

HOME AMONG THE GUM TREES

Creating habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot



2016

Tucked away near the mouth of the Huon River, Shipwrights Point is a popular government-owned public recreation reserve that includes a campsite, playground, dog-walking areas, and a jetty. It is also an important foraging and nesting area for the critically endangered Swift Parrot.

Swift Parrots, recently uplisted to 'Critically Endangered', are in decline due to a number of factors, including a loss of suitable habitat for feeding and nesting, as well as nest predation by the introduced sugar glider. A migratory parrot, they breed mostly along the south-eastern coast from St. Helens to Southport.

The black gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) at Shipwrights Point are not only part of a threatened coastal woodland vegetation community but also provide an important food source and nesting habitat for Swift Parrots, who feed on the nectar of the flowering trees and make their nests inside hollow tree branches or trunks – which can take hundreds of years to form.

From 2013-16, NRM South's NRM Facilitator and the Huon Valley Council's NRM Unit have been undertaking habitat enhancement work and community engagement to take care of the important

vegetation community at Shipwrights Point. The health of native vegetation has declined over a number of years at the site, partly due to the fact that Shipwrights Point experiences large visitor numbers and accommodates a range of recreational activities.

Mature black gums at the site were suffering from fungal growth, with some trees posing a threat to public safety due to the risk of falling limbs. The aim of the project has been to safely retain as many of the existing mature gums as possible, and revegetate key areas of the site to provide habitat for the longer term.

From 2014, staged revegetation works were carried out at the site, which were completed in May 2016 with a community planting day involving 167 students from Sacred Heart Primary School, and additional support from pakana services and Castle Forbes Bay Landcare Group.

Swift Parrots breed only in Tasmania, along the eastern coastal strip, the Wellington ranges near Hobart and on Maria and Bruny islands. They can travel up to 5,000km between their mainland wintering grounds and their breeding sites in Tasmania, the longest migration of any parrot in the world.

"The community tree planting event was a great success. It was educational, engaging and gave a sense of ownership to the local community in this project and the values at Shipwrights Point. Kids were able to learn more about Swift Parrots and how they will help to protect them"

TIM ACKROYD, NRM SOUTH FACILITATOR.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015-16

The protection and management of 11 mature black gums.

Planting of over 100 black gum saplings and about 800 native understorey plants.

Revegetation efforts have increased the area of native vegetation at Shipwrights Point by 1600 m².

One school – 172 people (167 pupils)– engaged in a community tree planting event, with positive promotions through Council newsletters and local media articles.

Five members of the Castle Forbes Bay Landcare and Coastcare community group took part in a tree planting event.



Australian Government



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