

Eubenangee Swamp National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	1,900ha
Bioregion:	Wet Tropics
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Cassowary Coast and Cairns Regional Councils
State electorate:	Mulgrave



Eubenangee Swamp National Park. Photo: EHP

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 (Estuarine Crocodile) Conservation Plan 2007 and Management Program 2007–2017</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	China—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Japan—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	National recovery plan for the spectacled flying fox <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>
✓	Republic of Korea—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Recovery plan for the southern cassowary <i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i>

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 fire strategy
✓	Level 2 pest strategy

Vision

Eubenangee Swamp National Park continues to protect the outstanding natural values of its coastal wetlands and forests, and the many species of conservation significance its wetlands support.

The park is promoted as an important site for bird watching, nature-based tourism and recreation, education and research within the region.

Conservation purpose

Eubenangee Swamp was gazetted in 1968 as an Environmental Park of about 1,500 hectares (ha) and upgraded to a National Park in 1977. Subsequent land acquisitions increased the park to 1,720ha in 1994 and 1,900ha in 2003.

The area conserves internationally significant coastal wetlands—probably the best example of its type in the Wet Tropics bioregion.

Eubenangee Swamp National Park is managed primarily to conserve the biological diversity and ecological integrity of threatened vegetation communities.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Eubenangee Swamp National Park is an exceptional example of a high rainfall wetland occurring on nutrient-rich basaltic alluvium. The park is situated on an old flood plain of the Russell River and falls within the very high rainfall zone between the Russell and Tully rivers.

A small rural residential development also adjoins the park. However, the park is primarily surrounded by low-lying agriculture and grazing land which relies on continued drainage into the swamp to remain viable.

Critical habitat corridors link the park to the nearby Russell River National Park, Ella Bay National Park and Woornooran National Park.

Regional ecosystems

Eubenangee Swamp is the last remaining example of vine forest, grassland, sedge and paperbark swamp forest associations occurring on nutrient rich basaltic alluvium; and is of international significance. The vegetation exhibits floristic differences from swamps on granitic or other alluvial deposits. There are 21 regional ecosystems mapped within Eubenangee Swamp National Park—17 of which are endangered and two are of concern (Table 1).

Native plants and animals

Plant species of conservation significance (Table 2) include two sedges *Eleocharis retroflexa* and *Frimbristylis adjuncta*. The latter, along with the blue orchid *Dendrobium nindii*, are endangered.

Over 200 bird species have been recorded from the park, demonstrating a very high species diversity in a relatively small area. The park's open fresh water areas are important during dry periods and attract migratory birds in addition to resident species.

Eubenangee Swamp National Park is part of an important cassowary corridor linking coastal and hinterland areas. Twenty-eight bird species recorded on the park are listed under international agreements (Table 3).

The park is a significant fish and crustacean nursery including important angling species like barramundi *Lates calcarifer*. Some freshwater fish species found in Eubenangee Swamp such as MacCulloch's rainbowfish *Melanotaenia maccullochi* and spotted blue-eye *Pseudomugil gertrudae* have restricted distributions and are under threat from habitat disturbance.

Aboriginal culture

Eubenangee Swamp National Park is part of the cultural landscape of Aboriginal people. Traditional Owners have used the area to hunt, gather and carry out ceremony. Currently no native title claims exist over the park, however, the area continues to have significant cultural value for Traditional Owners, and remains an important part of their story.

Shared-history culture

Parts of Eubenangee Swamp National Park were once used for grazing, rice and sugar cane production, and as a horse racing track. Little else is known of the shared-history cultural values of the park.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Eubenangee Swamp National Park is one in a network of coastal wet tropical parks between Mission Beach and Cairns that provide a range of predominantly day-use opportunities in close proximity to coastal towns with a range of accommodation facilities and services available. The park is easily accessed by conventional vehicles.

Walking in the park is easy and presents visitors with a good overview of the coastal lowland landscape. The park is a premier site for observing an extensive range of wetland and grassland birds and estuarine crocodiles.

Some commercial ecotourism operators using the coastal strip have a particular interest in interpreting wetland and grassland systems to their clients.

Education and science

The park's reputation for diverse bird life and wetland habitat is internationally recognised. A range of management, ecosystem and species-based research opportunities exist due to the restricted nature of very wet coastal lowland swamps.

Its close proximity and easy access from the coastal centres of Miriwinni, Innisfail and Babinda provides an ideal opportunity to promote environmental education programs to visitors and school groups about the values and importance of coastal wetlands, and the threats that impact on their viability.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Pest plants of greatest concern within Eubenangee Swamp National Park are those which threaten to alter the ecological function of the endangered wetland communities. This includes the pond apple *Annona glabra* and olive hymenachne *Hymenachne amplexicaulis* which are Class 2 Weeds of National Significance (WONS). QPWS staff have been successful in reducing the extent and severity of these infestations, and ongoing activities aim to permanently suppress these species.

Harungana *Harungana madagascariensis* invades rainforest communities within the park. Signal grass *Brachyaria decumbens* occurs over approximately 20ha of the park's hill slopes. QPWS staff are currently revegetating these areas to restore the vine forest communities and shade out this exotic pasture grass.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* are readily observed in the park. Wild dogs *Canis familiaris* are occasionally seen on the park, and cane toads *Rhinella marina* are present.

Fire management

Fire is used to maintain the floristic and structural diversity of the wetland, as well as to control pest plants. Fire intensity, frequency and timing are critical in maintaining the balance between existing grassland and *Melaleuca* communities. Planned burn programs have been successful in re-establishing and maintaining diverse native grassland and sedgeland communities, and in limiting the expansion of *Melaleuca* forests into grassland areas.

Other management issues

A number of drains associated with former land use occur in the park. Most of these have been rehabilitated resulting in improved water retention in the swamp. Other drains near the park boundary continue to drain water from the park.

Melaleuca forest can be affected by changes to natural drainage patterns. *Barringtonia*-Alexandra palm forest was under stress from reduced water levels, however increasing water retention has prevented loss of this community. Cooperative arrangements with neighbours resulted in a weir being built to retain some of the flow.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape</p> <p>Degraded areas are rehabilitated.</p>	<p>A1. Revegetate areas of past disturbance to assist in returning the park to its natural state.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>The diversity and distribution of natural plant and animal communities is maintained and information on plant and animal communities is sufficient for management purposes.</p>	<p>A2. Work cooperatively with Queensland Herbarium staff to improve knowledge of plant species.</p> <p>A3. Liaise with local bird watching and naturalist groups to record animal sightings.</p>
<p>Aboriginal culture</p> <p>The park continues to be recognised as having significant cultural value for Traditional Owners.</p>	<p>A4. Liaise with local Traditional Owner groups to identify and protect cultural heritage values of the park.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>The park continues to provide opportunities for low key, nature-based recreation.</p>	<p>A5. Maintain the nature-based experience for visitors with low-key visitor infrastructure.</p>

Tables—Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
7.3.1a	<i>Hemarthria uncinata</i> and/or <i>Ischaemum australe</i> +/- <i>Sorghum</i> spp. grassland, and/or ephemeral sedgeland, on seasonally inundated alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.3a	Mesophyll vine forest with <i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i> , on poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.3b	Mesophyll vine forest with <i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i> recovering from disturbance, with <i>Acacia celsa</i> canopy or emergents. Poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.3c	Mesophyll vine forest with dominant <i>Syzygium tierneyanum</i> and/or <i>Barringtonia racemosa</i> and sub-canopy dominated by <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
7.3.5d	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i> and <i>M. viridiflora</i> open-woodland with a dense grassy ground layer, usually dominated by <i>Ischaemum australe</i> and <i>Isachne globosa</i> , in peaty swamps	Endangered
7.3.5e	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i> and <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open-shrubland with a ground layer of by <i>Ischaemum australe</i> var. <i>arundinaceum</i> , on poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.10a	Mesophyll vine forest on moderately to poorly-drained alluvial plains, of moderate fertility	Endangered
7.3.10b	Mesophyll vine forest recovering from disturbance, with <i>Acacia</i> spp. canopy or emergents, on moderately to poorly-drained alluvial plains, of moderate fertility	Endangered
7.3.10c	Mesophyll vine forest with scattered <i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i> in the sub-canopy, of seasonally inundated alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.28a	Rivers and streams including riparian herbfield and shrubland on river and stream bed alluvium, and rock within stream beds	Endangered
7.3.29a	Complex of sedgelands, grasslands, fernlands and forblands of semi-permanent swamps of coastal lowlands. Includes <i>Cyperus lucidus</i> , <i>Actinoscirpus grossus</i> , <i>Lepironia articulata</i> , <i>Scleria poiformis</i> , <i>Gahnia sieberiana</i> , <i>Isachne globosa</i> , and <i>Blechnum indicum</i>	Endangered
7.3.29b	Open water of semi-permanent swamps of coastal lowlands	Endangered
7.3.30	Complex of fernlands and sedgelands with emergent rainforest pioneering spp. in permanently wet peat swamps of alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.31	<i>Lepironia articulata</i> sedgeland to open sedgeland of permanently to semi-permanently inundated peat swamps of alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.35b	<i>Acacia celsa</i> open to closed forest of alluvial plains	Endangered
7.11.39c	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i> , <i>Sorghum nitidum</i> and <i>Mnesithea rottboellioides</i> grassland on metamorphic hillslopes	Endangered
7.3.25a	<i>Melaleuca leucadendra</i> open forest and woodland, on stream levees and prior streams	Of concern
7.11.8b	<i>Acacia mangium</i> and <i>A. celsa</i> open-forest to closed-forest of the lowlands and foothills on metamorphics	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>Dendrobium nindii</i>	blue orchid	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Eleocharis retroflexa</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Fimbristylis adjuncta</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered	Data deficient
<i>Piper mestonii</i>	long pepper	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Rourea brachyandra</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
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	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>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>Acrocephalus australis</i>	Australian reed-warbler	✓	-	-	-
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	common sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	fork-tailed swift	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	eastern great egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	sharp-tailed sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	curlew sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	red-necked stint	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	white-winged black tern	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	✓		-

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Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Cuculus optatus</i>	oriental cuckoo	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's snipe	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle	-	✓	-	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	barn swallow	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	black-tailed godwit	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓	-	-	-
<i>Numenius minutus</i>	little curlew	✓	✓	✓	✓
<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>Symposiachrus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	wood sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	common greenshank	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	marsh sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓

Bonn: Bonn Convention

JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement