

Ella Bay National Park

Management Statement

2013



Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment, Science, and Innovation**

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The Ella Bay 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. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	3,710ha
Bioregion:	Wet Tropics
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Cairns Regional Council Cassowary Coast Regional Council
State electorate:	Mulgrave

Legislative framework

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

Plans and agreements

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement 2005
✓	Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998
✓	Recovery plan for the stream-dwelling rainforest frogs of the Wet Tropics biogeography region of north-east Queensland 2000-2004
✓	National recovery plan for the spectacled flying fox <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 Fire Management Strategy (draft)
✓	Level 2 Pest Strategy Innisfail (draft)

Vision

Ella Bay National Park is managed to maintain its natural, cultural and scenic values while providing a location for low-key, nature-based visitor activities.

Conservation purpose

Ella Bay was originally gazetted as a national park in 1978. The park is located within the Wet Tropics World Heritage area.

Ella Bay National Park adjoins unallocated state land and nature reserves. These natural areas connect to Russell River National Park, Eubenangee Swamp National Park and eventually to the highlands of Woornooran National Park. This corridor of protected areas and State lands comprises one of the best remaining natural corridors linking the wet tropical highlands to the coastal lowlands.

The entire catchment of Cooper Creek is contained within Ella Bay National Park. It rises in the Seymour Range and flows to the sea at Cooper Point.

Ella Bay Swamp is unique amongst the remaining wetlands on the coastal plain in the Wet Tropics bioregion in that its whole catchment is relatively undisturbed. The site contains one of the largest and least disturbed areas of swamp paperbark *Melaleuca quinquenervia* open forest remaining in the region.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Ella Bay National Park comprises a significant area of coastal lowlands encapsulated between the Seymour Range and Ella Bay. The summit of Mount Arthur at 415 metres (m) is the highest point on the surrounding Seymour Range.

Surrounding land use includes agriculture and grazing, aquaculture, recreational fishing and eco-tourism.

The park lies within a geographical area prone to disturbance by tropical cyclones.

Regional ecosystems

Within Ella Bay National Park there are 32 regional ecosystems mapped. Around 35% of the park area contains 15 ecosystems that are considered to be endangered. Another 15 ecosystems are considered to be of concern (Table 1). Broadly, these endangered and of concern ecosystems comprise four key vegetation communities; namely coastal foreshore, coastal littoral rainforest, *Melaleuca* swampland and mesophyll vine forest.

Ella Bay National Park conserves essential habitat for the southern cassowary. Littoral rainforest, nationally listed as critically endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth), occurs on the park.

Native plants and animals

Ella Bay National Park protects plant and animal species of conservation significance listed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Table 2). Twenty bird species and the estuarine crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* are listed under international agreements (Table 3).

The endangered common mistfrog *Litoria rhecola* is recorded from the park along with the near threatened tapping green eyed frog *Litoria serrata*. The endangered southern cassowary *Casuarius casuarius johnsonii* as well as the vulnerable beach stone-curlew *Esacus magnirostris*, Apollo jewel *Hypochrysops apollo apollo* and ant plant *Myrmecodia beccarii* occur on the park.

Aboriginal culture

Ella Bay National Park is part of the cultural landscape of Aboriginal people and is important as a place to hunt, gather and carry out ceremony. The Mamu people have a Native Title claim (Mamu people; QC01/15) over the park. The area continues to have significant cultural value to Traditional Owners and remains an important part of their story.

Shared-history culture

One life boat from the shipwrecked vessel Maria landed at Ella Bay in 1872. The ship foundered and sank on a voyage between Sydney and New Guinea with a crew of gold prospectors. The Aboriginal people at Ella Bay provided assistance and care to survivors from the wreck that landed at the bay.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Ella Bay National Park encompasses the Graham Range, Seymour Range and lowland coastal areas and is currently devoid of man-made infrastructure. It provides a pristine scenic backdrop for the landscape, particularly for vessel operators. No walking tracks or other visitor facilities currently exist on the park. Access to the park can only be gained by vessel.

Education and science

Ella Bay National Park provides opportunities to examine the dynamics and species composition of remnant coastal lowland forests and wetlands. The proximity of the park to Innisfail and Cairns enhances its value as a scientific research venue.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Pond apple *Annona glabra*, a class 2 declared plant, occurs in small isolated pockets and has been found along the southern side of the *Melaleuca* wetland. Pond apple is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) and presents a key threat to the health of wetland areas and water systems. Singapore daisy *Sphagneticola trilobata* is present within the coastal fringe habitat where it inhibits the recruitment of native plant species in the area.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* (class 2 declared animal) occur throughout the park and on adjacent land. They are known to cause significant environmental damage and prey upon native fauna.

Fire management

Fire is used to maintain the extent and species composition of ecological communities within Ella Bay National Park.

Since gazetted as a National Park, the *Melaleuca* swamp section has been burnt to reduce fuel loads while providing ample time for ecosystem recovery.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape Landscape and natural values including water quality, are maintained and enhanced.</p>	<p>Protect and maintain the natural integrity of Cooper Creek.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals The native plants and animals are preserved through effective management of the landscape.</p>	<p>Continue to manage pest plant species in order to suppress impacts and retain biodiversity. Implement fire management programs to retain the ecological integrity of endangered and of concern regional ecosystems.</p>
<p>Aboriginal culture Traditional Owners of the land are involved and informed with management of the park.</p>	<p>Engage with Traditional Owners to help identify, document and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage places.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities The park's value as a low-key recreation area in the Wet Tropics is maintained.</p>	<p>Continue to provide only vessel-based access to the national park. Offer opportunities for low-key, nature-based recreation in the absence of visitor infrastructure.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
7.1.2a	<i>Sporobolus virginicus</i> grassland, samphire open forbland to sparse forbland, and bare salt pans, on plains adjacent to mangroves	Of concern
7.1.4b	Mangrove and vine forest closed-scrub and closed-forest to open-forest, of the brackish zone	Endangered
7.2.1d,f	Mesophyll vine forest on beach ridges and sand plains of beach origin	Endangered
7.2.3c,e,f	<i>Corymbia tessellaris</i> and/or <i>Acacia crassicaarpa</i> and/or <i>C. intermedia</i> and/or <i>C. clarksoniana</i> woodland to closed-forest on beach ridges (predominantly Holocene)	Of concern
7.2.4f	<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp. (often <i>E. pellita</i> or <i>Corymbia intermedia</i>) open-forest and/or <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> (swamp mahogany) open-forest on swampy sandplains and Pleistocene beach ridges	Of concern
7.2.5a	Mesophyll to notophyll vine forest of <i>Syzygium forte</i> subsp. <i>forte</i> on sands of beach origin	Of concern
7.2.7a	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> +/- <i>Corymbia tessellaris</i> open-forest +/- groved vine forest shrublands, on strand and foredunes	Endangered
7.2.8	<i>Melaleuca leucadendra</i> (weeping tea tree) open-forest to woodland. Sands of beach origin.	Endangered
7.2.9a	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i> shrubland to closed-forest, or <i>Lepironia articulata</i> open to closed sedgeland, on dune swales and swampy sand plains of beach origin	Endangered
7.3.3a	Mesophyll vine forest with <i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i> , on poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.5a	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i> and/or <i>Melaleuca cajuputi</i> closed-forest to shrubland on poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.10a,c,d,e	Simple-complex mesophyll to notophyll vine forest, on moderately to poorly-drained alluvial plains, of moderate fertility	Endangered
7.3.30	Complex of fernlands and sedgelands with emergent rainforest pioneering spp. Permanently wet peat swamps of alluvial plains.	Endangered
7.3.35c	<i>Acacia mangium</i> and/or <i>A. celsa</i> and/or <i>A. polystachya</i> closed-forest on alluvial plains	Endangered
7.8.1a	Complex mesophyll to mesophyll vine forest on well drained basalt lowlands and foothills	Endangered
7.11.10a,b	<i>Acacia celsa</i> open-forest to closed-forest on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.18b,d	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> and/or <i>C. tessellaris</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open-forest to woodland (or vine forest with these species as emergents) on coastal metamorphic headlands and foothills	Of concern
7.11.24a,b,c,d	Closed vineland of wind-disturbed vine forest of metamorphic slopes, often steep and exposed	Of concern
7.11.25a	Simple-complex mesophyll to notophyll vine forest on amphibolites of the very wet lowlands and foothills	Of concern

Table 2: Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
Plants				
<i>Callerya pilipes</i>	northern wisteria	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Dendrobium nindii</i>	blue orchid	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Huperzia phlegmaria</i>	coarse tassel fern	Near threatened	-	High
<i>Linospadix microcaryus</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Myrmecodia beccarii</i>	ant plant	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	High
<i>Piper mestonii</i>	long pepper	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Taeniophyllum muelleri</i>	-	Least concern	Vulnerable	Not assessed
Animals				
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	grey goshawk	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Aerodramus terraereginae</i>	Australian swiftlet	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i>	southern cassowary (southern population)	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	estuarine crocodile	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma macleayana</i>	Macleay's fig-parrot	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	black-necked stork	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Esacus magnirostris</i>	beach stone-curlew	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Eulamprus tigrinus</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Hypochrysops apollo apollo</i>	Apollo jewel (Wet Tropics subspecies)	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Litoria rheocola</i>	common mistfrog	Endangered	Endangered	Low
<i>Litoria serrata</i>	tapping green eyed frog	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	cotton pygmy-goose	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>	spectacled flying-fox	Least concern	Vulnerable	High

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Anous stolidus</i>	common noddy	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	eastern great egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	sharp-tailed sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	-	✓	-
<i>Egretta sacra</i>	eastern reef egret	-	✓	-	-
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's snipe	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle	-	-	✓	-
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓	-	-	-
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	whimbrel	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Pandion cristatus</i>	eastern osprey	✓	-	-	-
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	glossy ibis	✓	✓	-	-
<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific golden plover	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	common tern	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	grey-tailed tattler	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	terek sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓

Bonn: Bonn Convention

CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement