

Cape Upstart Area

Management Statement

2013

Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment and Science**

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The Department of Environment and Science acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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The Cape Upstart Area Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2023 in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Park size: | Cape Upstart National Park 8,480ha Abbott Bay Resource Reserve 151ha |
| Bioregion: | Brigalow Belt |
| QPWS region: | Central |
| Local government estate/area: | Whitsunday Regional Council |
| State electorate: | Burdekin |

Legislative framework

| | |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ | <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Marine Parks Act 2004</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i> |

Plans and agreements

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ | Bonn Convention |
| ✓ | China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |
| ✓ | Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |
| ✓ | Juru (Cape Upstart) People Protected Area Indigenous Land Use Agreement |
| ✓ | Recovery plan for marine turtles in Queensland |
| ✓ | Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |

Thematic strategies

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ | Level 2 Fire Management Strategy |
| ✓ | Level 2 Pest Management Strategy |
| ✓ | Whitsunday and Mackay Islands Visitor Management Strategy |

Vision

Cape Upstart's diverse landscape will sustain a unique mix of ecosystems, including spinifex woodland, heath, beach scrub and rainforest. Species of conservation significance, including one of the largest populations of northern quoll in Australia, will persist in an area that has been isolated from other similar landscapes in the Northern Brigalow region.

Outdoor recreation activities and commercial tourism opportunities that are in keeping with the area's natural values will be encouraged.

Partnerships with the local community, neighbours, research institutes and conservation groups are established and contribute to the area's ongoing management. Traditional owners will be involved in the day-to-day management through the Indigenous Land Use Agreement. The area's significant cultural values will be protected through cooperative management.

Conservation purpose

The objectives of management for the Cape Upstart area and adjoining State waters are to:

- conserve and protect the management areas natural, cultural and scenic values
- incorporate the rights and interests of the traditional owners to the area and manage cultural heritage consistent with the Indigenous Land Use Agreement
- provide a remote natural recreation experience for visitors.

Protecting and presenting the area's values

Landscape

Cape Upstart National Park is located 15km north of Guthalungra, north-west of Bowen and south-east of Townsville. Abbott Bay Resources Reserve is situated on the southern side of the Elliott River, approximately 10km from the national park. Cape Upstart National Park is made up of three sections—Cape massif, Camp Island and Worungu Bay—separated by Cape Upstart Station, a freehold property. Cape Upstart National Park and Cape Upstart Station are surrounded by the South Pacific Ocean on the east and western side, freehold properties to the north and tidal flats on the southern side, creating an island effect during flood and storm tide events. Cape Upstart National Park adjoins the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. The area's landscapes and seascapes support a variety of important nesting and feeding habitats for species of conservation significance such as turtles and dugong Dugong dugon.

Cape massif section is a prominent feature of the landscape consisting of a highly folded 700m multi-peaked rugged granite massif that is often spectacularly capped in cloud. Gorges and creek systems crisscross the massif forming a convoluted north–south range containing diverse ecosystems. The northern coastline of Cape massif consists of a multitude of rugged rocky headlands containing coral and sand bays. These bays contain over 150 freehold properties which adjoin the national park, vacant crown land or recreation and township reserves.

Worungu Bay section is situated north of the mouth of the Elliott River and is composed of coastal dune systems with Casuarina foredune communities, beach scrub of national significance, areas of salt couch, samphire tidal flats and mangroves.

Camp Island is a small island off the coast and contains a section of Cape Upstart National Park. The island has one significant vegetation community. There is a small section on the southern end of the island which has been excised and contains a lease for tourism purposes.

Plants and animals

Cape Upstart area conserves 20 regional ecosystems; nine are listed as of concern (Table 1). Current regional ecosystem mapping is inaccurate in terms of species composition. These regional ecosystems provide habitat for fauna species, with 15 species listed as being of conservation significance under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, including two endangered species. Twelve of these species also have conservation significance under the Commonwealth legislation (tables 2 and 3).

Cape Upstart National Park, Cape massif and Camp Island sections have endangered microphyll vine forest (beach scrub) regional ecosystems. The beach scrub on Cape Upstart is one of the single longest stretches in

Queensland remaining. However, a large area is within esplanade or freehold tenure and a good working partnership with Whitsunday Regional Council and neighbouring landowners is important to ensure its integrity is preserved.

Five plant species are identified as being of conservation significance (Table 2). *Croton magneticus* is listed as vulnerable under both the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and is a low priority within the Back on Track species prioritisation framework. *Leucopogon cuspidatus* and *Taeniophyllum muelleri* are both listed as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. *Plectranthus graniticola* is listed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act* and is a high priority within the Back on Track species prioritisation framework. The Halifax fan palm *Livistona drudei* is listed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act* and is a medium priority within the Back on Track species prioritisation framework.

Cape Upstart Area has 134 native vertebrate species recorded on the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) databases. Cape Upstart contains health populations of northern quoll *Dasyurus hallucatus* which have been confirmed by recent surveys. This species is considered vulnerable under Commonwealth legislation and although it has a broad distribution its populations has been reduced in size and fragmented by land clearing and the fatal effects of cane toad *Rhinella marina* poisoning on individuals.

Aboriginal culture

On 26 July 2011 the Federal Court of Australia recognised the non-exclusive native title rights and interests of the Juru People to use the land under traditional law and custom. The claim was first made by the Juru People in 1997 and covered the whole of Cape Upstart National Park, an area of approximately 8,615ha. An Indigenous Land Use Agreement has been reached between the Juru people, the Kyburra Munda Yalga (Ky-burra Monda Yal-gar) Aboriginal Corporation, the Queensland Government, and provides for how native title rights and interests will be exercised with Cape Upstart National Park (QI2011/041).

Cultural heritage assessments have been undertaken and some artefacts are known to exist such as shell middens and stone tools. There are also places of important cultural significance within the national park.

Shared history culture

Coconut Bay in Cape Upstart National Park was historically leased for a graphite mine. Gold mining also occurred in the area. There are more than 150 huts adjoining the Cape massif section which are now a part of the contemporary culture of the area.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Visitor use in the management area is low. Visitors to the area come for the opportunity to explore the area's remote and natural setting and for fishing. A number of residences and fishing huts adjoin the northern boundary of the national park. The huts and homes provide a base for fishermen, visitors and tourists to the area.

There is limited vehicle access to Cape Upstart National Park with the majority of visitors accessing the area via vessel. Vessels can be launched at a ramp south of Gumlu at Molongle Creek. Bush camping is encouraged at Coconut Beach. Access to the beach is via vessels and campers need to be aware of the dangers posed by marine stingers and estuarine crocodiles. Shark Bay is suitable for bushwalking and fishing.

The Worungu Bay section of Cape Upstart National Park is accessible by vehicle from Guthalungra. This allows visitors to access the Snake Trail which was developed in conjunction with the Juru people. The trail supports low-impact recreation opportunities such as bushwalking and photography.

A private lease exists over part of Camp Island which has in the past been developed for its tourism potential.

Education and science

The management area offers learning opportunities in geology, seismic activity, biology, marine studies and Aboriginal cultural heritage. Public education increases community awareness of the area's values, conservation principles and practices.

The management area provides opportunities for scientific research and monitoring. Results from research and monitoring can benefit the area's management and educate staff and the community.

Central Queensland University undertake water quality monitoring in the area to measure the levels of base metals in the water. This monitoring provides a benchmark to record an undisturbed/unpolluted system and monitor for changes in the future.

Partnerships

QPWS is directly responsible for planning, managing and regulating activities in the management area. Working with Traditional Owners, organisations and individuals with similar interests in managing the area is highly desirable to achieve the vision. Efficiencies in resource sharing, improved communications, decision making and enhanced on-ground outcomes; is to be facilitated, where possible, through working partnerships.

A working relationship with the Juru Traditional Owners is essential so that their views and aspirations for the land can be included in planning and management. Traditional Owners have a role to protect cultural heritage in the management area and a role to educate QPWS and visitors on cultural heritage management.

QPWS has a working relationship with the Queensland Rural Fire Service, local government, Cape Upstart Station, neighbours and North Queensland Dry Tropics Natural Resource Management Group to assist in the management of fire, pests and grazing.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

A pest management strategy exists for the area. Rubber vine *Cryptostegia grandiflora*, a particularly invasive and aggressive species occurs within the significant beach scrub community. Control within the beach communities will be difficult, rust and fire will limit infestations throughout the rest of the management area. Reinfestation is going to be an ongoing management issue due to the lack of control on adjoining properties.

Jerusalem thorn *Parkinsonia aculeata* is restricted to the wetter areas in the management area and spreads in times of flood.

Prickly pear *Opuntia* spp. occurs sparsely throughout the management area. It is capable of dominating beach scrub communities and is hard to control due to access difficulties along the coast and the strength of the chemicals required.

The Class 2 pest plants prickly acacia *Vachellia nilotica* and Indian jujube *Ziziphus mauritiana* are water borne species that occur in the management area and are spread from neighbouring properties in flood events. The castor oil plant *Ricinus communis* washes down the Elliott River and colonises the dune systems on the landward side of the high tide mark. Snake vine *Argyreia nervosa* is an emerging issue; it smothers native vegetation and is spread by water and birds.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* occur on the southern margins of the massif and both ends of the beach scrub. Pigs pose a significant threat to the intertidal areas. In addition, pigs damage turtle nests, consuming eggs. Difficult access to the area and a surplus of available food and water makes pig control difficult to achieve.

Wild dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* prey on native animal species, however have a positive impact by reducing pig numbers. Strategic poison baiting is undertaken on the boundary when required.

Predation by foxes *Vulpes vulpes* on marine turtle nests and hatchlings, nesting birds and northern quoll populations is a threatening process. A large population of feral cats exists in the management area.

Cane toads *Rhinella marina* exist in the management area except in the beach scrub environments.

Kangaroos *Macropus* spp. have been introduced to Camp Island and require consideration in management strategies, as grazing pressure impacts on native plant species.

Fire management

A fire management system has been adopted statewide by QPWS which is the primary agency for fire management on protected areas and State forests. Fire strategies provide the overall framework and direction for fire management and are the foundation from which planned burn programs are developed. A fire management strategy exists for Cape Upstart National Park.

The long-term fire management aims for the area is to maintain the current diversity of flora and fauna species and used, where appropriate, to control rubber vine.

There have been a number of wildfires over time up until 1996, specifically on the western slopes and ridgelines of Cape Upstart National Park, Cape massif section. Ecosystems such as *Spinifex sericeus* grasslands and herb lands and *Casuarina equisetifolia* low open woodland on fore dunes, microphyll vine forest 'beach scrub' on sandy beach ridges and semi evergreen vine thicket and microphyll vine forest with hoop pine on igneous rocks are fire sensitive and require special consideration in fire management programmes. Fire adapted communities make up

the majority of the vegetation of the Cape massif. Two monitoring plots exist (Shark Bay and Moonlight Bay) to establish whether the open forest communities with a *Triodia stenostachya* understorey have expanded from repeated intense fires that destroy and remove the eucalypt over storey.

Authorities

Abbott Bay Resources Reserve is managed by QPWS and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines as trustees under the *Nature Conservation Regulations 2006*.

Authorities may be issued under the *Nature Conservation Act* to allow certain types of infrastructure. Ergon Energy are currently seeking a section 35 authority for a historically constructed power line on Cape Upstart National Park. Power lines and associated infrastructure is managed in accordance with the Code of Practice for maintaining electricity corridors in Queensland's parks and forests.

Management directions

| Desired outcomes | Actions and guidelines |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>The full range of naturally occurring biological diversity, ecological processes and landscape dynamics are maintained.</p> | <p>Monitor the impacts from natural processes, pests, fire and recreation. Use the information to guide management decisions and amend current and future plans and strategies, including pest and fire strategies.</p> <p>Minimise threats through appropriate fire regimes, grazing and pest plant and pest animal control and maintain relationships with neighbouring properties to ensure collaborative management of fire and pests.</p> <p>Encourage and allow access for the implementation of research programs into species distribution and population dynamics, particularly the northern quoll <i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>. Incorporate new information about threatened plants, animals or communities into plans and strategies and Wildnet.</p> |
| <p>Cultural management</p> <p>Traditional Owners are actively involved in the day-to-day management of the area.</p> | <p>Continue to work with Traditional Owners in accordance with the Indigenous Land Use Agreement to maintain cultural connections and protection of known sites and areas, and to develop appropriate management tools for the area.</p> |
| <p>Tourism and visitor management</p> <p>The park provides a range of recreational and tourism activities which highlight its special character and complements other local and regional opportunities.</p> <p>Recreation and tourist access and facilities on the national park complement the natural setting and do not compromise natural and cultural values.</p> | <p>Promote minimal impact and safe walking and camping practices.</p> <p>Develop cooperative liaison with user groups to ensure that the park is promoted in a manner appropriate with the level of services and facilities provided.</p> |
| <p>Authorities</p> <p>Facilities on the management area are correctly authorised under the <i>Nature Conservation Act</i>.</p> <p>Facilities will be managed to minimise impacts on the values of the area.</p> | <p>All private infrastructures is authorised under the <i>Nature Conservation Act</i>.</p> <p>Power lines and associated infrastructure is to be managed in accordance with the Code of Practice for maintaining electricity corridors in Queensland's parks and forests.</p> |
| <p>Partnerships</p> <p>The effectiveness of future management is strengthened through cooperative partnerships.</p> | <p>Continue to build relationships with the local community, Traditional Owners, organisations, visitors and interest groups to improve knowledge of the management area, and to highlight its significance to the region and gain support for park management initiatives.</p> |

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

| Regional ecosystem | Description | Biodiversity status |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 11.2.2 | Complex of <i>Spinifex sericeus</i> , <i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i> and <i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> grassland and herbland on foredunes | Of concern |
| 11.2.3 | Microphyll vine forest (beach scrub) on sandy beach ridges | Of concern |
| 11.3.25 | <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> or <i>E. camaldulensis</i> woodland fringing drainage lines | Of concern |
| 11.12.8 | <i>Eucalyptus shirleyi</i> woodland on igneous rocks | Of concern |
| 11.12.12 | <i>Araucaria cunninghamii</i> woodland on igneous rocks (boulder-strewn coastal hills) | Of concern |
| 11.12.14 | <i>Lophostemon</i> spp. woodland on igneous rocks. Coastal hills | Of concern |
| 11.12.15 | <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> , <i>Livistona drudei</i> woodland on igneous rocks. Coastal hills | Of concern |
| 11.12.18 | Montane shrubland on igneous rocks. Mountain tops. | Of concern |
| 11.12.19 | <i>Eucalyptus exserta</i> , <i>E. moluccana</i> , <i>E. crebra</i> , <i>Corymbia citriodora</i> woodland on igneous rocks. Steep hills and ranges | 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>Croton magneticus</i> | - | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | Low |
| <i>Leucopogon cuspidatus</i> | - | Least concern | Vulnerable | Low |
| <i>Taeniophyllum muelleri</i> | - | Least concern | Vulnerable | - |
| <i>Rhamphicarpa australiensis</i> | - | Near threatened | - | Low |
| <i>Plectranthus graniticola</i> | - | Vulnerable | - | High |
| <i>Livistona drudei</i> | Halifax fan palm | Vulnerable | - | Medium |
| Animals | | | | |
| <i>Acanthophis antarcticus</i> | common death adder | Near threatened | - | Medium |
| <i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i> | grey goshawk | Near threatened | - | Low |
| <i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i> | northern quoll | Least concern | Endangered | Medium |
| <i>Delma labialis</i> | striped-tailed delma | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | Medium |
| <i>Denisonia maculata</i> | ornamental snake | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | Medium |
| <i>Egernia rugosa</i> | yakka skink | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | Medium |
| <i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i> | black-necked stork | Near threatened | - | Low |
| <i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i> | red goshawk | Endangered | Vulnerable | High |
| <i>Esacus magnirostris</i> | beach stone-curlew | Vulnerable | - | High |
| <i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i> | sooty oystercatcher | 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>Geophaps scripta scripta</i> | squatter pigeon | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | Medium |
| <i>Lophoictinia isura</i> | square-tailed kite | Near threatened | - | Low |
| <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> | eastern curlew | Near threatened | - | Low |
| <i>Rostratula australis</i> | Australian painted snipe | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | Medium |
| <i>Xeromys myoides</i> | water mouse | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | High |

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

| Scientific name | Common name | Bonn | CAMBA | JAMBA | ROKAMBA |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| <i>Apus pacificus</i> | fork-tailed swift | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Ardea modesta</i> | eastern great egret | - | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| <i>Ardea ibis</i> | cattle egret | - | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| <i>Crocodylus porosus</i> | estuarine crocodile | ✓ | - | - | - |
| <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> | white-bellied sea-eagle | - | ✓ | - | - |
| <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i> | white-throated needletail | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | barn swallow | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Merops ornatus</i> | rainbow bee-eater | - | - | ✓ | - |
| <i>Monarcha melanopsis</i> | black-faced monarch | ✓ | - | - | - |
| <i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i> | satin flycatcher | ✓ | - | - | - |
| <i>Sternula albifrons</i> | little tern | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i> | spectacled monarch | ✓ | - | - | - |

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement