

# Hasties Swamp National Park Management Statement 2013

|                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Park size:                    | 57ha                        |
| Bioregion:                    | Wet Tropics                 |
| QPWS region:                  | Northern                    |
| Local government estate/area: | Tablelands Regional Council |
| State electorate:             | Dalrymple                   |



Hasties Swamp National Park. Photo: NPRSR.

## Legislative framework

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

## Plans and agreements

|   |  |
|---|--|
| ✓ | China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement             |
| ✓ | Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement             |
| ✓ | Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |
| ✓ | Water Licence 59954K                                 |

## Thematic strategies

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| ✓ | Level Two Fire Strategy |
| ✓ | Level Two Pest Strategy |

## Vision

Hasties Swamp National Park is recognised regionally and internationally as a popular wetland bird watching site. The integrity of the park's wetlands and other endangered ecosystems are maintained.

## Conservation purpose

Hasties Swamp was gazetted as a national park in 1980 to protect its wetland ecosystems and the rich birdlife it supports. It was subsequently extended in size in 1986.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

Hasties Swamp lies in a depression between the Great Dividing Range to the west, the Herberton Range to the south and the western margin of the Atherton Tablelands volcanic area to the east. It is part of the Scrubby Creek system in the Barron River catchment. The swamp's location, on the western edge of the basalt soils, indicates it may have formed when lava flows impeded the flow of Scrubby Creek.

Aquatic environments of open water, reeds, muddy edges and sedge land vary with the cycle of wet and dry seasons. Freshwater marshes are present throughout the year but shrink to remnant waterholes during dry times. Despite this seasonal fluctuation, Hasties Swamp provides a wetland refuge all year round, due to the licensed 40cm weir (reference 59954K) at the southern end of the swamp. The open eucalypt forest surrounding the swamp provides a contrast to the humid tropical rainforests of nearby parks.

The swamp's catchment extends beyond the protected area boundary and is under a variety of land uses including grazing, agriculture, other protected areas, rural residential development and a public refuse tip.

The north-eastern edge of the main lagoon was partially cleared in conjunction with adjoining agricultural land around the 1920s.

### Regional ecosystems

Hasties Swamp is located on the transition zone between rainforest, which once covered land to the east of the park, and dry sclerophyll woodland which persists on the lower slopes of the Great Dividing and Herberton ranges, immediately to the west and south of the park.

Of the regional ecosystems occurring in the park, two are endangered and one is considered of concern (Table 1).

### Native plants and animals

Hasties Swamp National Park protects animal and plant species of conservation significance listed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Table 2). Ten near threatened and two vulnerable animal species are listed for the park. Two near threatened plant species have also been recorded from the park. Thirty-two bird species recorded from the park are listed under international agreements (Table 3).

Of the 226 native species recorded in the park, the majority are birds (202) followed by amphibians (10), plants (seven) and reptiles (two). Most of the sightings listed have been contributed by Birds Australia North Queensland (BANQ). Hasties Swamp is home to sarus crane *Grus antigone* and brolga *Grus rubicunda* during the months of October and November. At times, thousands of plumed whistling-duck *Dendrocygna eytoni* can be viewed from the bird hide on the park.

There is a paucity of plant records for the park, but it is likely that Hasties Swamp National Park protects plant species of conservation significance.

### Aboriginal culture

No native title claims currently exists over the park, however the area continues to have significant cultural value to Traditional Owners and remains an important part of their story. Tableland Yidinji people have expressed an ongoing interest in management activities on the park and have been consulted in relation to development of infrastructure on the park.

### Tourism and visitor opportunities

Hasties Swamp National Park is easily accessed by conventional vehicles directly from the Atherton–Herberton Road. Wildlife viewing with a very heavy emphasis on birdwatching is the main visitor opportunity. The swamp is internationally recognised for its high diversity of birds particularly waterbirds and some migratory waders.

The two-storey bird hide on the eastern side of the lake was constructed in 2001 with a grant obtained by the former Atherton Shire Council from the Queensland Heritage Trails program with the support of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and BANQ. QPWS has ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the bird hide and toilet structures. However, the car park is on adjacent road reserve managed by the Tablelands Regional Council.

Commercial tour operators visit Hasties Swamp National Park and undertake nature-based day-use activities. No camping facilities are provided on the park.

## Education and science

The park provides opportunities to examine the dynamics and species composition of a remnant high altitude tropical wetland, and to consider how the heavily modified surrounding land uses influence its values. The proximity of the park to Atherton, and its ease of access enhance its value as an educational location. Opportunity also exists for local schools and volunteers to monitor the condition of various habitats and wildlife in the park.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) utilise the park to monitor for avian diseases.

## Partnerships

Partnerships with the local authority, BANQ and QPWS resulted in the construction of the bird hide in 2001. Good working relationships continue between these entities.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

High biomass introduced pasture grasses such as para grass *Urochloa mutica* and Guinea grass *Megathyrsus maximus* occur within the park. They threaten ecosystem values by displacing native species and by increasing the intensity and frequency of fires. Lantana *Lantana camara*, as well as other introduced shrubs and vines which occur within the park, threaten natural values.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa*, wild dogs *Canis familiaris* and feral cats *Felis catus*, are known to occur in the park.

The area was previously managed as a camping and water reserve for travelling stock.

### Fire management

Fire is managed on Hasties Swamp National Park to minimise risks to life and property on the reserve and neighbouring residential properties, in order to maintain the extent and species composition of ecological communities and to assist with lantana control.

## References

Birds Australia North Queensland (BANQ) 2009 <http://birdsaustralianq.org/index.htm>

## Management directions

| Desired outcomes   | Actions and guidelines  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>The importance of the wetland refuge is recognised and buffered from seasonal fluctuations.</p>   | <p>A1. Monitor the integrity of weir structure to enable year round maintenance of the wetland.</p>   |
| <p><b>Native plants and animals</b></p> <p>The native plants and animals are preserved through effective management of the landscape</p> <p>Information on the occurrence and distribution of plant and animal communities continues to be sufficient for management purposes.</p> | <p>A2. Implement pest and fire management programs to retain ecological integrity of endangered ecosystems.</p> <p>A3. Support and encourage relevant plant studies and population monitoring of threatened species, and incorporate findings into management practices.</p> <p>A4. Monitor changes in vegetation structure in regards to fire and pest plant management; and adapt management based on the findings.</p> |
| <p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b></p> <p>Safe and sustainable visitor opportunities are provided and maintained.</p>   | <p>A5. Plant and maintain a visual barrier along the pathway between the car park and bird hide to mitigate disturbance to birds near the hide.</p>   |

## Tables – Conservation values management

**Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems**

| Regional ecosystem number | Description  | Biodiversity status |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| 7.3.39c                   | Freshwater Swamp Palustrine wetland (e.g. vegetated swamp). Ephemeral freshwater swamp. Drainage depressions in upland situations.   | Endangered          |
| 7.3.43a                   | <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open forest to woodland, on uplands on well drained alluvium. Contains palustrine wetland (e.g. in swales). <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open forest, tall open forest and woodland including communities ranging from those dominated by <i>E. tereticornis</i> to mixtures of that species with <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>E. drepanophylla</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> and <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> . Uplands on alluvium. | Endangered          |
| 7.3.45b                   | <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> woodland to open forest. May include small areas of <i>Acacia leptostachya</i> shrubland. Alluvial plains.  | 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>Haplostichanthus submontanus</i> subsp. <i>sessiliflorus</i> | -                        | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Helicia lamingtoniana</i>                                    | -                        | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <b>Animals</b>  |                          |                                     |  |                      |
| <i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>                                | grey goshawk             | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Aerodramus terraereginae</i>                                 | Australian swiftlet      | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma macleayana</i>                       | Macleay's fig-parrot     | Vulnerable                          | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Dendrolagus lumholtzi</i>                                    | Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>                               | black-necked stork       | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Falco hypoleucos</i>   | grey falcon              | Near threatened                     | -  | Data deficient       |
| <i>Lewinia pectoralis</i>                                       | Lewin's rail             | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Lophoictinia isura</i>                                       | square-tailed kite       | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |

| Scientific name                 | Common name              | Nature Conservation Act 1992 status | Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status | Back on Track status |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i> | cotton pygmy-goose       | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Rostratula australis</i>     | Australian painted snipe | Vulnerable                          | Vulnerable   | Medium               |
| <i>Stictonetta naevosa</i>      | freckled duck            | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |
| <i>Tadorna radjah</i>           | radjah shelduck          | Near threatened                     | -  | Low                  |

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

| Scientific name               | Common name               | Bonn | CAMBA | JAMBA | ROKAMBA |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| <i>Acrocephalus australis</i> | Australian reed warbler   | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |
| <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>     | common sandpiper          | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Ardea ibis</i>             | cattle egret              | -    | ✓     | ✓     | -       |
| <i>Ardea modesta</i>          | eastern great egret       | -    | ✓     | ✓     | -       |
| <i>Calidris acuminata</i>     | sharp-tailed sandpiper    | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Calidris melanotos</i>     | pectoral sandpiper        | ✓    | -     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>    | red-necked stint          | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Cecropis daurica</i>       | red-rumped swallow        | -    | ✓     | -     | ✓       |
| <i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>  | cicadabird                | -    | -     | ✓     | -       |
| <i>Cuculus optatus</i>        | oriental cuckoo           | -    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>   | Latham's snipe            | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Grus antigone</i>          | sarus crane               | -    | ✓     | -     | -       |
| <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> | white-bellied sea-eagle   | -    | ✓     | -     | -       |
| <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>  | white-throated needletail | -    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Hirundo rustica</i>        | barn swallow              | -    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>     | Caspian tern              | -    | ✓     | ✓     | -       |
| <i>Limosa limosa</i>          | black-tailed godwit       | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Merops ornatus</i>         | rainbow bee-eater         | -    | -     | ✓     | -       |
| <i>Monarcha frater</i>        | black-winged monarch      | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |
| <i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>    | black-faced monarch       | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |

| Scientific name                  | Common name              | Bonn | CAMBA | JAMBA | ROKAMBA |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| <i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>        | satin flycatcher         | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |
| <i>Pandion cristatus</i>         | eastern osprey           | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |
| <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>      | glossy ibis              | ✓    | ✓     | -     | -       |
| <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>        | ruff                     | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>           | Pacific golden plover    | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Rhipodura rufifrons</i>       | rufous fantail           | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |
| <i>Rostratula australis</i>      | Australian painted snipe | -    | ✓     | -     | -       |
| <i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i> | spectacled monarch       | ✓    | -     | -     | -       |
| <i>Tringa glareola</i>           | wood sandpiper           | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Tringa nebularia</i>          | common greenshank        | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>        | marsh sandpiper          | ✓    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |
| <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