

Ban Ban National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	1,958.6ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	North Burnett Regional Gympie Regional
State electorate:	Callide

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>

Plans and agreements

✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	National recovery plan for the black breasted button quail

Vision

Bridging the shires of North Burnett Regional Council and Gympie Regional Council, Ban Ban National Park will be managed to retain its conservation values, while still accommodating a lease and grazing practices on the protected area. The park will be managed to retain the natural values through fire, cultural, recreation, pest plant and pest animal management. Management of the park will consider the broader relationship of the protected area with surrounding grazing and agricultural properties.

Conservation purpose

Ban Ban National Park was gazetted in March 2006. It was previously Ban Ban Forest Reserve transferred across from State Forest as part of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement in 2003.

Ban Ban National Park is recognised as having very high State and regional biodiversity significance for the relative ecosystem size. Sustaining populations of native species in proportionately small areas of habitat can be achieved through maintaining corridors as links between larger patches, providing a refuge for native plants and animals from cropping, grazing or fire.

Ban Ban National Park is part of a much larger terrestrial corridor which connects major remnant vegetation tracts and incorporates altitudinal and climatic gradients. The biodiversity values of the area are supported by this high level of connectivity. Larger contiguous areas are less susceptible to ecological edge effects and more likely to sustain viable populations of native plants and animals than smaller tracts.

The conservation purpose for Ban Ban National Park is to maintain the high ecological and biodiversity values of its ecosystems.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

The park is located in the hinterland north-west of Gympie, a scenic rural area with forested hills and mountain ranges. The area contains extensive ironbark woodlands, mixed eucalypt woodlands, Araucarian notophyll and microphyll vine forests.

Located east of the Burnett Highway, access into Ban Ban National Park is via Boobyjan Road or from the west

along Stockhaven Road passing through private property. Authority from land owners needs to be obtained and a statutory declaration is required stating the vehicle you are in is weed free.

A grazing authority is in operation over areas of the national park until 2028. The principal land use on adjacent properties is cattle grazing or agricultural based production, with lucerne and other stockfeed crops being produced on the black soil creek flats.

Regional ecosystems

The park conserves six regional ecosystems, including three regional ecosystems 12.12.12, 12.12.18 and 12.12.8 which cover 65% of its area and have an of concern biodiversity status. The dominant regional ecosystem is 12.12.18 (low microphyll vine forest + *Araucaria cunninghamii* and semi evergreen vine thicket). This is associated with a subdominant regional ecosystem 12.12.8 *Eucalyptus melanophloia* woodland on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks and covers around 30% of the park.

Outside of the park these regional ecosystems have been cleared for pasture and cropping especially in more level areas. Remnants require intensive management because of pest plant invasion and fire damage to margins. Reducing stresses on these natural communities will make them more resilient. The remnant habitat between protected areas is an important factor in building this resilience.

Native plants and animals

The black-breasted button quail *Turnix melanogaster* which is listed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* is conserved in the 12.12.18 vine forest communities. There is a National recovery plan for this species which aims to improve its current threatened status under State and Commonwealth legislation through protection and management of its habitat. This recovery plan recognises loss of habitat due to inappropriate fire regimes and clearing, predation by feral animals, habitat degradation from domestic stock and habitat fragmentation due to clearing and forest harvesting.

Fire scar imagery indicates that the low microphyll vine and semi ever green vine thickets are under constant pressure from both controlled and wildfire activities. These fires, carried from grazing areas in the surrounding open Eucalyptus woodlands, are usually either hotter fires lit on the expectation of spring rains or wildfires coming from lightning in the drier months of the year. These fire events can impact on the habitat and populations of the black breasted button quail.

There are no comprehensive plant and animal surveys for the national park and this is an important priority for future park management.

Aboriginal culture

The extent of occupation and the parks cultural significance to Traditional Owners remains largely unknown to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). The Sunshine Fraser Coast area has high importance to Aboriginal people and there are many sites of cultural importance across the region. The land has a number of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage places and values however limited data is available on specific sites.

Opportunities exist to improve relationships with local Traditional Owner groups and involve them in park management.

Shared-history culture

Ban Ban National Park has little recorded shared-history. There is one gazetted road which runs off Haas Road into the national park which was used for timber extraction when active forestry production was taking place.

In the past, mining for molybdenum and copper off the old stock route of Sefton Road and Haas Road has been recorded, next to the national park. The Military attempted to utilise the stock route as a short cut for transport heading south to north during the 1940s but were unsuccessful due to the rugged terrain which forced them to abandon their efforts and go through freehold land instead (park neighbour, pers comm. Nov 2011).

Mine sites have been identified in the national park. There are liabilities associated with unmarked mine shafts including some that are covered only by old sheets of rusted galvanised iron.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Ban Ban National Park is surrounded by freehold land with two access points that are not maintained. One is a gazetted stock route bordering the south-east corner of the national park. This results in limited access for any

visitor opportunities. Recreational off-road trail bike riding is occurring.

Partnerships

Cooperative partnerships with neighbours and rural fire authorities regarding shared issues such as fire, pest and infrastructure management have been limited in and surrounding Ban Ban National Park.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Remnant areas in this park potentially require intensive management because of the threat of pest plant invasion, predation and fire damage on eucalypt forest and vine forest margins as well as impacts on black breasted button quail habitats and populations.

Ban Ban National Park has no formal records of pest animals but it is expected to have similar species to the surrounding areas which include cane toad *Rhinella marina*, feral dog *Canis lupus familiaris*, feral cat *Felis catus* and rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. Visual sightings of deer and pigs *Sus scrofa* have also been reported by neighbours. There have been instances of pig hunting with dogs and possible deer hunting on the park. There is also the issue of cattle *Bos* spp. and horses *Equus caballus* outside of designated Stock Grazing Authority area.

Pest plants recorded for Ban Ban National Park include; velvety tree pear *Opuntia tomentosa*, lantana *Lantana camara*, *Malvastrum americanum* var. *americanum* and cat's claw creeper *Macfadyena unguis-cati*.

Ban Ban National Park does not currently have a Level 2 pest management strategy in place.

Fire management

Ban Ban National Park has very little recorded fire history. In the past neighbouring freehold land owners and lessees have managed their prescribed burning practices without the involvement or notification to QPWS. Impacts can be observed from the different fire regimes used, which have affected the national park.

Looking at fire scar history, adjacent freehold land managers appear to have used the two vine scrub ecosystems as natural fire management lines. At the present time the impact of fire on the fringes of these regional ecosystems is unknown.

Ban Ban National Park does not currently have a Level 2 fire management strategy in place. QPWS have no managed fire breaks around Ban Ban National Park.

The predominant regional ecosystem in the southern end of the national park is the 12.12.8 grassy woodland which is of concern and has been subject to the repeated fire activity represented on the satellite fire scar imagery.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Regional ecosystems</p> <p>Ecosystem health and species diversity are identified and maintained.</p>	<p>A1. Conduct comprehensive plant and animal surveys to establish baseline data for future management directions as a matter of priority.</p> <p>A2. Assess and record fire impact on vine forest regional ecosystems.</p>
<p>Aboriginal culture</p> <p>Traditional Owners have meaningful involvement with park management planning and direction.</p>	<p>A3. Encourage Traditional Owners to identify values, sites, artefacts and places of cultural heritage significance so that management strategies and decisions relating to fire regimes, access and track maintenance minimise potential threats to these values.</p>

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>National park and lease boundaries are determined.</p> <p>Public awareness of national park values is improved.</p>	<p>A4. Conduct mapping of bush tracks, mine sites and shafts.</p> <p>A5. Install appropriate safety signs.</p> <p>A6. Survey boundaries of national park and leases. Install QPWS signs on access points and to identify boundaries.</p> <p>A7. Develop appropriate signs and information on park values.</p>
<p>Pest management</p> <p>Pest management improves the integrity of native communities and species.</p>	<p>A8. Develop and implement a Level 2 pest management strategy.</p> <p>A9. Liaise with neighbours to determine previous pest management practices and develop future strategies.</p>
<p>Fire management</p> <p>Manage fire to protect habitat.</p>	<p>A10. Develop and implement a Level 2 fire management strategy.</p> <p>A11. Improve communication and liaison with neighbours in relation to fire practices, e.g. mapping of fires and recording fire history.</p> <p>A12. Minimise the risk of fire in the vine forest to protect button quail habitat.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.12.8	<i>Eucalyptus melanophloia</i> woodland on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks	Of concern
12.12.12	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>E. crebra</i> , <i>E. siderophloia</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest on granite	Of concern
12.12.18	Semi-evergreen vine thicket on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks	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
<i>Turnix melanogaster</i>	black-breasted button quail	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-

Bonn: Bonn Convention

CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement