

# Cania Gorge National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	3,000ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland Bioregion
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	North Burnett Regional Council
State electorate:	Callide

## 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 Fire Management Strategy
✓	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy

## Vision

Cania Gorge National Park will be managed to conserve the quality and integrity of its natural values, including the open forest, woodlands and vine thicket ecosystems, diverse plant communities and wildlife, and cultural heritage. Day-use facilities will be maintained to enable visitors to enjoy these values in safety.

## Conservation purpose

Cania Gorge National Park—3,000ha in area—lies within the Brigalow Belt Bioregion and is located approximately 520km north-west of Brisbane and 26km north of Monto, the nearest town. It protects eucalypt forests and woodlands, deep moist gullies and protected escarpments which support dry rainforest and other moisture-adapted plant communities. The park conserves landscapes of sandstone ridges, gorges and riverine environments.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

The park is located in the Burnett River catchment and the topography of the park and local area is dominated by sandstone escarpments which sets its overall character. The dissected sandstone beds that comprise most of the park landscape are of Jurassic origin (160–190 million years ago) and represent an eastern outcropping of the sandstone that extends westwards through Isla and Carnarvon gorges. The layered structure of the sandstone allows retention of rainwater which then moves along bedding planes and forms permanent seepages that outcrop against the eroded edges of the sandstone mass. These seepages support relict plant communities of high conservation value.

Cania Gorge National Park possesses significant scenic and aesthetic values in the context of the local area, providing a backdrop to Lake Cania and the adjacent caravan parks and pastoral lands.

Catchment areas for the sandstone aquifer are reasonably intact and vegetated at present. Three Moon Creek runs through the park for a distance of 11km and semi-permanent waterholes in the creek may become stagnant when water releases from the dam cease during non-irrigation periods. This can have detrimental impacts on fish populations and also facilitates the build-up of blue green algae. Stock graze on the lower section of the park and will continue to do so until 2014 as part a negotiated agreement with the former owner who donated it for inclusion in the park.

Surrounding land uses include grazing and irrigated cropping, forestry, private tourist facilities and a public water storage facility.

## Regional ecosystems

The park supports seven regional ecosystems, most of which are dominated by eucalypt species occurring in woodland or open forest communities while deep moist gullies and protected escarpments support dry rainforest, semi-evergreen vine thicket and other moisture-adapted plant communities. Regional ecosystems of concern are listed in Table 1. Taller forest communities occur in the southern sections of the park, dominated by lemon-scented gums *Corymbia citriodora*, while lower more open woodlands dominated by narrow-leafed ironbark *Eucalyptus crebra* occur to the north.

## Native plants and animals

More than 470 species of plants and animals have been recorded on the park. Threatened plant species include the endangered small tree *Cossinia Australiana*, which is found in the vine-thicket communities, and the vulnerable *Parsonsia kroombitensis*. The vulnerable tusked frog *Adelotus brevis* has been recorded on the park and the near threatened golden-tailed gecko *Strophurus taenicauda* is present. The vulnerable koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* frequents the park. The lungfish *Neoceratodus forsteri* has been recorded in Three Moon Creek and is listed as vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Historically, fish and platypus have been found in Three Moon Creek and, although the populations of both suffered due to long periods of drought, they should recover.

The vulnerable species squatter pigeon *Geophaps scripta scripta* has been sighted on park. Macropods such as rufous bettong *Aepyprymnus rufescens* and long-nosed potoroo *Potorous tridactylus tridactylus* have been recorded in the national park. They have a preference for thick undercover, where they can hide from predators. These species are now very restricted in range due to clearing and grazing. Monitoring is required to identify predator population size and quantify interactions in order to manage impacts.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* threaten native populations by causing siltation of aquatic habitats and through opportunistic predation. There has been long term survey and monitoring of feral pig numbers over a limited area of representative sites.

## Aboriginal culture

Artefacts, rock art and places of cultural significance are found in areas within and adjacent to the park. Occupation sites in the adjacent hills have been dated to 18,500 years ago, and it is possible that similar sites may occur in the park. The native title claim QC01/029 Port Curtis Coral Coast covers the area in which the park is located.

## Shared-history culture

Gold mining was first established in the area in 1861 with the development of the Cania goldfields on the banks of Three Moon Creek, and there are a total of 17 old mines within the park. The abandoned and derelict Shamrock Mine is a relatively short walk from the car park but little remains at the site which is marked by shallow shafts and workings. Mine workings present safety issues for park visitors, and sites that pose a safety risk are currently fenced.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

There are a number of walks available in the park with destinations and views including spectacular sandstone cliffs, small caves, dry rainforest and patches of mosses, ferns and elkhorns where water has percolated down through the sandstone. Cania Gorge National Park is promoted locally as a tourist destination together with the adjacent Lake Cania. The area supports a number of commercial enterprises including two caravan parks and the park contributes to the broader economy by encouraging longer tourist stopovers in the local area.

Around 21km of maintained walking tracks enable visitors to navigate through the park and enjoy nature-based recreational opportunities such as bushwalking and photography. The park provides for day-use visitor activities only, and the central visitor site is the car park and picnic area adjacent to Cania Road that runs through the park to Lake Cania. The picnic area has barbecues, shelter sheds, toilets and an interpretive display. The park is on the itinerary of several commercial tour group operators. Park activities are promoted in conjunction with water sports and fishing at Lake Cania and approximately 100,000 people visit each year.

## Education and science

Infrastructure at the main day-use area and walking tracks facilitate the use of the park by school groups. The University of Queensland has conducted archaeological investigations in areas adjacent to and within the park.

## Partnerships

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) staff members work cooperatively with neighbours to manage fire, pests, fence maintenance and other issues of mutual concern. The park is an important contributor to the local economy and staff members liaise with North Burnett Regional Council and local tourism representatives on a range of shared issues.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

Cats claw creeper *Macfadyena unguis-cati*, lantana *Lantana camara* and mother of millions *Bryophyllum* spp. occur in sections of the park and require ongoing monitoring and control to limit their spread. Pest animals recorded in the park include pigs, cats *Felis catus*, foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, hares *Lepus europaeus*, rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and wild dogs *Canis lupus familiaris*. Foxes pose a threat to Herbert's rock-wallaby *Petrogale herbert* which lives on the park. It is considered that cattle *Bos* spp. and horse *Equus caballus* grazing in shallow backwaters along creek systems may severely disrupt lungfish spawning. A Level 2 pest management strategy is in place.

### Fire management

The eucalypt woodlands and open forests would normally be burnt to maintain a mosaic of grassy and shrubby understoreys with less than 10–30 per cent of the extent burnt in any one year. Care should be taken to maintain ground litter and fallen timber habitats by burning only when there is sufficient soil moisture. The fire sensitivity of the vine thicket must be taken into account when using fire as a management tool. Issues with lantana and other pest plants may result from fire and other disturbance. The park has a Level 2 Fire Management Strategy.

### Other management issues

Vandalism and the painting of graffiti on sandstone rock faces detract from the visitor experience in some areas.

## Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>Catchment areas for the sandstone aquifer remain reasonably intact and vegetated.</p> <p>Water flow through Three Moon Creek is maintained to prevent blue green algae build up.</p>	<p>A1. Maintain effective inter-agency liaison with organisations managing land and hydrological processes associated with the Burnett River catchment to manage algae issues.</p>
<p><b>Native plants and animals</b></p> <p>Platypus numbers on the park are increased with the ultimate goal of restoring them to pre-drought levels.</p> <p>The population of Herbert's rock wallaby is maintained.</p> <p>Lungfish populations will be maintained through appropriate habitat management practices.</p>	<p>A2. Survey the platypus population of the park.</p> <p>A3. Identify and implement habitat regeneration and protection measures to support and sustain increased platypus population levels.</p> <p>A4. Monitor Herbert's rock wallaby population for evidence of predation by foxes and dogs, and conduct surveys of all significant plant and animal species.</p> <p>A5. Consult with Burnett River hydrological management authorities regarding appropriate riverine management for lungfish, for the purpose of developing a coordinated plan for identifying and regulating the most suitable rate for environmental flows to protect the habitat for lungfish within the park.</p>
<p><b>Pest management</b></p> <p>Cat's claw creeper, lantana and mother-of-millions are controlled.</p>	<p>A6. Use ecologically sensitive control measures to manage these species, and ensure creek lines, riparian verges, sites of high conservation value and off-park areas are not adversely affected.</p>
<p><b>Cultural heritage</b></p> <p>Places and items of cultural heritage value are identified, protected and presented to the public if appropriate.</p>	<p>A7. Identify and record the cultural heritage values of the park, and present them to the public by improving interpretive displays and access to cultural heritage sites where this is achievable without risk to their integrity or existence.</p>
<p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b></p> <p>Visitor infrastructure caters for current and future visitor needs.</p>	<p>A8. Investigate the opportunity to establish a long walk from Fern Tree pool to Hurdle Gully Lookout in Coomingleh State Forest using existing roads (about 22km long).</p>

## Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
11.3.4	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> woodland to open-forest.	Of concern
11.3.25	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> or <i>E. tereticornis</i> open-forest to woodland.	Of concern
11.10.8	Semi-evergreen vine thicket and microphyll rainforest. Occurs on medium to coarse-grained sediments that may be subject to local enrichment from adjacent rocks such as basalt as well as seepage.	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
<b>Plants</b>				
<i>Parsonsia kroombitensis</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Ricinocarpos canianus</i>	-	Endangered	-	-
<i>Cossinia australiana</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered	Medium
<b>Animals</b>				
<i>Adelotus brevis</i>	tusked frog	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Geophaps scripta scripta</i>	squatter pigeon (southern species)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Neoceratodus forsteri</i>	Australian lungfish	-	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Potorous tridactylus tridactylus</i>	long-nosed potoroo	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Strophurus taenicauda</i>	golden tailed gecko	Near threatened	-	Medium

\* Conservation significant

**Table 3: Species listed in international agreements**

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	Great egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<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	✓	-	-	-

BONN – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement