

Thrushton National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	25,650ha
Bioregion:	Mulga Lands
QPWS region:	South West
Local government estate/area:	Maranoa Regional
State electorate:	Warrego

Legislative framework

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

Plans and agreements

✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
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Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 fire management strategy
✓	Level 2 pest management strategy



Thrushton National Park. Photo: NPRSR.

Vision

Thrushton National Park will continue to conserve the quality and integrity of the park's natural values, including species of conservation significance and brigalow communities of the Mulga Lands bioregion.

Conservation purpose

Thrushton National Park was gazetted in 1990 to conserve a diverse range of vegetation communities and fauna associations representative of the central eastern part of the Mulga Lands bioregion.

Thrushton National Park is included in the Thrushton/Homeboin area listing on the Register of the National Estate for its significant plant communities, which are in excellent condition and are representative of vegetation types typical of the central-eastern part of the mulga region in Queensland.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Thrushton National Park is situated in the catchment of Neabul Creek. The park is a large vegetation remnant in an area of extensive clearing. The park is bounded on all sides by grazing properties which predominantly run sheep with some cattle. Approximately 65-75% of properties adjoining the park have been previously cleared for grazing, with many of these areas now regenerating.

Regional ecosystems

Nine regional ecosystems are conserved on the park. Three have a biodiversity status of endangered, four are of concern and two are not of concern (Table 1).

The Thrushton National Park landscape is comprised of a mosaic of vegetation communities including spinifex/heath on sandplains, belah *Casuarina cristata* on clay plains with gilgais, poplar box *Eucalyptus populneal* mulga *Acacia* spp./forest gum on red earth plains, mulga on low ridges, river red gum *E. camaldulensis* fringing Neabul Creek and coolabah on alluvial floodplains.

Cattle heavily grazed the coolabah woodland in the past and little timber regeneration has been observed.

The spinifex/heath communities found on the park are an uncommon regional ecosystem which is restricted to eastern parts of the bioregion and extensively invaded by buffel grass elsewhere. A high diversity of plants and reptiles occur in the angophora/spinifex communities. Some reptiles are specific to this habitat and require different stages of spinifex growth—mosaic burning is preferred.

Native plants and animals

Four hundred and twenty two species have been recorded on the park. Two of these are vulnerable and one is near threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Table 2).

Four species—belah, Baradine red gum *Eucalyptus chloroclada*, delicate mouse *Pseudomys delicatulus* and golden whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*—are nearing their south-western range limit. The eastern yellow robin *Eopsaltria australis*, painted button-quail *Turnix varius* and yellow-footed antechinus *Antechinus flavipes* are uncommon in the bioregion and are also near their south-western range limit.

Easterly populations of the skinks *Ctenotus brachyonyx* and *Ctenotus schomburgkii* occur on the park. A disjunct population of the skink *Carlia munda* is found on the park.

Gum-barked coolabah *Eucalyptus intertexta* occurs at Thrushton National Park and is poorly represented in other protected areas.

Aboriginal culture

The protected area landscape is of intrinsic value to Traditional Owners. A small number of cultural places and artefacts are found in the park in varying densities. No active management of these sites is occurring.

A native title claim is currently active—Federal Court No: QUD6027/01, Tribunal No: QC01/028 for the Gunggari #2 people.

Shared-history culture

The Thrushton house was originally part of the original Dunkeld Inn and was moved to 'Thrushton' on carts drawn by 40 horses in 1921. It is deteriorating and has been fenced due to associated safety risks. Fire protection measures have been put in place.

An old tank stand, cement slab and house stumps still remain at the old homestead site. The site is not threatened by wildfire, and has been left to deteriorate naturally. The floorboards in the shearing shed have been replaced and the building is in a reasonable condition. Internal walls of the shearer's quarters have suffered water and termite damage and more recently vandalism. There is no current evidence of termites in the shearer's quarters.

The machinery shed at Thrushton was approximately 15–20 years old when relocated to Lonesome National Park. Old rubbish dumps on the park are currently unfenced and will be assessed for cultural value, management action or need for removal.

The removal of buffel grass from around the buildings and sheep yards has reduced the risk from wildfire.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Thrushton is roughly 40 kilometres (km) north-east of Bollon and accessible only in dry weather. A four wheel-drive vehicle is recommended. Thrushton National Park has no visitor facilities, however, bush camping is permitted. Visitors can enjoy nature-based activities including walking, bird watching and nature appreciation. There are no formal walking tracks and the vegetation is thick and the terrain featureless. People wishing to visit the park must be self-reliant.

Partnerships

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is undertaking cooperative dog and fox baiting with local syndicates. While no bores are located on the park, the extensive bore drains have been closed and water piped to a few strategic points as part of the Australian Government's Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative program. This program aims to accelerate work on the repair of uncontrolled artesian bores and the replacement of open earthen bores drains, with piped water reticulation systems.

Fencing is at a stock proof standard and straying stock are an irregular occurrence.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Thrushton National Park has a current Level 2 pest management strategy.

Small infestations of buffel grass *Cenchrus ciliaris*, Bathurst burr *Xanthium spinosum*, crownbeard *Verbesina encelioides*, couch grass *Cynodon dactylon*, noogoora burr *Xanthium occidentale*, common pest pear *Opuntia stricta*, velvety tree pear *Opuntia tomentosa*, spiny emex *Emex* sp. and saffron thistle *Carthamus lanatus* occur on the park. Buffel grass control has effectively reduced the fire risk to the old Thrushton house. Areas of common pest pear have been treated. No other pest plant control measures have been put in place.

The major pest animal species found on the reserve include foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, cats *Felis catus*, feral pigs, goats *Capra hircus*, mosquito fish *Gambusia holbrooki* and the house mouse *Mus musculus*.

Baiting programs have been carried out for control of dogs and pigs, and opportunistic shooting has also been undertaken. Observational monitoring has noted reduced track sightings immediately following baiting.

The Rutherglen Road heads east-west adjoining the southern boundary of the northern block and the northern boundary of the southern block. The boundary fences are on the opposite side of the road to the two blocks, allowing stock to enter the park if gates to neighbouring properties are left open.

A feral goat mustering program has been undertaken and has significantly reduced their numbers.

Fire management

Thrushton National Park has a current Level 2 fire management strategy.

The fire requirement of plant communities and associated fauna is largely unknown and the risk of wildfire is increasing.

Some of the spinifex/heath communities have not been burnt for over 30 years, and are being colonised by cypress pine *Callitris* sp. This has resulted in vegetation thickening and a decrease in diversity of the lower vegetation layers. Prescribed burns are planned for these areas and will take place as conditions allow.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Regional ecosystems</p> <p>The diversity and distribution of natural plant and animal communities typical of the Mulga Lands bioregion are conserved.</p>	<p>A1. Establish or review key objectives for regional ecosystems of conservation significance on the park, and support programs that achieve these objectives. Particular focus will be on programs for the health and distribution of spinifex communities to support reptiles and the regeneration of coolabah woodlands.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>Knowledge of plant and animal species distribution and habitat requirements are enhanced and are used as a basis for future management directions.</p>	<p>A2. Establish and review key objectives for species of conservation significance on the park, and support programs that achieve these objectives. Particular focus will be on programs for the yakka skink, square-tailed kite and Major Mitchell's cockatoo.</p>
<p>Aboriginal culture</p> <p>Cultural heritage values are identified and protected.</p> <p>Awareness of the importance of Aboriginal culture is developed where appropriate.</p>	<p>A3. Encourage surveys of the park for cultural heritage sites and maintain a secure register with the endorsement of Traditional Owners.</p> <p>A4. Manage heritage places to conserve these areas with Traditional Owner involvement.</p> <p>A5. Involve Traditional Owners, where appropriate, in the provision of educational material concerning cultural heritage sites.</p>
<p>Shared-history culture</p> <p>Shared-history cultural heritage places are identified through survey and protected.</p> <p>Education material for the public is produced sharing the history of the park.</p> <p>History stories of the park are recorded.</p>	<p>A6. Survey and assess the park for heritage places and record this onto QPWS databases.</p> <p>A7. Develop and implement conservation and presentation plans for shared-history sites where appropriate. Otherwise the non-promotion of sites will also aid in their protection. The plans will particularly focus on overgrowth of buffel grass, increasing the risk of fire on the sheep yards and Thrushton house.</p> <p>A8. Record stories from people that have had an association with the park, when opportunity arises.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>Nature-based recreation opportunities are provided for.</p> <p>Visitor information improves knowledge of the park's natural and cultural resources.</p>	<p>A9. Maintain access tracks for four-wheel drive vehicles only.</p> <p>A10. Increase visitor awareness of the park's geological, biological and cultural heritage processes and specific park management practices.</p>
<p>Education and science</p> <p>Research contributes to the knowledge base for improved management and is sustainable.</p>	<p>A11. Encourage research that contributes to improved management outcomes.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Bore water pipelines are maintained in cooperation with neighbours.</p>	<p>A12. Provide continued maintenance of bore water pipelines and tanks on the park as part of the cooperative water supply program with neighbouring properties.</p>
<p>Pest management</p> <p>An effective pest control program is developed and reduces impacts to manageable levels.</p>	<p>A13. Continue to review and implement the pest management strategy for the management area with adjoining landholders and other interested parties. Include priority actions to map and monitor buffel grass infestation, minimise disturbance to impacted areas and control any new outbreaks outside these areas.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
6.3.3	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> +/- <i>E. coolabah</i> +/- <i>E. populnea</i> , <i>Acacia stenophylla</i> woodland on alluvium	Of concern
6.3.18	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> +/- <i>Eremophila mitchellii</i> +/- <i>Acacia aneura</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus melanophloia</i> woodland on flat alluvial plains	Of concern
6.4.2	<i>Casuarina cristata</i> +/- <i>Acacia harpophylla</i> open-forest on clay plains	Endangered
6.4.3	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> , <i>Casuarina cristata</i> or <i>Acacia harpophylla</i> +/- <i>Geijera parviflora</i> woodland on clay plains	Endangered
6.5.1	<i>Acacia aneura</i> , <i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> , <i>E. melanophloia</i> open-forest on undulating lowlands	Of concern
6.5.3	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> , <i>Acacia aneura</i> +/- <i>Eremophila mitchellii</i> woodland within <i>A. aneura</i> communities	Of concern
6.5.5	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> +/- <i>E. intertexta</i> +/- <i>Acacia aneura</i> +/- <i>Callitris glaucophylla</i> woodland on Quaternary sediments	Endangered

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
Animals				
<i>Egernia rugosa</i>	yakka skink	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>	Major Mitchell's cockatoo	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	square-tailed kite	Near threatened	-	Low

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