manual control.

Lantana *Lantana camara* is considered a major threat to Baga National Park. It is a declared Class 3 pest plant within the Weeds of National Significance database. The lantana has displaced many of the shrub species in the endangered vine forest. The aim is to contain the infestation in strategic area and reduce the extent by more than 50% within eight years.

Cattle *Bos taurus* / *Bos indicus* are considered a moderate threat to Baga National Park. The exclusion of cattle from Mount Baga is difficult. Department of Environment, Science and Innovation will work with neighbouring landholders to develop strategies to manage cattle access into the park.

Fire management

QPWS is responsible for fire management activities on the park.

Managing fire is a high priority as wildfires may threaten life, property, commercial assets and biodiversity values. Protecting and managing the vegetation communities and native animals is complex. Inappropriate burning and uncontrolled fires can result in significant damage to native plant and animal habitats. Fire frequency, timing and intensity can threaten many species through loss of nesting and feeding habitat, loss of individuals and habitat degradation.

QPWS has a responsibility to protect its neighbours from damaging effects of fire. QPWS works closely with other agencies and groups that also have a responsibility for managing fire.

Authorities

No authorities currently exist on Baga National Park. Future authorities in the national park must be consistent with management strategies and plans, and are to be issued in accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

References

Willmott W. 2006, *Rocks and Landscapes of the National Parks of Central Queensland*, Geographical Society of Australia, Queensland Division: Brisbane.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Natural values</p> <p>The full range of naturally occurring biological diversity, ecological processes and landscape dynamics are maintained.</p>	<p>Monitor the impacts from natural processes, pests, fire and recreation. Use the information to guide management decisions and amend current and future plans and strategies.</p> <p>Investigate the acquisition of freehold or leased land directly adjacent to the national park for inclusion into protected area tenure.</p> <p>Minimise threats to natural values through appropriate fire regimes, pest plant and animal control.</p>
<p>Fire management</p> <p>Fire is managed to meet the ecological requirements of fire-dependant and fire-sensitive communities.</p>	<p>Regulate the frequency and intensity of fire to maintain the regional ecosystem composition, structure and ecological dynamics of all vegetation communities.</p> <p>Develop and implement the fire management strategy.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>The national park offers sustainable outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities and settings that meet and adapt to visitor needs with minimal impact on the area's natural and cultural values.</p>	<p>Manage activities to be consistent with the high scenic landscape values. Activities that compromise these values, and cannot be mitigated or managed, will not be permitted.</p> <p>Allow only essential visitor safety and management infrastructure to exceed the site's tree height. If such infrastructure is required, landscape impacts should be mitigated to the greatest possible extent.</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility to mark or construct a walking track to the peak.</p> <p>Develop and implement a site plan for managing visitor use.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>The effectiveness of future management is strengthened through cooperative partnerships.</p>	<p>Continue to build relationships with the local community, organisations, visitors and interest groups to improve knowledge of the management area, and to highlight its significance to the region.</p> <p>Encourage and support Traditional Owners in conducting a comprehensive cultural heritage survey including recording sites, stories, language, names and cultural heritage places.</p> <p>Liaise with Rockhampton Regional Council and other interested parties to establish agreements to cooperatively control pests in the management area.</p> <p>Work with the local outdoor recreation clubs and organisations to establish protocols to manage sites, impacts and other issues such as rock climbing.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem	Description	Biodiversity status
11.3.4	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> and/or <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp. tall woodland on alluvial plains	Of concern
11.3.25	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> or <i>E. camaldulensis</i> woodland fringing drainage lines	Of concern
11.3.38	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>Melaleuca viridiflora</i> , <i>Corymbia tessellaris</i> and <i>Eucalyptus fibrosa</i> subsp. (Glen Geddes) woodland with a grassy ground layer. Occurs on alluvial plains and broad drainage lines derived from serpentinite	Endangered
11.12.3	<i>Eucalyptus crebra</i> , <i>E. tereticornis</i> , <i>Angophora leiocarpa</i> woodland on igneous rocks especially granite	Of concern

Table 2: Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> status	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> status	Back on Track status
Plants				
<i>Leucopogon cuspidatus</i>	-	Least concern	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Psyrax reticulata</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
Animals				
<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Australasian bittern	Least concern	Endangered	Medium

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	fork-tailed swift	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	great egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Gallinago harwickii</i>	Latham's snipe	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle	-	✓	-	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	barn swallow	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-

Bonn: Bonn Convention

CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea